

**International Steering Committee (ISC) of Civil Society Pillar of the  
Community of Democracies**

**Meeting, September 28<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am-5:00 pm**

**UN Church Center, Room 10H  
777 UN Plaza, New York City, NY**

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**AGENDA**

*Breakfast will be available at 8:30am, the meeting will begin promptly at 9:00am.*

**1. Welcome Introductions and Approval of Agenda (9:00 am-9:15 am)**

*See attached list of all members of the interim ISC and list of those expected to attend this meeting*

**2. Role and operating procedures of the “interim” ISC (9:15 am-9:30 am,  
resuming after Meeting with the SG and Presidency from 10:30-11:00)**

*See attached document approved by the GC on role of the ISC and the paper approved by the General Assembly of the CSP in El Salvador*

**3. Meeting with the SG and the Presidency (9:30 am -10:30am)**

We have invited representatives of the Presidency (US Government) and the Secretary General of the CD to join the ISC meeting to discuss their plans for the next two years and cooperation between the ISC and the Permanent Secretariat and the Presidency.

**4. Review of the Agenda of the Governing Council meeting (10/1) and ISC positions (11:00 am-11:45 am)**

The ISC will be represented with the right to speak at the GC meeting on October 1. We will review the agenda for the GC meeting and determine an ISC position on the issues to be debated. *Please see the attached GC meeting agenda.*

*Lunch will be provided around 12:00 pm, precise timing dependent on the flow of the meeting*

**5. Priorities for the US Presidency (11:45pm-12:30 pm)**

- **Sustainable Development Goals.** We want to create a committee of the ISC to develop a position on the role the CD should take in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs so as to give appropriate attention to democracy issues.
  - *Article 19 and CIVICUS have expressed interest in leading on this point.*
- **Democracy and Security**
- **Democracy Renewal**

- **Enabling Environment for Civil Society** In July, the GC adopted the following: “The Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (PSCD) and other relevant CD bodies, such as the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, shall endeavor to consult with the ISC on issues concerning civic space, the development of strategies and activities to promote civic space, and the participation of civil society in international fora.”
  - *ICNL has agreed to chair a committee to advance this objective in cooperation with other ISC members.*
- **Working with the Open Government Partnership**
- **Other substantive issues.** The ISC should consider if it wants to propose to the Presidency and the GC other substantive priorities.
  - *Felesia Muyia-Odada and Michael Ym Kau have expressed willingness to take on responsibility for developing and getting approval of the ISC positions on priority issues.*
- **Organization issues.** The ISC should consider organizational priorities for the CD for the next two years. This includes: approval of observer status for CD at the UN, expansion of the GC (key targets: Brazil, Indonesia, UK), creation of an effective CD and ISC presence in Geneva and NY. We will want to create a committee to work on this issue and a committee to follow the relevant UN bodies in Geneva and NY.
  - *Patricia Galdamez offered, specifically in Geneva, to help coordinate ISC positions on selected issues for each session of the UNHCR. Hoda el Khatib Chalak has also expressed interest in coordinating and developing ISC Positions for each UNGA and UNHCR session.*

## 6. CSP representation in GC member countries. (12:30 pm-1:15pm)

The approved structure of the CSO calls for the recruitment of one organization/person to represent the ISC in each member country of the GC and to participate in General Assembly meetings. We will ask each member of the ISC from a country on the CG to take on this role in their country. We will create a committee with representation from every region to take on the task of recruiting the needed additional representatives.

*See the attached member information sheet for a regional break down of the GC members, linking with the ISC participants.*

## 7. Enforcing the Standards of the Warsaw Declaration. (1:15 pm- 2:00 pm)

The GC in a number of situations needs to assess if countries are adhering to the standards of the Warsaw Declaration. These include: approving applications of countries to join the GC, deciding which countries to invite to the Ministerial meeting as participants and which as observers, suspending (and re-instating) members of the GC and participants in the CD. In all of these situations the ISC has a voice and the opportunity to bring the views of civil society of the country concerned to the attention of the CG. We will need to create a committee to take the lead

in developing positions for the ISC for each of these situations, including when the ISC should initiate the process.

- *Freedom House has agreed to chair this committee and Penelope Faulkner and Hoda el Khatib Chalak have expressed interest in this task.*

*Coffee, Tea and Fruit will be provided around 2:00 pm*

## **8. Working Groups (2:00 pm -2:45 pm)**

The ISC has a right to be represented on each WG of the CD. All working groups currently have NGO representatives including members of the ISC. We will need to designate one organization to formally represent the ISC within each Working Group, to present its views, and to report back to the ISC.

*See the attached sheet listing the WGs and the current NGO members indicating which are now members of the ISC.*

## **9. Supporting new democracies (2:45 pm-3:30 pm)**

The CD's programs to welcome and support new democracies are not functioning well. The ISC needs a committee to develop a position on how to move ahead working on this issue with the Permanent Secretariat, in particular to support Tunisia and Sri Lanka.

- *CIVICUS, Michael Ym Kau, and George Mathew expressed interest supporting this issue.*

## **10. Creation of Permanent Civil Society Pillar Structure (3:30 pm-4:15 pm)**

This includes a technical secretariat and an ISC chair. Procedures need to be developed for electing members to the ISC to ensure appropriate diversity. Funding needs to be secured to permit the Civil Society Pillar to hold an effective General Assembly in Washington in 2017 and to finance the new structures going forward. The ISC needs to create a committee to deal with these issues.

- *Patricia Galdamez has agreed to chair the committee. Felesia Muyia Odada, and George Mathew have offered to lead with the creation of a permanent Civil Society Structure.*

## **11. Committee Break Out Session (4:15 pm-5:00 pm)**

An opportunity for the committees formed during this meeting to meet and discuss their next steps.