

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY

Program of Action

The International Civil Society Forum (ICSF-2003) was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 8-9 September, 2003, immediately preceding the Fifth International Conference of New and Restored Democracies on Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society (ICNRD-5). The ICSF's aim was to seek effective ways to promote democratic reforms by strengthening civil society organizations at national, regional and international levels and ensure civil society input into the ICNRD process to expand and deepen democracy. Continuing this effort and responding to the ICNRD-5 decision to coordinate their follow-up mechanism with the ICSF activities, the ICSF's International Core Group has met and adopted the following Program of Action of the International Civil Society Forum for Democracy (ICSFD) on the basis of the "Civil Society Partnerships for Democracy" ICSF-2003 Declaration, Recommendations and Plan of Action, the ICNRD Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Plan of Action and the General Assembly Resolution 58/13 on "Support by the United Nations System of the Efforts of Governments to Promote and Consolidate New or Restored Democracies."

ICSFD Mission:

- Provide an effective avenue for civil society to assert the values of democracy and influence governments to promote democracy

ICSFD Goals:

- Coordinate and strengthen civil society actions for promoting democracy
- Foster national, regional and international alliances and partnerships for the promotion of democracy
- Strengthen civil society perspectives within the ICNRD process
- Coordinate ICSFD programs with the ICNRD Follow-Up Mechanism
- Monitor the implementation of the ICNRD Plan of Action
- Build civil society cooperation with the United Nations to promote democracy and good governance

Plan of Action:

- Advocate for and monitor the development and implementation of National Plans of Action for Promoting Democracy
- Advocate for and monitor the preparation of Country Information Notes (CINs), support the involvement of civil society in the process
- Support the development of parallel/shadow CINs by civil society groups
- Encourage development of national democracy watch networks and creation of national democracy and civil society indicators to generate civil society reports on democracy in different countries and give an alternative reference point to people, distinct from government and international organizations' reports
- Develop regional and sub-regional mechanisms for strengthening civil society monitoring, advocacy and analysis; link national initiatives with regional and international networks
- Develop comparative analyses of democracy within regions or sub-regions

- Infuse regional and international networks with ICSFD perspective on democracy and civil society, coordinate efforts in different sectors (e.g., development, environment, women's participation) to better promote democracy and civil society

Initial Strategy:

- Coordinate with the ICNRD Follow-up Mechanism
- Advocate for the implementation of ICNRD Declaration and Plan of Action in the countries that have endorsed them
- Participate in the agenda setting for subsequent ICNRDs
- Select some countries in each region as pilot cases for capacity development for monitoring the implementation of ICNRD Plan of Action
- Coordinate and engage other networks in training and capacity development of civil society organizations and focusing on specific issues such as women's participation
- Engage regional and sub-regional inter-governmental mechanisms such as African Union, Council of Europe, OAS and ASEAN to advocate ICSFD programs and objectives

Themes:

- Access to justice and the rule of law
- Conflict prevention, peace-building and transitions from conflict
- Mechanisms for monitoring compliance with human rights norms and democratic practices
- Promoting inclusiveness and greater participation in democracy

Adopted by the ICSFD International Core Group on February 29, 2004, in New York City, USA.