



**2nd intersessional meeting on SDGs  
Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda: Session 2  
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Delivered by Susan Wilding**

Thank you chair,

CIVICUS believes that the sustainable development goals cannot be attained without the full and meaningful protection of civil society. Despite the broad recognition of democracy, fundamental freedoms, good governance and rule of law as essential, commitments made to protect and promote civic space are yet to be implemented.

The CIVICUS Monitor, a real time data tool used to monitor civic space around the globe, shows that only 4% of the world's population live in countries with open civic space. Even in these contexts of open civic space, vulnerable communities are often marginalised.

The role of Civil society in development is key. Civil Society helps to ensure inclusive policy making by shining a spotlight on the needs of the most vulnerable, propel innovation in decision making by finding solutions to complex development challenges, and take responsibility for delivery of services on the ground at minimal cost, responsive to the needs of communities. Civil society also perform a watchdog role over public resources.

When civic space is restricted, these vital roles are compromised.

So much more needs to be done to protect civic space and accelerate Agenda 2030 commitments. We have identified 3 suggestions to achieve this:

- (i) adoption of more robust and relevant indicators on SDGs 16.7, 16.10 and 17.17.
- (ii) Public pronouncements on the importance of civic space from political leaders, diplomats and representatives of intergovernmental institutions.
- (iii) Enhancement of space for civil society organisations in Voluntary National Reviews drawing on experiences from the UN Universal Periodic Review Processes.

With a commitment to protect civic space and the full participation of civil society, we can accelerate the delivery of the Goals.

We thank you.