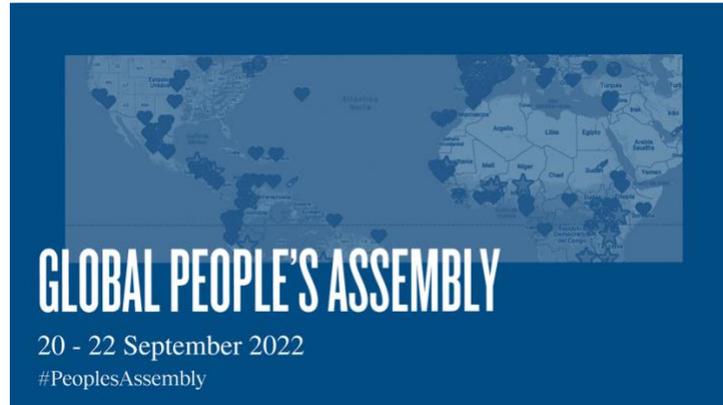


PRESS RELEASE – GLOBAL PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY



Global People’s Assembly at the UN General Assembly: Over 1000 civil society groups propose bold steps to transform our world

New York, 23 September 2022 - Seven years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals - almost halfway to the 2030 deadline - the visionary promise of social justice and a rights-based, equitable and ecologically just world for all appears to be a distant dream. 1300 [participants](#) from groups who have historically been marginalized and excluded as well as civil society organisations from over 127 countries, are calling upon world leaders to take bold and transformative steps to address the current unjust, unequal and extractive system.

[A Declaration](#) developed with inputs from over 30 national and regional people’s assemblies, was adopted at the [three-day Global People’s Assembly](#) on Tuesday 22 of September, organised by [Global call to Action Against Poverty](#) (GCAP) and allies, during the **77th session of the UN General Assembly**. “The time to act is now,” the group calls for a shared political and economic power equally between the global north and global south, for global democracy and a robust civic space.

“We have attempted to galvanise the voices of the most marginalised communities in the people’s assemblies organised at the national, regional and global levels. The global assembly declaration has been prepared in a bottom-up process by taking inputs from the grassroots groups world leaders have to listen to,” says **Ingo Ritz, Director of Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)**.

“The Global People's Assembly creates an important space for alternative views and voices to be raised while heads of state meet in New York. Those gathered in the assembly believe that the UN cannot remain an exclusive club of governments. The people, civil society, and elected representatives need to be included,” adds **Andreas Bummel, Executive Director of [Democracy Without Borders](#)**.

The Global People’s Assembly is calling for decision-makers to link the needs of future generations to present priorities, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to end militarism and to act on the climate crisis, with a strategy founded on human rights principles and intergenerational equity, essential to preserve the interests of present and future generations. "In order to achieve global justice, we must achieve climate justice, and in order to achieve climate justice, we must ‘Stop Ecocide’. Ecocide is a crime against my generation and against humanity. Centering my generation in the fight for global justice is key, because it's our future that we're shaping," says **Emma Buretta of Fridays For Future** who will be joined by thousands in the streets of New York city for the upcoming climate strike.

The Declaration places a special emphasis on the current human rights challenges across the globe and calls for world leaders to guarantee the fundamental freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression and uphold the rights of all to participate fully in economic and civic life.

“Civic space conditions continue to remain a challenge throughout the world with only 3.1% percent of the global population living in countries where fundamental freedoms are respected and protected. The SDGs cannot be completely achieved without the participation of those who are affected by them, and such participation can only be realised in an enabling environment. It is critical for civil society to be fully, actively and effectively engaged to accelerate Agenda 2030 commitments,” says **Lysa John, Secretary General, [CIVICUS](#)**.

Speaking on civic space ahead of the upcoming Presidential elections, **Athayde Motta, Executive Director of the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analyses (IBASE) and Executive Staff at Abong** says, "Brazilian civil society organisations and social movements have been subject to bureaucratic criminalization processes whose goal is to prevent them from demanding rights for the poorest sectors of Brazilian society. Civic spaces have been completely shut down in Brazil and citizen's participation in policy making and decision making has been obliterated. The result is clear: less effective social policies and less money for social programs, or, simply put, more poverty".

[The Declaration](#) focuses on several main issues: vaccine equality, democracy and human rights both online and offline, a gender transformative approach, the need to meet and exceed the Paris Climate agreement, debt and economic justice in particular when it comes to financing for development and an accountable global financial system, the need for pacifism and finally UN reforms ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024 where no one should be left behind.

“Caste-based discrimination and untouchability known as work and descent-based discrimination in UN terms is a fundamental root cause of extreme poverty, non-representation, violence, exclusion, slavery, and injustice to Dalits. Such injustice and inequalities have to be eliminated by implementing national and international laws and policies effectively,” says **Bhakta Biswakarma from the [Asia Dalit Rights Forum](#)**.

“The world is off-track in achieving the sustainable development goals. We cannot address the situation in a business-as-usual approach; we need urgent and extraordinary actions towards just and inclusive recovery. In order to #HitTheGoals, all must work to make development more effective. Key areas are: for aid-providing countries to deliver 0.7% of their national income as official development assistance (ODA) and adhere to effectiveness principles; for plans to prioritise the most impoverished and marginalised to ensure we leave no one behind; for private sector to adhere to human rights and labour standards; and for civil society to engage as independent development actors, free from repression and persecution,” comments the **[CSO partnership for Development Effectiveness \(CPDE\)](#)**.

While civil society seriously strives for the successful implementation of the SDGs, political and economic systems are failing us. Rising food and energy prices, loss of livelihoods, environmental degradation and critical gaps in healthcare — including vaccine inequality and other inequities in the fight against COVID-19 — are pushing people to the margins and making our planet uninhabitable. Urgently, the assembly demands to ensure free and universal access to the COVID vaccine and all tests and treatments, prioritizing the most marginalized countries, going a step beyond the decision of the WTO Ministerial Conference in June 2022 to include [a full TRIPS waiver of vaccine, test and treatment](#). Finally, the pandemic treaty proposed by the WHO should be adopted.

"The reality is clear. All societies, whether large or small, strong or weak, are vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters. From the climate crisis to the many visible and invisible conflicts, it is obviously the people who suffer the short- and long-term consequences. Unfortunately, they hardly ever have a say and are often excluded from the

decision-making process. These doors cannot and should not remain closed and the possibilities for dialogue must be broadened and strengthened. Initiatives such as the Global Peoples' Assembly regenerate spaces in which activists and civil society organisations can meet, strengthen each other, express solidarity and strategise with communities that are left on the periphery of today's political world. I am referring, of course, to young people, women, people with disabilities, the elderly and all those who are left out because of power imbalances. It is time to hear their voices. The gap between rhetoric and reality must be closed. Let us finally translate promises into action! Let everyone, Leaders, Researchers, Civil Society Groups and all other Actors around the world, find in my words a call to action," concludes **Mavalow Christelle Kalhoule**, Chair of [Forus](#) and President of [SPONG](#), the Burkina Faso NGO network.

Read the Global People's Assembly declaration [here](#).

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