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Global Council call - Civic space strategy

23 July 2020

MINUTES

Attendees

Global Council Members

Adnan Bahiya, Iraq (MENA) AB

Athayde Motta, Brazil (Latin America) AM

Chadwick Llanos, Philippines (Asia Pacific) CL

Chenai Mukumba, Zambia (Anglophone Africa) (Chair) CM

Dupleix Kuenzob, Cameroon (ASC representative) DK

Isabel Munilla, USA (Global Reach) IM

Joe Williams, UK (Global Reach) JW

Miles Litvinoff, UK (Europe and North America) ML

Olena Pavlenko, Ukraine (Eurasia) OP

Apologies

Mariatou Amadou, Niger (Francophone Africa)

Secretariat

Elisa Peter, Executive Director EP

Stephanie Rochford, Director of Member Engagement SR

Demba Seydi, Regional Coordinator Francophone West Africa DS

Marion Mondain, Human Rights and Civic Space Advisor MM

Actions

Action	By who	By when
Include a standing agenda item on civic space	Secretariat	As of September GC meeting
Share ideas for how to coordinate effectively across the network	Global Council members	Ongoing



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Notes

Chair CM welcomed everyone to the call and reminded the participants of the thematic focus on civic space. She introduced Marion Mondain and Demba Seydi from the PWYP Secretariat for presentations on the PWYP Strategic Framework on civic space and on the situation in Niger.

Presentation of the Civic space strategic framework (MM)

MM provided a brief overview of the development of the framework in 2019, as well as a definition of how civic space is interpreted by PWYP. She noted the particular challenges related to the restrictions on fundamental freedoms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion on Civic space

IM congratulated MM on the amount and quality of work undertaken on civic space. She reiterated Oxfam's interest and ability to support the PWYP Secretariat & members on issues related to civic space, including through securing additional resources. She asked if the approach undertaken to support the coalition in Niger (capacity building, prevention, rapid response, etc.) could be applied to other countries/regions. In the US, there is a chance that upcoming elections may change the political landscape and there are a number of targets in the US Congress on which we can double down.

ML thanked MM for the presentation and shared an anecdote about Myanmar, which PWYP UK brought up to the attention of DFID. The UK government can be leveraged on these issues. He noted instances of severe intimidation against CSOs in Brazil and Kazakhstan. He requested a 15mn review of important updates on civic space at each GC meeting.

AM noted that threats and attacks against natural resource governance activists in Latin America have not historically been analysed as a symptom of closing civic space. Making that link in our narrative is very important, to show isolated attacks are in fact part of a wider, worrying trend.

In response to the questions asked to the GC, JW said that the EITI validation review was an important opportunity to think through how other mechanisms could be better integrated to EI work (OGP, ICNL, CIVICUS, UN, etc.). While he supports the idea of organising training for members, he questioned the capacity of the Secretariat to carry those itself and how the Secretariat prioritises its limited resources. He noted the importance of focusing on



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upcoming elections, during which civic space restrictions are often imposed. IFIs should definitely be a focus - with the Secretariat coordinating on-going efforts by others. It would be good to clarify what company engagement would look like, as well as how to engage human rights national and regional bodies. He also offered NRG's support on EITI validation and IFI engagement (IMF) as well as corporate engagement. The Natural Resource Governance Index, which will be published next year, includes civic space, and he encouraged MM to get in touch with the NRG team at NRG.

CL highlighted the challenges faced by activists in the Philippines. Civic space concerns seem to be high on the agenda of many more countries now and it would be interesting to have a reflection on these trends.

OP thanks MM for the comprehensive presentation. She reminded participants of the situation in Azerbaijan, which withdrew from the EITI following failures to meet requirements related to civil society engagement. The debate on transparency vs accountability/human rights is still very much alive in the EITI. OP encouraged us to work with high-level champions such as EU delegations to advance our advocacy agenda and to develop a strong narrative as to why accountability is so fundamental to the good natural resource governance.

EP emphasized the important window of opportunity to influence the EITI validation of the civil society protocol and requirement 1.3. on civil society engagement. PWYP and ICNL have drafted a framework with a set of indicators, that has been shared with the EITI Secretariat (available upon request) and it will be important to push hard in the next few months ahead of the October EITI Board meeting, where the new validation model is expected to be endorsed. She also informed the GC that she had recently joined the Advisory Committee of [ICNL](#), with a view to forging a more strategic cooperation between PWYP and ICNL.

Presentation of updates/ information on Niger (DS)

DS provided an update on serious ongoing challenges in Niger in relation to civil society space, with issues that were faced in 2018 (with the arrest of 26 activists) being repeated in 2020 (three PWYP activists remain in jail at this time).

Discussion on Niger

JW enquired about the response of the EITI Board/Secretariat to the situation in Niger.

MM answered that the PWYP Secretariat reached out to the EITI Secretariat to raise concerns about the current worrying pattern of repression against some PWYP members,



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including one member of the MSG. Some discussions were held with the CSO Board in order to activate the Rapid Response Committee. Nevertheless, this case was not considered as a clear violation of the Civil Society Protocol.

IM enquired about what could be done in regards to corporate engagement, as well as the role of embassies in Niger. She asked whether it could be useful to liaise with Orano in this case.

Marion added we can take this discussion further separately with the PWYP US coalition.

Modalities of GC virtual meetings

A member has requested that GC meetings be open to PWYP members as observers, especially as this would not add a cost considering they are happening online. Observers could still join online if/when in-person meetings resume.

GC members thought this was a good idea, with the caveat that the GC could have closed executive sessions; that a list of observers would be published; that rules for observer engagement be defined (e.g. whether observers can speak or not) etc.

EP noted some limitations to participation relating to time-zones and language provision (the GC meetings are held in English and French currently). EP also noted a risk of non-PWYP members joining as observers, although this might be mitigated if the request had to come through the relevant GC representative.

A proposal was made to provide a clear basis for when GC meetings would be made public, on the basis of what relates to the Vision 2025 strategy.

AOB

CM announced that she was leaving her current organisation in Zambia (CUTS) for a role in an organisation that is not a PWYP member. As such, she will have to step down from the Global Council. The Secretariat will circulate a message in the next few days with information on next steps to ensure her timely replacement, as per the provisions contained in the PWYP governance manual. The GC members will also have to select a new Chair.