Zero Draft Post-2015 Agenda Highlights the Need for Robust Civic Space Indicators
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The Zero Draft of the Post-2015 Development Agenda—the declaration, together with its goals and targets—points to the value of a free, vibrant civil society. The Civic Space Initiative (CSI) commends the Zero Draft for recognizing the role of "all human rights" and "civil society" in the Agenda and **urges Member States to support robust indicators to directly measure civic space.**

> Civil society organizations (CSOs) contribute substantially to development strategies and assist states and the international community in finding innovative solutions to complex development issues. CSOs ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalized voices are heard; push for key national reforms; help implement development strategies; and deliver services often in places out of reach of governments. The donor community has recognized CSOs as a critical, independent actor in development.

An Agenda that Encompasses All Human Rights
The CSI commends the inclusion of paragraphs 17 and 28 of the Declaration, along with the continued inclusion of targets 16.7 and 16.10. As paragraph 17 states, "this is an Agenda which encompasses all human rights….It will work to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are enjoyed by all without discrimination." Paragraph 28 rightfully recognizes that "respect for human rights… and effective and accountable institutions" are critical building blocks of peaceful, inclusive societies. Target 16.7 reaffirms the importance of ensuring inclusive and participatory decision-making, and should be supported by an indicator to measure civil society's right to participation. Echoing the language in paragraph 17, target 16.10 calls on States to "protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements." The aspirational language of paragraph 17 and target 16.10 should be the basis of the development of robust indicators to protect fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of association, assembly, and expression, in accordance with international law.

Civil Society Partnerships as Key to the Agenda's Success
Paragraphs 36 and 37 of the Declaration provide key guidance that should translate into full inclusion of civil society in the implementation of the Post-2015 agenda. These paragraphs call for "inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships" that bring together "all relevant stakeholders in implementation of the new Agenda," including civil society and voluntary groups. Civil society has the on-the-ground resources and expertise to contribute effectively to this process, as well as to indicator development, and should be included at every level. This language is rightfully supported by target 17.17, which calls on States to "encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships." This commendable recognition of multi-stakeholder partnership should be strengthened by indicators directly measuring such partnerships, as well as institutionalized processes to ensure meaningful civil society engagement at all levels of implementation, follow-up, and review of the Agenda, at national, regional, and international levels.

The centrality of a free and vibrant civil society to the Post-2015 agenda has been recognized by 17 United Nations human rights experts, who called for "indicators measuring the extent to which enabling environments for civil society exist" and stated that "these freedoms are essential to the realizations of the entire new development agenda." **With indicators expected to be finalized in March 2016, the CSI reiterates the UN experts' statement and will continue to urge Member States to support indicators that directly measure civic space.**