



Call for input on the topics to be discussed during the fourth session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

Civil society has been at the forefront of the global response to the pandemic. It has provided life-saving services, shared information and coordinated the actions needed to reinforce accountability and pursue responsive policy outcomes. With the worst of the pandemic over, we see that many States acted with a heavy hand that adversely restricted civic space in the name of national health. Many States chose to use the pandemic as a veil with which to cover many ongoing and some new restrictions on civil society. And, while supporting our societies in coping with the impact of prolonged lockdowns, a large number of States ignored the needs of the sector by not including civil society in recovery plans and stimulus packages and/or deliberately kept civil society out of planning and implementation efforts.

To prevent devastating health and economic effects of another pandemic, we see that no response is good enough without the support of a strong, diverse, and capable civil society. It is for this reason that civil society should be meaningfully included in all post-pandemic processes, having been closest to the ground, including the pandemic treaty negotiations. States should increase their funding and access to resources for civil society and protect and promote the enabling environment for civil society.

We therefore strongly believe that the 4th forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law should address the following:

- (a) use and misuse of the state of emergency and emergency powers, especially those in response to public health emergencies;**
- (b) ensuring greater and systematic involvement of civil society in all post-pandemic processes, including in the pandemic treaty negotiations;**
- (c) Building democratic institutions to sustain political transitions;**
- (d) Safeguarding freedom of assembly in a post-pandemic era;**
- (e) Benchmarks for accountability to address impunity in democratic transitions;**
- (f) Ensuring access to resources, including foreign funding, for CSOs.**