

Warm-up: We are civil society (aren't we?)

1. “Our definition of civil society is broad and covers non-governmental organisations, activists, civil society coalitions and networks, protest and social movements, voluntary bodies, campaigning organisations, charities, faith-based groups, trade unions and philanthropic foundations.”²
2. “One of the key challenges we confronted was the heterogeneity of CSOs, and the fact that civil society represents a wide range of organizations, voices, and circumstances. As such, it was important to purposefully recognize that diversity. That meant taking a nuanced view of what we mean by ‘civil society’ by systematically identifying civil society sub-groups, understanding their relative strengths, and developing ways of working together that allow us to realize our joint potential.”
3. “Descriptions of civil society as a ‘sphere separate from both the state and market’ (as the WHO defines civil society), indicating the non-State and non-profit characteristics, or occupying a space between the public and the private, are at best misleading. In the complex contemporary global architecture, traditional boundaries between what constitutes ‘public’ and what is ‘private’ are being eroded. The dichotomy is blurred in particular by the contemporary growth of private foundations registered by corporations (corporate-owned NGOs).”
4. “Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour leaders, faith based organizations, religious leaders and other civil society representatives play a critical and diverse set of roles in societal development. In the last two decades these roles have shifted as the external environment for civil society has changed. Recently, a renewed focus on the essential contribution of civil society to a resilient global system alongside government and business has emerged.”

Sources: Please attribute

- WHO-Civil Society Task Team report, November 2018
- Klaus Schwabe, Preface to: The Future Role of Civil Society, WEF 2013
- Civicus website
- A “new business model” for NGOs? In: Global Health Watch 4