

Title: Are global civil society organizations still relevant at the UN organizations?

Convening Organization: [International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care](#)

Question for debate: What role, if any, can global civil society play to make the deliberations and outcomes of UN organizations fit for 21st century purpose?

Global civil society drives a cosmopolitan vision of sustainable peace and human development. The UN has traditionally recognized civil society as a key partner in accomplishing its mission and goals. The ECOSOC and WHO Secretariats have divisions that accredit CSOs and facilitate their participation in member state meetings. Yet this participation is largely contingent on member state support or withdrawal thereof. *Unless member states take affirmative action to support the role of civil society in UN meetings, requesting that they be given a meaningful voice in deliberations, global civil society voices, already marginalized, will quickly become as irrelevant as the inter-agency cooperation framework – mandated by the UNGA to help member states achieve the SDGs.* New geopolitical alignments are challenging these inter-agency collaborations, along with CSO space, voice, and funding, further endangering a sustainable global health and human rights agenda.

Short Bios of presenters in order of presentaion

Nicoletta Dentico is Co-President of G2H2, [Head of the Global Health Justice Programme](#), Society for International Development (SID). She is a journalist and writer, with a long experience in international cooperation and human rights. After leading the Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines, she spearheaded the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, firstly in her role as director general of Medecins Sans Frontieres in Italy, and later in the MSF Campaign's international team. She joined Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) as policy and advocacy director, continuing the activity for the right to health as her primary goal. She served as Board Member of the Italian Ethical Bank until 2019.

Katherine Pettus, is Senior Advocacy and Partnerships Director for the [International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care](#). She holds a PhD in Political Theory from Columbia University, and a Master's degree in Health Law and Policy from the University of California San Diego. Katherine leads IAHPHC delegations at meetings of UN entities to advocate for improved availability, and rational use of opioids for palliative care as a component of the right to health. She addresses issues of global palliative care development and policy as an essential element of primary health care and universal health coverage throughout the life course.

H.E. Mrs. Catalina DEVANDAS AGUILAR is the Ambassador for Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva. She is a lawyer by training and a human rights advocate. She was appointed as the

first United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of persons with disabilities in 2014, and served until August 2020. Ms. Devandas Aguilar has worked extensively on disability rights and inclusive development for the past 20 years, including with the World Bank, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, and international donor organizations that supported the work of organizations of persons with disabilities to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Raffale Marchetti is Senior assistant professor (national qualification as associate professor) in *International Relations* at the Department of Political Science and the School of Government of LUISS. His research interest concerns global politics and governance, hybrid and city diplomacy, transnational civil society, (cyber-)security and political risk, and democracy. He acts as external expert for the European Commission and other public/private institutions on issues of global governance, public policies, civil society, and security. He is editorialist for *Il Messaggero*, and the author of many books and articles including [Hybrid Diplomacy with NGOs](#), published in 2021 by Palgrave.

Background Reading

Joint statement by 61 UN member states at the UN General Assembly 3 Committee meeting

“We commend and echo the UN Secretary-General words in his report Our Common Agenda: *“what is most needed at this time is to go beyond a consultation and advocacy role, and rather for all parts of the United Nations system directly to include civil society in their work across all the pillars of our activities. This is about a shift in mentality as well as in practice”*. We, as member states, have committed to this shift on multiple occasions: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted unanimously by all Member States, pledges to involve all people, civil society, indigenous peoples and the scientific and academic community. Last year, in the UN75 Declaration, the General Assembly committed to make the United Nations more inclusive and engage with all relevant stakeholders, not the least civil society, to ensure an effective response to our common challenges. However, we are concerned that we do not walk the talk. During the pandemic, human rights defenders, civil society organizations and representatives have experienced a number of difficulties to access and engage in the work of the United Nations. Ranging from limitations on access to premises and virtual meetings, unequal access to registration, to availability of information and opportunities to engage with Member States and other stakeholders.”

Nicoletta Denticò

[“The Breathing Catastrophe: COVID-19 and Global Health Governance”](#), Development, 2021.
[The World Needs Healthy Commons, Development issue](#), December 2020.

Katherine Pettus

[Global Palliative Care: Reports from the Peripheries](#) 2020

[Availability of Internationally Controlled Essential Medicines in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) 2020

Raffaele Marchetti

[Hybrid Diplomacy with NGOs](#) (2021) “This book explores a new way of doing diplomacy through the engagement with non-governmental organizations, here referred to as hybrid diplomacy. Today’s global politics is played out most successfully by the combined actions of different actors. A specific type of partnership is that between governments (namely Ministries of Foreign Affairs) and civil society organizations. While not the only type of global partnership at work, this is particularly effective in advancing new issues and promoting the norm changes that have been discussed at length in international relations and sociological literature. The author has chosen Italy as a case study because of the country's prolonged deployment of such policy. Being a middle power, with a strong non-profit sector, and hosting the central node of catholic global network, Italy is well positioned to take advantage of this new diplomatic mode. Through presenting a new reading of the Italian contribution to international affairs, this book contributes to broadening the scholarship in foreign policy analysis and transnational activism.”

[What to Do with the United Nations?](#) (2005)

Medicus Mundi

[Promote civic space at the WHO and other UN bodies and agencies ...and defend democratic multilateralism](#)—includes many other links on civic space in the UN