



Indonesia Civil Society Forum 2023
Civic Space, Capacity and Sustainability
Jakarta, June 14 - 15, 2023



Indonesia Civil Society Forum 2023:
Sustaining Civil Society in Indonesia: Civic Space,
Capacity and Sustainability
June 14-15, 2023

The Indonesia Civil Society Forum (ICSF) is an annual forum to discuss and support issues for civil society and civil society organizations in Indonesia, including at the sub-national level. ICSF convenes national and local civil society activists and government reformists for networking, capacity development, and acknowledgement for innovations and smart practices. ICSF gathers insights and perspectives on the present health of democracy and civil society in Indonesia, key issues, and the roles of civil society to advance inclusive democracy in Indonesia. As one of the pillars of a vibrant democracy, the health of civil society is crucial. Civil society plays a key role in building and strengthening democracy and promoting peaceful development.

Building on the success of the 2018, 2021, and 2022 forums, the fourth Indonesia Civil Society Forum 2023 will be held on **June 14-15, 2023**, on the theme of **Civic Space, Capacity, and Sustainability**.

Around 250 participants and resource persons will join the event from various parts of the country to share their thoughts, perspectives, experiences, and lessons learned. Participants will engage in discussions centering on the civic space, the capacity, and sustainability needs of Indonesian civil society at the national and sub-national level. ICSF 2023 is organized by the USAID-MADANI project in collaboration with INDIKA Foundation and a Steering Committee comprised of CSO experts from development partners and Indonesian civil society who will plan the events, identify topics and speakers, and co-finance, with Indonesian CSO hosting breakout discussions.

After two years online, the ICSF 2023 will be held at a hotel in Jakarta in-person on June 14-15, 2023. The format will be a combination of two keynote speaker session, two panel discussions, and two parallel sessions with five facilitated breakout groups in each session. Special design considerations and technical solutions will be used to ensure that the ICSF is interactive, collaborative, and participatory. The Forum is a two-day event.

The focus on the first day, June 14, is on **Inclusive Democracy and Civic Space in a Post-Reformasi Era**. While many countries around the world are experiencing profound challenges in managing their democracies, resulting in an increasing in intolerance, social tensions, and authoritarian rule, Indonesia has been less exposed to this type of populism and non-democratic rule. There remains

strong support for democracy and regional autonomy. However, as participants at the ICSF 2021 and 2022 noted, the country is not immune to a democratic decline and Indonesia is experiencing declining scores in international indexes. An increase in the rise of “uncivil society” and challenges to freedoms of association and expression have taken place, leading to a democratic stagnation. Speakers in ICSF 2022 highlighted increasing religious radicalism and social chauvinism that are leading to social intolerance. To avoid a backlash, it is important to maintain the integrity of democratic institutions and popular support for democratic practices, such as regular elections at all levels and effective forms of everyday citizen participation so that the voices of citizens can be heard in policymaking. The first day will feature keynotes by Professor **Yasonna H. Laoly**, Minister of Law and Human Rights and Ms. **Bivitri Susanti**, Indonesia Jentera School of Law, a panel discussion with prominent panelists, and parallel breakout sessions, highlighting best practices and discussing various aspects of the challenges and opportunities for civil society in Indonesia to strengthen democracy, covering topics such as protecting civic space, peace-building initiatives, civil society preparation for 2024 elections, and protecting the marginalized.

A civil society marketplace and networking dinner will be organized on the evening of June 14.

The focus on the second day, June 15, will be on **Civil Society Organizations Capacity and Sustainability**. Since democratic and decentralization reforms in 1998, Indonesian CSOs have both contributed to and benefitted from key democratic achievements. In a democracy, civil society groups uphold respect for the law, for the rights of individuals, and for the rights of other groups to express their interests and opinions, including tolerance and the accommodation of pluralism and diversity. However, during the past ten years, civil society in Indonesia has stagnated or even declined, with the rise of new forms of populist politics. Many CSOs have found it difficult to respond to the challenges of the times, such as misinformation, fragmentation, and social polarizations. As discussed at the ICSF 2022, new forms of civil society actions are needed, led by a new generation, and using new forms of communication and social media, to reflect civil society in the 2020s. For CSOs to contribute to putting a brake on further democratic backsliding in Indonesia, national and sub-national CSOs need to continue to build their capacity, including on financial sustainability, which remains elusive for many CSOs, especially at the subnational level. The second day will feature a keynote by **Nani Zulminarni** from ASHOKA, a panel discussion with prominent panelists, and parallel breakout sessions, highlighting best practices and discussing various aspects of the challenges and opportunities for civil society in Indonesia, covering topics such as dealing with a shrinking enabling environment for CSOs, improving the financial sustainability of CSOs, innovations in technology and social media, resource mobilization for CSO and regeneration of civil society and the role of youth.

The ICSF 2023 will end with a closing session providing highlights from panel discussions and the breakout sessions and outline next steps and forms for collaboration, as well as the future of the ICSF after MADANI ends.