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# Towards a World Citizens' Movement: Connecting the Circles

From the Johannesburg Compass  
to a worldwide community for transformation

Concept note and programme for the Global Conference at the World  
Social Forum in Tunis 25 – 26 March 2015



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*“Ongoing professionalization and bureaucratisation of counter culture means that our voices are losing their subversive edges and tones. The system endorses its own critic. The more assiduously we resist the empire, the more like the empire we become! Time is urgent, let’s slow down.”*

**Bayo Akomolafe – Keynote speaker for Global Conference 2014**

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## **1. A World Citizens’ Movement for a just and sustainable global society**

The world is at risk. Entering an age of a planetary society and confronted with a permanent and multiple crisis situation, global scenario planning suggests that humanity might well drive into the abyss of barbarization or, at best, a world in which environmental challenges are addressed but at a large social cost. To avoid these scenarios, we need both global and local answers to the challenges the world is facing today, such as climate change, planetary boundaries, increasing inequalities and erosion of democratic participation and human rights.

The current world economic, cultural and political system, based on competition, self-interest, marketization, exploitation and authoritarian politics, is not able to provide the answers to these challenges. The stories of endless material growth and development are broken. We need radical, systemic change in order to meet these challenges: A Great Transition of the current system to one based on cooperation and universal values, that can provide a Good Life for all. As the threats are inherently global, they have to be discussed and tackled on a global level, while considering local solutions.

Economic globalization, manifesting in global markets and corporations, is a reality, driven solely by the quest for money and profit. Political globalization, through bodies like UN, G20 or multilateral and international trade negotiations, is driven by a logic of cultural hegemony and political power, under a strong influence of economic interests. In contrast, globalization of emancipatory civil society, with the potential to create a joined force of committed citizens, social movements and civil society organisations (CSOs), is still too weak - despite the fact that an ever-increasing number of people from all over the world identify as “global citizens”.

However, the world needs a strong, coordinated world citizens’ movement to resist to the economic exploitation of human beings and nature and to support the victims of the current system. But beyond the defence of human and social rights, a world citizens’ movement has to voice a counter narrative and to propose other solutions, in order to catalyse alternatives and support the emergence of institutions for a new democratic global governance.

Today, an increasing number of transnational, transformational initiatives explicitly or implicitly aim at or contribute to the emergence of a “world citizens’ movement” - but these approaches don’t necessarily connect.

**Building on two previous global conferences in Johannesburg in 2013 and 2014, we propose a number of events during the World Social Forum in Tunis that provide a unique space to bring together people from various backgrounds, but with a joint commitment to transformational, global change, in order to advance and strategize the idea of a world citizens’ movement.**

## **2. Background**

In November 2013, 200 people from five continents, representing social movements and NGOs, united in Johannesburg for two days to discuss the possibility of a “World Citizens Movement” ([conference report by Nicola Bullard](#)). Three key elements of the discussions are captured in the “*Johannesburg Compass*” – the

final outcome document:

- The sense of individual and collective responsibility for the change that we want to see in the world.
- The agreement that we cannot continue as in the past, that we have to question “old ways” of working, including a modernistic anthropocentric world-view, and the failure of the NGO establishment to bring about transformational change.
- The importance of mutual learning, sharing, and questioning.

As a follow up, a second conference took place in Johannesburg from 19 to 21 November 2014, building on the process initiated in 2013 (check out the [report by Olivier Consolo](#), a [2 minute video teaser](#), the [8 minute documentary](#) of the conference). It was part of the 2014 [International Civil Society Week](#) (ICSW) of CIVICUS, and was closely linked to civil society mobilisation coming in 2015 (Post-MDG and climate change agenda) through hosting the global assembly of the global [Action/2015 campaign](#), and the seven months [DEEEP leadership development course](#) with 50 “explorers of systemic change”, who convened in Johannesburg during the ICSW.

**The third global conference “Towards a World Citizens Movement” takes place as part of the World Social Forum in Tunis on 25 and 26 March 2015: An open assembly as part of the WSF on the first day, and a closed strategy meeting with up to 150 participants on the second day.**

The two days are organised under the lead of the [DEEEP project](#) of [CONCORD](#) (the European Confederation of Development NGO), in partnership with

- [GCAP](#) (Global Call for Action against Poverty)
- [CIVICUS](#) (World Alliance for Citizen Participation)
- [FNWVG](#) (Forum for a New World Governance)

The events take place in the frame of the global [Action/2015](#) sustainable development and climate campaign, which will host its Global Assembly in Tunis right after our conference, on 28 and 29 March 2015. A strategic regional meeting (Europe) will take place on 27 March (afternoon) to bridge this third global conference and the Action/2015 assembly, ensuring links between long-term transformational thinking and targeted actions on critical international summits in 2015. [Click here for registration](#) to the Action/2015 Global Assembly.

### 3. Objectives

Based on the objectives set up for the Johannesburg conferences, **the overall aim is to support the emergence of transformational World Citizens’ Movements** through an inclusive conversation around building a common vision, mutual learning and linking towards joint strategies and action.

#### Specific objectives:

- a. Facilitate networking and linking between existing global, transformational initiatives and individuals
- b. Advance the strategic reflection on moving towards a world citizens movement (WCM)
- c. Agree next steps to advance a structured world citizens movement in 2015 and beyond

#### Outcomes:

- a. Clarity on and commitment to the idea of creating a meta-network of transnational initiatives committed to systemic change towards an inclusive and sustainable world society
- b. Agreed elements for a roadmap towards a world citizens movement
- c. A committed core group of leaders in transnational, transformative initiatives, that will reconvene in 2015 to take the WCM initiative forward

## 4. DAY 1: Open Assembly “Towards a World Citizens Movement” - 25 March

### Description as submitted to the World Social Forum

“There is growing evidence that the current economic and political system, based on paradigms of growth, consumerism, markets and competition, and constantly violating the universality of human rights, cannot provide the solutions for the future of the planet and humankind.

NGOs and CSOs, reluctant to systemic change and a profound transformation of the world society, often prioritise their policy work towards institutions, through the elaboration of detailed analysis and proposals, which however address only on the symptoms of a infirm system. On the other hand, while there is an increasingly visible mobilisation and uprising of citizens all over the planet on issues of justice, rights and sustainability, but these struggles are often geographically and/or topically limited.”

The day will be split in 3 different sessions:

- **Panel discussion: *Bridging the gap between social movements and NGOs***  
This panel will examine the complex and difficult relationship between social movements and NGOs with a range of eminent speakers from both worlds.
- **Workshop: *actions for transnational change***  
The workshop will discuss and test concrete action ideas around the topics like feminism for systemic change, transforming leaders across borders, religions and values, global citizenship and others.
- **Panel discussion: *Towards a World Citizens Movement - What is to be done?***  
A panel of eminent speaks from social movements and civil society will present and critically discuss different approaches towards a transformational World Citizens Movement.

### Programme

Wednesday 25 March 2015 - Open Assembly		
Hosts:		
<i>Mari-Helene Kaber</i> , Humana Estonia, CONCORD DARE Forum		
<i>Bobby McCormack</i> , Development Perspectives, CONCORD DARE Forum		
8.30 – 11.00	SESSION 1 : Bridging the gap between social movements and NGO's	
8.30	OPENING	Welcome and agenda for the day
8.45	Where do we stand: The “World Citizens Movement” process so far	<i>Jesse Chen</i> , Powerline. Feedback from previous World Citizens Movement conferences and possible ways forward
9.15	Are NGOs getting it wrong?	<i>Jay Naidoo</i> , Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
9.30	NGOs vs. Social Movements - or together?	Exchange on the difficult relationship between NGOs and social movements in participatory fishbowl format, including: - <i>Minar Pimple</i> , Amnesty International - <i>Seamus Jeffreson</i> , CONCORD Europe - <i>Marta Benavides</i> , Global Call for Action against Poverty - <i>Silke Helfrich</i> , Commons Strategies Group - <i>Ashish Kothari</i> , Kalpavriksh & Alternatives Confluence - <i>Bayo Akomolafe</i> , International Alliance for Localisation
10.50	Action/2015: A global movement for global justice in 2015	<i>Beckie Malay</i> , Action/2015 reference group
11.00	END	

<b>11:30 – 14.00</b>	<b>SESSION 2: Actions for transnational change</b>	
<b>11:30</b>	INTRODUCTION	
<b>11.35</b>	Pitch of action ideas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From Jo'burg to Tunis: Orientations for a World Citizens Movement</li> <li>2. Transforming leaders across borders</li> <li>3. What the F...!? Women and the world citizens movement</li> <li>4. Moving for Justice</li> <li>5. What's the fire in your belly? Stories for change</li> <li>6. Global Citizenship Education</li> <li>7. Spirituality as a driving force for social change</li> <li>8. Open group (TBC)</li> </ol>
<b>12.00</b>	Parallel working groups	Discussions of the action ideas in working groups
<b>13.30</b>	Feedback from the working groups	
<b>14.00</b>	END	
<b>15:00 – 17.30</b>	<b>SESSION 3: What is to be done?</b>	
<b>15:00</b>	INTRODUCTION	
<b>15.15</b>	Ways forward towards a World Citizens Movement	Inspiring thinking for transnational change initiatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>David Bollier</i>, Commons Strategies Group</li> <li>- <i>Richard Sanders</i>, Great Transition Initiative</li> <li>- <i>Jean Rossiaud</i>, Forum for a New World Governance</li> </ul>
<b>15.45</b>	Where do we go from here?	A jury will critically question and discuss the presented approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Uchita de Zoysa</i>, People's Sustainability Treaties</li> <li>- <i>Rosa Lizarde</i>, Feminist Task Force</li> <li>- <i>Nomvula Dlamini</i>, Community Development Resource Association</li> <li>- <i>John Hillary</i>, STOP-TTIP</li> <li>- <i>Michelle Dixon</i>, Online Progressive Engagement Platform</li> </ul>
<b>17.10</b>	Wrap-up and opening	Summary state of the process and bridge to next day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Olivier Consolo</i>, conference reporter</li> </ul>
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END</b>	
<b>20:00</b>	Dinner of guests, speakers and organisers (upon invitation)	Update everyone on objectives and state of process Provide a space for networking between the invited initiatives

➔ Do you want to take part? No need to register for the 25<sup>th</sup>!

## 5. DAY 2: Closed strategy workshop at the World Social Forum: “Towards a World Citizens Movement - Connecting the circles” - 26 March

This workshop will bring together up to 150 leaders of international initiatives with an ambition to transform the current economic and political world system from the dominant focus on markets and economic growth towards well-being and common goods.

### It aims to:

- Explore a joint, cross-sectorial narrative for a world society, which breaks the thematic and geographic silos of civil society
- Identify common ethics and articulated approaches to create bridges between more or less radical pathways
- Define opportunities and threats for a civil society counter power in the world beyond 2015
- Elaborate and agree next steps towards a “World Citizens Movement” meta-network

### Programme

Thursday 26 March 2015 - Closed workshop		
Hosts: <i>Biraj Swain, GCAP (tbc)</i> <i>Tobias Troll, DEEEP/CONCORD</i>		
From 8:00	REGISTRATION	
9:00	Opening	Welcome Outline the objectives and process of the day
9:10	Where do we stand?	The process so far and perspectives <i>Jean Rossiaud, Forum for a New World Governance</i>
9:25	Keynote	<i>Bayo Akomolafe, International Alliance for Localisation</i>
10:00	<i>What is already happening?</i> Presentation of existing international, transformational initiatives	Participants get a quick overview to inform their choice in the meeting place sessions
10:30	<i>Meeting place 1</i> Participants engage with one of the initiatives present	Participants exchange about existing transformational initiatives: “How does the initiative contribute to building a world citizens’ movement?” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smart CSOs (<i>Micha Narberhaus</i>)</li> <li>EDGE Funders (<i>Nicolas Krausz, Mark Randazzo</i>)</li> <li>Degrowth movement (<i>Vincent Liegey</i>)</li> <li>Radical ecological democracy (<i>Ashish Kothari</i>)</li> <li>COP21 coalition (<i>Christophe Aguiton</i>)</li> <li>Soka Gakkai (<i>Hiro Sakurai</i>)</li> <li>Commons Strategies Group (<i>David Bollier, Silke Helfrich</i>)</li> <li>World Social Forum (<i>Candido Grzybowski, Raphael Canet, Nicolas Haeringer</i>)</li> <li>Barefoot Guide Connection (<i>Nomvula Dlamini, Doug Reeler</i>)</li> <li>Peoples Tribunal for Sustainability (<i>Uchita de Zoysa</i>)</li> <li>OPEN (<i>Michelle Dixon</i>)</li> <li>Organisation for Universal Citizenship (<i>David Flacher</i>)</li> <li>p2p foundation (<i>Kevin Flanagan</i>)</li> <li>STOP-TTIP (<i>John Hillary</i>)</li> <li>World Alliance of Alternative Universities (<i>Manish Jain</i>)</li> </ol>

		<p>16. Feminist Task Force (<i>Rosa Lizarde</i>)</p> <p>17. Action/2015 (<i>Marie L'Hostis, Beckie Malay</i>)</p> <p>18. Great Transition Initiative (<i>Richard Sanders</i>)</p> <p>19. International Alliance for Localisation (<i>Bayo Akomolafe</i>)</p> <p>20. Forum for a New World Governance (<i>Jean Rossiaud</i>)</p>
<b>10:50</b>	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>	
<b>11:20</b>	<i>Meeting place 2</i>	Discussion in clusters of two or three initiatives: <i>"What is the central challenge for advancing a World Citizens Movement?"</i>
<b>11:50</b>	Light bulb moments	Sharing of ideas on key challenges for advancing a WCM
<b>12:20</b>	<i>Meeting place 3</i>	Participants deepen links and discuss strategic direction for advancing on a WCM in further enlarged clusters of initiatives
<b>12:50</b>	Strategic directions	Share possibilities for strategic directions to move towards a WCM
<b>13:00</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
<b>14:00</b>	Working group intro	<p>Presentation of working group sessions</p> <p><i>Working group topics might be adapted according to feedback received at registration, and to discussions in the morning</i></p>
<b>14:30</b>	Working groups	<p>Participants discuss challenges for a world citizens movement and next steps that have to be addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>How do we create a new global narrative?</b> Working with cultural values for the Great Transition</li> <li>2. <b>How can local, radical experimentation bring a shift upon global change?</b> From the niches to global change</li> <li>3. <b>How can we overcome fragmentation of transformational initiatives?</b> Linking actors (movements, CSOs, academia...) and topics (climate, inequalities etc.)</li> <li>4. <b>Which should be common orientations for a World Citizens Movement?</b></li> <li>5. <b>Can religion be a progressive force for transformation?</b></li> <li>6. <b>TBC</b></li> </ol>
<b>16:30</b>	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>	
<b>17:00</b>	Where do we go from here?	Get a common understanding on the next steps that are needed.
<b>18:00</b>	Self-empowerment, conclusion and closing	Participants leave with the feeling that this is the beginning of something powerful, and are motivated to take this agenda forward collectively, bi-laterally or individually.
<b>18:30</b>	<b>ENDS</b>	
<b>19:30</b>	Closed dinner Invitation only	<p>Strategizing next steps</p> <p>Prepare convergence</p>

➔ Do you want to take part? REGISTER for the 26<sup>th</sup> [HERE](#) !

## 6. Logistics

### Participants and place

Place: At the World Social Forum [[Univerity Tunis El Manar](#)] in a big tent in the "crossroads of citizenship" section

We expect up to 150 participants.

Participants should:

1. Be open to transition thinking/paradigm shift
2. Have decision making power/leadership position within international / global organisation / movement / network
3. Be able and willing to act as multipliers

### Registration process

Participants will be **asked to join only if they meet predefined criteria** (commitment to transition thinking, implication in an international, transnational or global initiative for transformational change), and are able to take this agenda forward. They will be asked to participate in a short online self-assessment, to make sure that their profile matches with the requirements outlined above. They will also be asked to answer a few questions on global movements and systemic change, which will feed in the program design.

Registration and self-assessment via [this form](#).

### Participation fee

We decided **not to charge any registration fee** for this event, in order not to create additional obstacles to participate.

You will receive a confirmation of your registration by email. Please print it out and bring it with you on 26 March.

However, we urge you to inform us as soon as possible if you cannot come to this event, despite having registered. We will close registration at 150 participants, and it would be a pity if places remain empty because people drop out without notice.

In case you need to cancel your participation, please drop an email to [Santeri Suvanto](#) with [Tobias Troll](#) in cc.

### Travel and accommodation grants

A limited number of travel and accommodation grants is available for speakers and guests.