29th June 2020

Response of the International Association for Community Development to the Joint Statement of the core group of states on Civil Society Space.

The International Association for Community Development welcomes the joint statement to the 44th Human Rights Council from the group of states which usually sponsor the Council Resolution on Civil Society space. We call on the Human Rights Council and on all UN member states to adopt its sentiments and ensure that civil society in all its diversity is facilitated to continue and reinforce its work for a just and equal future locally, nationally and globally.

We welcome the acknowledgment of the transformative role of civil society and of the increasing of restriction and threat to that space.

As an organisation committed to empowerment and inclusion of the residents and citizens which form part of our diverse communities, we fully agree that significant further steps are needed including increased support, better protection mechanisms and enhanced realisation of women’s rights and environmental justice. Community Development can and does play a key role in these processes. There can, we believe, be no real sustainable development without Community Development.

Community Workers have played key roles in generating essential immediate responses to the current pandemic globally. They continue to work to support building and rebuilding the collective resilient communities needed for marginalised and minority peoples to begin to get the rights and social and economic justice which should be theirs.

Racism, building on legacies of colonialism and slavery has systemically denied these rights for centuries as recent events have reminded us.

Local groups and groups of people experiencing racism have played key roles in highlighting and addressing racism in all its forms everywhere both now and in the past. The diversity and autonomy evident in small as well as large organisations and in particular in community groups and organisations including those addressing racism (eg Black Lives Matter) need to be acknowledged as key parts of civil society and civil society space

Anastasia Crickley and Tony Ssembatya
IACD Representatives at the United Nations