

[The Civil Society Forum at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit](#)

What is the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit?

It's the largest engagement a U.S. president has ever had with African leaders and governments. The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit will bring together 50 heads of state, along with a range of U.S. and African civil society and business leaders, to discuss the future of Africa.

What issues will the Summit address?

The summit leader sessions will focus on topics such as trade and investment, peace and regional stability, and good governance. The signature events will address issues such as civil society, women's empowerment, global health, resilience and food security, and wildlife trafficking.

What will happen at the civil society event?

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power will join other U.S. and African officials, civil society leaders and members of the U.S. Congress to discuss ways governments can further involve citizens and civil society in meeting shared challenges.

Through panel discussions, a town hall meeting and a keynote address, the *Civil Society Forum* will touch on the issues of corporate accountability and transparency; the importance of civic space to social entrepreneurship, civic innovation and development; strengthening the judiciary; and existing U.S.-Africa initiatives.

The event's key outcomes may include commitments from government and civil society to emulate successful regional or international partnership models and technical assistance from the United States to support and expand successful engagement between government and civil society.

Why is this issue important to young African leaders?

Civil society gives citizens a voice. It complements the efforts of governments and the private sector to help people. It advances democracy, respect for human rights, inclusive development and media independence. It helps communities become prosperous and stable and pushes political institutions to be agile and responsive to the people they serve.

The United States has made support for and protection of civil society a cornerstone of its foreign policy. It encourages African leaders to join in helping to make civil society strong. Young African leaders can be a critical part of that effort.

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“What was the outcome of the signature Civil Society Forum event at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit?”

Secretary of State John Kerry spoke  about the role of civil society at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit on August 4.

Credit: AP Images

Secretary of State John Kerry opened the forum on civil society, which focused on leveraging the knowledge and experience of citizens to solve their countries' main development challenges.

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power urged leaders of African countries that are not yet part of the [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP) to join the international network. She said governments can use the OGP as a resource for decisionmaking and for sharing information with citizens. She encouraged governments that have joined the OGP to make their open-government action plans publicly accessible.
