

Dear Forus members,

Below you will find a **summary** with key data on Forus' activities in 2024.

## CONNECT

**2024 Forus General Assembly (13-17 May):** The 2024 Forus GA in Gaborone, Botswana brought our network together in person for the first time since 2018, with **84%-member representation**. This vibrant and member-led gathering fostered connections and facilitated strategic discussions on CSOs' challenges and opportunities. Among the highlights was the partial **Council** renewal, with five new members joining: CODE-NGO (Philippines), Cooperation Canada, Red Encuentro (Argentina), UNNGOF (Uganda), and VB Plataforma (Lithuania). With 87% of participants affirming the relevance of discussions and 98% expressing eagerness to join the 2026 GA, the event has paved the way for impactful collaboration and the development of the 2026-2030 Forus Strategy. Relive the connections and energy through the [General Assembly video!](#)

📄 **Check out the 2024 Forus GA report** [Available in [English](#) - [Français](#) - [Español](#)].

**ComsForUs Working Group:** In 2024, the working group focused on digital activism, communications, and the ethical use of AI. The group also launched several initiatives, including the **Communications Clinic** led by Forus members and strategies to promote positive narratives on the role of civil society organisations at local and global levels. Topics explored during the meetings ranged from inclusive communication strategies to AI-driven storytelling, communicating around civic space, interview skills and developing partnerships with the media. Looking ahead to 2025, the group will continue to build on these initiatives by expanding its digital activism efforts, focusing on mapping events, strategic storytelling, innovative campaigns, decolonising narratives, and deepening collaboration across Forus members with tailor-made sessions by regional priorities.

📅 **Register here for the next meeting on 30 January, from 13:00 to 14:30 UTC.** ([Your local time here](#))

📊 **Complete this quick survey** to share your priorities and to shape the working group together! [Available in [English](#) - [Français](#) - [Español](#) - [Português](#)]

**Forus Member Talks:** The webinar series focused on societal progress and gender justice. La Coordinadora (Spain) introduced their "**Coherence Index**", while ASONOG (Honduras), Coordination SUD (France), and VANI (India) led discussions on gender justice and women's leadership through the #MarchWithUs campaign.

## Forus Campaigns, Stories & Collective Initiatives

**#MarchWithUs:** Continued advocacy for gender justice. [Join the movement in 2025!](#)

**Shifting the Power – Global Voices Rising:** A podcast amplifying CSOs perspectives on decolonising development and Shifting Powers!

**#UNmute Initiative:** Issued a joint statement with nearly 500 CSOs ahead of the UN Summit of the Future.

**SDG16 Rebuilding Trust for Inclusive Governance:** With the report and social media actions, we provided tools for governance structures based on transparency, participation, and equity.

**#Let'sTalkDigital campaign:** We explored digital rights and internet governance via the Digital Futures podcast and **our AI for activism call!**

Forus supported **member campaigns**, including #StopàlabaisseAPD by Coordination SUD (France), the **Pajubá Project** by Abong (Brazil), calls to counter anti-NGO laws by ANC (Peru) and many more!

**Looking ahead**, stay tuned for CSO interviews before the **Finance in Common Summit**, a new campaign to leave no one behind and more positive narratives from across the network!

## Three new members joining the Forus family!

Forus welcomes the **Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation** (AKÜ), the **Bulgarian Platform for International Development** (BPID) and the **Norwegian Forum for Development and Environment** (ForUM), as the newest members of our network! We look forward to collaborating with these inspiring platforms and incorporating their valuable perspectives into our collective efforts.

🔗 [Click here](#) to see the full list of Forus members.

## SUPPORT

### Strengthening effective teams and leadership across the Forus network

2024 marked an exciting milestone of Forus' capacity-strengthening efforts, laying a strong foundation for network development, resilience and sustainability.

**Organisational Self-assessment:** 2024's self-assessment helped Forus members reflect on team structures and skills, highlighting strengths and areas for growth. Members showed confidence in strategy building, recruiting diverse governance bodies, and gaining recognition. However, digital skills, funding gaps, and knowledge-sharing remain key priorities. Insights from the assessment will shape tailored support for our network. Stay tuned, as [a report with key results will be shared soon.](#)

🔗 **Get Involved!** Complete the Forus Organisational Self-Assessment [here](#).

**Cycle 6 - National Projects Partnerships Programme:** Twelve members from Africa, Asia, and Latin America have partnered with Forus to enhance coordination teams and

organisational structures with the framework of [Cycle 6](#). Guided by a member-led Peer Committee, composed by ANONG (Uruguay), CNONGD (DRC), Cooperation Canada, FONG-STP (São Tomé e Príncipe), FONGTO (Togo), JOINT (Mozambique), and Red Encuentro (Argentina), this cycle will deliver key outputs by December 2025, supported by Skills Sharing Sessions and Learning Modules.

**Cycle 5 - Leadership Development Programme (LDP):** [Cycle 5 of the LDP](#) brings together participants from five continents to explore feminist leadership through collaborative action research, training, and writing workshops. The programme, concluding in August 2025, aims to advance inclusive leadership, powerful negotiation skills and public speaking for social change.

**Opportunities Ahead:** In 2025, Forus will offer Skills Sharing Sessions, Learning Modules, and peer-support platforms like Failures Clubs and Mastermind Groups. Topics will include fundraising, ethical AI, and accountability, and other key skills to prepare for Cycle 7 projects.

To know more, contact [elisa.novoa@forus-international.org](mailto:elisa.novoa@forus-international.org)

## Your Voice Matters!

**2024 Membership Survey:** With an outstanding **89%-member participation**, the survey provided valuable insights into our member organisations and feedback on the impact of our work. Your feedback will help us continue ensuring Forus remains member-led and aligned with your needs and expectations.

**Surveys on FiCS and CADE Projects:** The FiCS project (22-25) evaluation survey offered key insights into its impact, informing plans for a potential second phase. The CADE baseline survey contributed to a [Mapping Study on CSO engagement in multilateral internet governance processes](#).

Thank you for your invaluable contributions to these collective accountability efforts!

## Forus Team

In 2024, with new projects starting, the Forus Secretariat grew a little to facilitate new activities, strengthen support for members and drive forward our mission.  [Click here](#) to meet the Forus Team!

## INFLUENCE

### Advocacy Working Groups

Below is an overview of the 2024 highlights from the Advocacy Working Groups. The working groups also met in person during the 2024 Forus GA in Botswana.

**Agenda 2030 Working Group:** In 2024, the group addressed the urgent need to accelerate progress on the SDGs as the 2030 deadline looms. The group engaged in discussions on strengthening civil society's role in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), policy coherence, and the challenges posed by shrinking civic spaces, political instability, and governance issues in various regions. Key moments included the launch of the ["Progressing National SDGs Implementation" report](#) and the [Inclusive Governance and SDG 16 Forus report](#), emphasizing inclusive governance and multi-stakeholder participation. The group also contributed to strategic advocacy and global visibility at the UN HLPF, and identified gaps in data, insufficient government engagement with civil society, and the need for capacity-building as critical barriers to SDG progress. In 2025, the group will develop a post-VNR follow-up strategy and two key studies: a Localisation Study for the UN HLPF (14-23 July 2025, NYC) and a Policy Coherence Study for the World Social Summit (4-6 November 2025, Qatar).

**VNR Advocacy Support Mechanism:** Aimed at strengthening national members' capacity to advocate for the implementation of the SDGs, the project supported 6 members: CCONG (Colombia), NANGO (Zimbabwe), NFN (Nepal), Red Encuentro (Argentina), UnidOSC (Mexico) and UNNGOF (Uganda). The projects produced alternative reports, fostered collaboration with governments, and amplified local voices through media and campaigns, showcasing CSOs key role in advancing the SDGs. Through the Agenda 2030 working group, members shared lessons and best practices.

 **Stay tuned for details about upcoming meetings!**

**Financing for Sustainable Development (FfSD) Working Group:** In 2024, the group focused on reforming the global financial architecture, conducting a mapping exercise that identified key priorities: overseas development assistance (ODA), climate finance, and engagement with Public Development Banks (PDBs) and the Finance in Common Initiative. Other areas, such as debt and tax justice, were noted but had less capacity for action. Members also actively engaged in major international processes, such as the C20 in Brazil. Alongside the Agenda 2030 working group, FfSD working group members contributed to the Summit of the Future, hosting a virtual side event on ODA. A key milestone of the group was the launch of [the Engaging PDBs Research Study and CSO Toolkit](#) to enhance CSO engagement with PDBs. In 2025, Forus and group members are preparing to engage in two key international events to advance global financial reform: [the Finance in Common Summit](#) (FiCS, 26–28 Feb, South Africa) and [the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development](#) (FFD4, 30 June-3 July).

 **[Register here](#) for the next meeting on 5 February from 13:00 to 14:30 UTC. ([Your local time here](#)).**

**Enabling Environment Working Group:** In 2024, the group focused on key issues impacting civic space and CSO environment, including rising authoritarianism, restrictive legislation, digital repression and negative narratives. Key initiatives included the creation of the [Forus Solidarity Compendium in Times of Shrinking Civic Space](#), with members recommendations to address threats to CSO environment, a [Directory for Rapid](#)

Response Support, the [UNMute initiative](#) promoting CSO participation in UN processes, [talking points to counter negative narratives against CSOs](#), and the [“We Are Leaving No One Behind, Are You?” campaign](#) to highlight CSOs' critical role in sustainable development, set for launch in 2025. The group also facilitated peer learning and emphasized evidence-based narratives to counteract anti-CSO discourses while fostering resilient civil societies. Additionally, the group played a significant role in shaping the [EU SEE Project](#), detailed in the section “New Projects” below.

 [Register here](#) for the next meeting on **Thursday, 13 February 2025, from 13:00 to 14:30 UTC**. ([Your local time here](#)).

## New Forus Working Groups!

**Local Power Working Group:** Co-chaired by Moses Isooba (UNNGOF, Uganda) and Mette Müller (Global Fokus, Denmark), the new group fosters collaboration among Forus members from the Global South and Global North to advance "Shifting the Power" and promote locally led development. In its first year, the group focused on defining "Shifting the Power," addressing barriers like funding inequities and colonial legacies, and exploring opportunities such as participatory grant-making and equitable partnerships. Key outputs included a [Library of Shift the Power Resources](#), knowledge-sharing, ongoing work to refine a [joint definition of “Shift the Power”](#), and the start of a [repository of good practices](#) to inspire and strengthen advocacy efforts. Looking ahead, the group has planned bi-monthly sessions, tackling topics such as financial autonomy, risk-sharing, inclusive language, and systemic advocacy.

**Digital Governance Working Group:** Launched in late 2024, the group provides a platform for members to acquire knowledge to help them engage on critical issues at the intersection of technology and civil society. The inaugural meeting focused on effective CSO participation, digital inequality, data protection, and civil society's role in shaping national and multilateral Internet governance and digital policies. By fostering collaboration and sharing insights, the group aims to address the challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning.

 [Join the new Forus Working Groups here!](#)

## New Projects!

**EU System for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society (EU SEE):** EU SEE is a consortium of international organisations in 86 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas, and the Caribbean. The partnership aims to implement and maintain an Early Warning and Monitoring Mechanism to document changes and shed light on critical trends in the enabling environment for civil society, providing a clear understanding of the conditions necessary for civil society to thrive. EU SEE equips civil society, governments, and stakeholders with actionable insights to address challenges and leverage opportunities, focusing on countering deterioration in the enabling environment and supporting improvements where possible. The project has completed

its inception phase, developing a detailed monitoring methodology. Several Forus members and member organisations from Consortium partners are now joining the EU SEE Network. These partners will engage in monitoring and advocating for an enabling environment for CSOs, with onboarding sessions underway to establish a solid foundation for impactful collaboration.

● To know more about EU SEE, please contact [elisa@forus-international.org](mailto:elisa@forus-international.org)

**Civil Society Alliances for Digital Empowerment (CADE):** The [CADE initiative](#) brings together a 9-member consortium, with Forus as a key member. Its goal is to enhance CSOs' involvement in global digital policy, fostering more inclusive, participatory multilateral and multi-stakeholder practices. In its first year, Forus commissioned two studies: a [Mapping Study](#) and a Baseline Survey targeting CSOs worldwide. Additionally, in August, Forus co-hosted a webinar to reflect on CSOs' role in the development of the [Global Digital Compact](#) and to explore strategies for strengthening CSO engagement in digital policymaking and promoting equitable digital governance.

● To know more about CADE, please contact [kenneth@forus-international.org](mailto:kenneth@forus-international.org)

## 2024 Forus engagement in international fora

**UN Civil Society Conference (9-10 May, Nairobi):** Forus, along with members like Abong (Brazil) and NNNGO (Nigeria), advocated for the network's key contributions to global governance and sustainable development. Joining key discussions on the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, as well as co-facilitating sessions on [#UNMute Civil Society](#) and [#SDG16Now](#), Forus highlighted the need for greater civil society inclusion in UN processes and the importance of multilateralism, inclusion, and sustainable development.

**2024 High-Level Political Forum (8-17 July, NYC):** Forus organised two impactful side events. On [8 July](#), the "[Rebuilding Trust for Inclusive Governance](#)" online side event marked the launch of the [Inclusive Governance and SDG 16 Forus report](#), with members sharing strategies to enhance transparency, combat corruption, and strengthen institutions. On [9 July](#), the joint in-person side event "[From Margins to Mainstream](#)", co-organised with TAP Network, UNDP, and the governments of Uganda and Nepal, emphasized inclusive decision-making and collaboration to rebuild trust and address regional challenges.

**UN Summit of the Future (22-23 Sept, NYC):** Forus played a key role in amplifying civil society's voice through a member-led Taskforce co-chaired by NNNGO (Nigeria) and Abong (Brazil). The Taskforce advocated for an ambitious [Pact for the Future](#), consolidating feedback from Forus members, strengthening CSO participation, and aligning national and global advocacy strategies. Key achievements included facilitating member inputs on the [Pact's drafts](#), revitalizing the [#UNMute](#) campaign for greater CSO inclusion in UN processes, and organising three side events during the Summit on inclusive governance, Global South leadership and a recipient-centered approach to ODA. These initiatives strengthened CSOs' participation, and advanced priorities for an

ambitious [Pact for the Future](#) and Global Digital Compact. Post-Summit, Forus introduced the [National Implementation Framework](#) with actionable recommendations for implementing the 56 actions of the *Pact for the Future* at the national level.

**ICANN Annual General Meeting (9-14 Nov, Istanbul):** The CADE consortium shared preliminary results of the [Mapping and Baseline Study](#) and gather feedback from non-commercial stakeholders within ICANN. During the meeting, the CADE consortium was represented by Kenneth Harry Msiska (Forus) and Karolina Iwanska (ECNL).

**Civil Society (C20) Summit (13 Nov, Rio de Janeiro):** Held alongside the G20 Summit in Brazil, [the C20](#) marked the conclusion of Brazil's leadership of the G20 civil society engagement group. Chaired by Forus member Abong (Brazil), the C20 gathered global CSOs, including Forus and its members CANGO (China) and JANIC (Japan), to address critical issues such as climate, inequality, and economic justice. While the G20 Rio de Janeiro Declaration included several commitments, civil society called for stronger actions and more inclusive engagement to tackle these urgent challenges.

**Internet Governance Forum (IGF) (15-19 Dec, Riyadh):** The CADE consortium organised the session [Empowering Civil Society: Bridging Gaps in Policy Influence](#), moderated by Forus and featuring inputs from Diplo and KICTANet. The consortium shared excerpts from the Mapping, Baseline, and Africa Case Study, and held a meeting with the EU, with an overview of activities from the first year of the CADE initiative.

## Forus in the media

In 2024, Forus was featured in over 100 media outlets with stories and statements from members across the membership on issues related to civic space, the Agenda 2030, digitalisation, gender equality and more!

 [See what the media says about Forus here](#)