
GPF Newsletter

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What's new

New development goals need to include commitments by the rich



A meeting aimed at coordinating global advocacy on a new development agenda was held last February 23-24 in Istanbul, convened by the UN Secretary-General's adviser on development planning, the UN Foundation, the Overseas Development Institute of the UK and CIVICUS. Social Watch addressed a letter to the meeting arguing that "joint civil society action around Post-2015 has to focus on goals and commitments for the countries of the North, the necessary changes of the consumption and production patterns in these countries, and the structural framework conditions shaped by these countries, particularly in the global financial, investment and trade systems".

OECD's new info exchange standard a watershed moment?



The OECD has published a report on a new global standard for countries and tax havens to exchange information with each other: a crucial tool for tackling offshore secrecy and tax evasion. The report represents significant progress by endorsing a principle that civil society organisations have been demanding for many years, and which has now been endorsed by the G20 finance ministers. In reaction to the report by the OECD, Tax Justice Network (TJN) publishes an

analytic response on whether the OECD's new standard is indeed a watershed moment. The OECD report, which focusses especially on due diligence checks, a crucial element in any transparency regime, seems to have many positive details. Yet, TJN says, there are a number of shortcomings in the report, too: some technical, and some political.

How corporations and lawyers are scavenging profits



Since the economic crisis hit Europe, international investors have begun suing EU countries struggling under austerity and recession for a loss of expected profits, using international trade and investment agreements. This is revealed by a new report released today by the Transnational Institute and Corporate Europe Observatory. The investors – and the lawyers involved – are scavenging for profits amidst crisis-hit nations, providing a salutary warning of the potential high costs of the proposed trade deal between the US and the EU, which start its fourth round of negotiations today in Brussels.

Alternatives to the debt crisis



As the lion's share of the world's nations suffer from austerity policies, politicians, financial experts and civil society activists came together this month for a three-day international conference to discuss alternative ways of tackling the debt crisis. Themes included debt restructuring options for countries suffering from high debt burdens, the value of carrying out debt audits to help identify and repudiate illegitimate debt, the problems caused by the tight mandates of central banks, and options how to bring interest rates and eventually the costs of debt service down.

The Future HLPF Review



In a new working paper, Marianne Beisheim from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs analyzes the options for a review mechanism for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), a UN body created after the Rio+20 summit in 2012 and inaugurated in September 2013. The HLPF is replacing the UN's Commission on Sustainable Development and aimed at providing political leadership and guidance and a dynamic platform for regular dialogue, stocktaking, and agenda-setting – all to advance sustainable development. Furthermore, the HLPF is to provide "follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments." In her paper, Marianne Beisheim develops criteria for an effective review mechanism, analyzes existing review mechanisms and evaluates their advantages for the new HLPF review.

Special Rapporteur issues final report



In his final report to the UN Human Rights Council after a six-year term as Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter calls for the world's food systems to be radically and democratically redesigned. "Objectives such as supplying diverse, culturally-acceptable foods to communities, supporting smallholders, sustaining soil and water resources, and raising food security within particularly vulnerable areas, must not be crowded out by the one-dimensional quest to produce more food," he urges.

Neuer Report: Gemeinsame Ziele – unterschiedliche Verantwortung



Das Prinzip der gemeinsamen, aber unterschiedlichen Verantwortungen (Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, CBDR) gilt als einer der Meilensteine des Erdgipfels von Rio 1992. Die Regierungen hatten damals ihren unterschiedlichen Beitrag zur Umweltzerstörung anerkannt – und damit auch ihre unterschiedliche Verantwortung, für die Wiederherstellung des Ökosystems und die Anpassung an Umweltschäden zu bezahlen. Heute ist dieses

Prinzip zum Dreh- und Angelpunkt der Klima- und Post- 2015-Verhandlungen geworden. Der vorliegende Report beschreibt die aktuellen Kontroversen um das Rio-Prinzip, nimmt die wichtigsten Vorschläge zu seiner Operationalisierung unter die Lupe und stellt schließlich Empfehlungen für die Weiterentwicklung dieses Prinzips vor dem Hintergrund der veränderten geopolitischen und weltwirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen zur Diskussion.

G20 Finance Ministers: crises brewing, but little action



Last weekend's G20 finance ministers' meeting produced an eye-catching (but detail-free) promise to raise global growth levels, but obscured the fact that little concrete progress has been made, with IMF reform mired in US inaction, no proposals for systemic reforms such as debt workout mechanisms, and a reliance for implementation on international institutions such as the OECD that exclude

developing country participation.

New GPF Report: Contracting Insecurity





Today Global Policy Forum publishes a new report on recent developments and practices of the security outsourcing of the UN. GPF's Lou Pinget discusses the increasing use of private military and security companies (PMSCs), the shifting understanding of their role and activities, and how this influences the perception of the UN by other actors. The report discusses the UN's attempt to increase transparency and accountability in their selection processes of PMSCs. Finally, Pinget calls on the UN, member states, and civil society to adopt a more ambitious and radical approach to PMSCs.

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