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# GPF Newsletter

July 04, 2014



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## Latest from GPF

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### GPF Launches Web Portal on Corporate Influence



GPF is pleased to share its new web portal on corporate influence at the UN, part of a broader research focus on the privatization of global governance. We have compiled recent GPF analysis, relevant UN documents, and an extensive listing of reports and articles by civil society organizations and think tanks, tracking the consolidation of corporate power in the multilateral setting. As this work illustrates, corporations and their proxies are transforming the discourse and/or blocking progressive outcomes in both the UN's sustainable development post-2015 agenda and the business and human rights processes, pushing (overtly and/or silently) for "multi-stakeholder" governance models and voluntary, non-binding corporate social responsibility commitments. [Read more](#) on the history of corporate influence at the UN, its current manifestations, and GPF's recommendations on reversing the corporate capture of the UN.

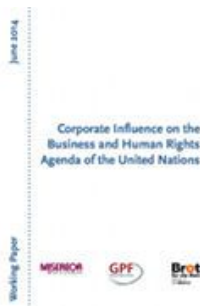
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## GPF Briefing 1: Privatizing Global Governance: Corporate Influence at the United Nations



Global Policy Forum has undertaken significant research to track and chart the increasing power and influence of corporations in global governance settings, particularly the UN. We are pleased to share with you our new Briefing on Corporate Influence, which includes main messages and recommendations.

## New Working Paper: Corporate Influence on the Business and Human Rights Agenda of the UN



A new GPF working paper, jointly published with Brot für die Welt and MISEREOR, gives an overview of the debate around how to create an international legally binding instrument to hold transnational corporations accountable for human rights abuses. The scope reaches early efforts to formulate the UN Code of Conduct to the current initiative for a binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights. The paper particularly focuses on the responses by TNCs and their leading interest groups to the various UN initiatives, specifies the key actors and their objectives. In this context it also highlights features of the interplay between business demands and the evolution of regulatory debates at the UN. This provides an indication of the degree of influence that corporate actors exert and their ability – in cooperation with some powerful UN member states – to prevent international binding rules for TNCs at the UN.

## What's new

### CSOs protest as European Commission hires PricewaterhouseCoopers to assess corporate transparency



Yesterday, a broad alliance of civil society organizations including Global Policy Forum sent an open letter to the European Commission to protest against the assessment of country by country reporting by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Since PricewaterhouseCoopers - one of the "Big Four" audit firms - is a known opponent of public country by country reporting, letting them assess this crucial tool for preventing corporate tax dodging would be the same logic as to set the fox to guard the henhouse.

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## How tax policy can contribute to gender equality



The latest report of the British NGO Christian Aid “Taxing Men and Women: why gender is crucial for a fair tax system” deals with the different effects of tax systems in men and women as well as possibilities how prudent fiscal and tax policy can contribute to gender equality. Whereas a lot of literature exists on the consideration of gender aspects on the spending side of national budgets, this report marks a first step to analyze state revenues with regard to gender equality.

Christian Aid provides several recommendations for actors on different levels – civil society organizations, governments and tax authorities in countries of the global south – on how to work towards gender-sensitive tax systems. Furthermore, the authors point to the lack of available data that currently prevents further progress on this issue and to the need of further empirical studies.

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## New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa raises concerns



In a recent policy paper, the FIAN critically analyses the G8 “New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa” from a human rights perspective. Although the G8 initiative intends to get 50 million people out of poverty by 2022, according to FIAN, serious concerns about the initiative have to be raised. It ignores general human rights principles and does not carry out human risk analysis. Besides, the G8 New Alliance links the opening of agriculture and food markets to foreign investors with fighting hunger and malnutrition. While the G8 initiative enforces its public-private partnership initiative, FIAN calls on G8 governments to stop it, because of its bias towards the corporate sector and the missing states’ obligations to ensure no violations of human rights through private corporations.

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## Resolution on binding human rights standards passes in Human Rights Council



The Treaty Alliance just published a Press Release on the adoption of a resolution initiating a process to develop legally binding human rights standards for transnational corporations. The resolution sponsored by Ecuador and South Africa was adopted yesterday by the United Nations Human Rights Council after fierce negotiations. While the EU and others already expressed that they will not cooperate in the implementation of the resolution, the decision could nevertheless mean a big step towards bringing justice to the victims of ongoing human rights abuses by transnational corporations.

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## IMF raises pressure for global tax reform



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday released a new policy paper “Spillovers in International Corporate Taxation”. The paper analyses the effects tax rules can have on other countries' tax systems. These spillovers can result in significant tax losses for developing countries and thereby diminish their ability to realize human rights. The current global tax system allows transnational corporations to reduce their global corporate taxes to almost zero, according to the report. By highlighting the severe shortcomings of the institutional framework for addressing international tax spillovers the IMF urges the international community to step up its reform efforts in global and domestic tax systems.

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## UN Special Rapporteur: Tax policy major determinant in enjoyment of human rights



During the current session of the UN Human Rights Council the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, presented a report by his predecessor Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona concerning fiscal and tax policy, poverty and human rights. The report stresses the role of fiscal and taxation policy as a major determinant in the enjoyment of human rights and makes some recommendations how to make the global tax system more effective, equitable and transparent.

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## SDGs: The disappearing act of the “inequality” goal



**Third World  
Network**

The negotiations of the Open Working Group (OWG) on a draft of goals and targets for the Post-2015 Agenda has reached its final phase at the 12th Session on 16-20 June in New York. Discussions were raised with respect to an inequality goal, which was included as a stand alone goal in the zero draft after the last session of OWG. However, an unofficial release of a new set of goals by the Co-Chairs on 16 June merges poverty reduction and inequality into one combined focus area. Nevertheless, this is of little help to conclude the serious division between developing and developed countries in the inequality discussion.

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## Linking Finance and the Post-2015 Agenda



The negotiations of the Open Working Group (OWG) on a draft of goals and targets for the Post-2015 Agenda has reached its final phase at the 12th Session on 16-20 June in New York. Aldo Caliari, Director of the Rethinking Bretton Woods Project, argues in an article published by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) that financial and monetary reform should be a fundamental part of post-2015 development agenda.

Taking this into consideration, the new agenda was a political opportunity to avoid following the imperfect path of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to include necessary means of implementation. On top of that, Caliari presents thoughts on key areas like financial regulations and mobilization of domestic resources, which could be covered in an action plan that is essential for development finance to work.

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## CSOs criticize closing of 12th OWG session to NGOs



One day after NGO representatives were escorted out of the 12th Session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by security staff, the global women's network Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) together with other partners from Major Groups and Stakeholders wrote an Open Letter to the OWG Co-chairs and all Member States.

The broad alliance of civil society organizations (CSO) critically stated that closing the session to them without providing a clear reason violates the right to participation and limits their capability to distribute information. Besides that, other complications like the exclusion from following the webcast are contrary to the inclusive and open spirit of the OWG.



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