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# GPF Newsletter

July 26, 2013



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## What's new

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### Panel Event: Use of PMSCs by the UN



Lou Pingot, Policy Advisor at GPF, will speak on a panel convened by the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries on Wednesday, 31 July 2013, 10:00-13:00 on the use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) by the United Nations. Lou is a longstanding expert on PMSCs and author of the well received GPF report "Dangerous Partnerships", which has opened an important debate around the UN's use of PMSCs. A wide range of observers and policymakers have expressed concern at the growing role of PMSCs and their lack of accountability. And yet the UN increasingly uses PMSCs for a wide range of services, including armed and unarmed security, risk assessment, security training, logistical support and consultancy.

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### Rethinking the Role of Consumption



Economic growth remains the focus of both policies and societies worldwide. In the meantime, social inequality rises and the ecological destruction of our planet continues to accelerate. We know that things have to change, but struggle to imagine a good life beyond the consumption driven lifestyles we have established for ourselves in. In this new publication *Is Different Really Enough? Thoughts on a New Role for Consumption*, experts from different parts of the world address the question of consumer responsibility in the necessary transformation process towards more sustainable societies and set out to look for new roles for consumption.

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## Video Introduction: Global Fund for Decent Work and Social Protection



SOLIDAR, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Global Network and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors have produced a short video on a proposal for a new Global Fund for Social Protection. The UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, and on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Magdalena Sepulveda, have proposed to set up a fund in order to support the efforts to build viable social protection systems, especially in the poorest countries. The video featuring Olivier De Schutter, gives an introduction to the proposal.

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## Alliance Sud Commentary on the New Swiss Public-Private Guidelines



Nina Schneider from Alliance Sud, the Swiss Alliance of Development Organizations, draws attention to the new guidelines of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for public-private development partnerships (PPDPs). The guidelines were published in early 2013 and they aim at regulating the partnerships more tightly.

Alliance Sud reports that one central problem has been decentralized structures of the Swiss agency resulting in lack of control over the various partnerships. The new guidelines tackle some problematic issues related to PPDPs, but Schneider points out that for example local ownership of the development projects and the participation of local actors are not mentioned.

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## TJN responds to OECD Action Plan on corporate tax avoidance



On July 19, 2013, the OECD published a long awaited so-called Action Plan with recommendations to tackle corporate tax avoidance. Tax Justice Network, an international expert network working on issues around tax evasion and avoidance, reacted to this Action Plan with their own take on what needs to be done about transnational corporations paying little or no taxes in countries where they operate.

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## Rich Countries Not Living Up to Their Climate Change Promises



Alliance Sud, a coalition of Swiss development NGOs, criticizes industrialized countries for not living up to the promises made at the Cancún climate conference in 2010. While rich countries had pledged additional funding to support developing countries, they have resorted to cosmetic tactics instead. Thus, Alliance Sud points out that Switzerland is trying to declare private financing as public contributions. Yet, more innovative public finance mechanisms would be needed instead. This process could endanger a global climate change agreement.

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## Land Grabbing Is A European Problem Too



Transnational Institute, the European Coordination Via Campesina and the Hands off the Land network have published a joint report on the scale of land grabbing within Europe. Contrary to conventional wisdom, they argue that land grabbing is not only prevalent in Africa and Latin America, but is happening increasingly in Europe, and in particularly rapid fashion in Eastern Europe. The losers have been smallholder farmers, who have been replaced by investors both foreign and domestic. Therefore, the report calls for a transnational political struggle in order to combat this process.

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## German Drone Campaign criticizes UN plans to use UAV



In a press release, the German NGO "Information Centre on Militarization" (IMI) criticizes the decision of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to begin deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in UN missions. IMI is a member organization of the German Drone Campaign "against the deployment of UAV technology used for military, surveillance and oppressive purposes".

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## Is the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition suitable for combating poverty?



A new policy paper published by the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development argues that the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa will not be able to combat hunger and food insecurity in Africa. On the contrary, the paper, to which Global Policy Forum contributed, points out that the New Alliance is mainly focused on providing multinationals with opportunities to reap profits through the creation of environments conducive to investment. Thus, the paper calls for either a radical reform of the New Alliance or its abolishment.

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## ANND: Egypt Opens New Horizons for Democracy



Will Arab leaders learn the lessons by their people demanding their democratic rights, asks Ziad Abdel Samad, the Executive Director of Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND). ANND is a regional network of 23 NGOs working to strengthen the civil society, democracy, human rights and sustainable development in the 12 Arab countries they work in. Samad reflects on the current situation in Egypt and the defects in the existing governance mechanisms in the Arab region that have become visible in the political processes after the Arab Spring.

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## Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement Could Hurt Developing Countries



Martin Khor, director of South Centre, explains how the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement could potentially disadvantage participating developing countries. He points out that local producers will have to compete with large foreign businesses. Moreover, the TPPA will give foreign companies more opportunities to sue governments, while also raising the prices of medicines.



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