



What's new

G20/OECD plans for global tax reform dominated by corporate interests



On May 2nd Oxfam released the report 'Business among Friends' critically assessing the OECD-led 'Action Plan on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting' (BEPS). The negative implications of tax evasion and profit shifting for development are increasingly acknowledged among political leaders and international organizations. The amount that governments in the Global South lose annually due to illicit financial transfers but also legal means of tax evasion easily outnumbers the amount they receive in form of Official Development Aid (ODA). Nevertheless, developing countries are not involved in the process of reforming the global tax system, according to the authors. Instead, business interests dominate the negotiations. As a result, OECD-members and multinational corporations will likely benefit from BEPS at the expense of developing countries.

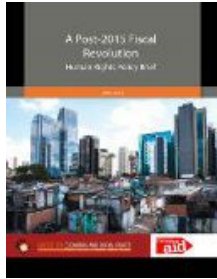
Big Data puts farmers on alert



A new article, published in Rural21 - the International Journal for Rural Development, deals with new data information systems introduced by seed companies Monsanto and DuPont in the USA. Author Mike Gardner indicates that American farmers are on alert due to new data services. It is not just that the new technology collects and stores information from farmers, but it also uploads data to seed providers. Seed giants like Monsanto can use these data for analyzing and optimizing their planting. However, according to the American

Farm Bureau Federation this may lead to inter alia increasing competition between farmers and higher seed prices, as well as greater benefits for seed companies.

New briefing demands 'fiscal revolution' to finance sustainable development



As the negotiation of the post-2015 development agenda further evolves from broad ideas to more and more specific targets, the question of how to sufficiently finance sustainable development becomes increasingly important. Prior to the 11th session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals between May 5 and May 9 organizations Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and Christian Aid published a policy briefing tackling exactly this issue. In order to ensure sufficient, equitable and accountable financing for sustainable development the authors demand a 'fiscal revolution' based on three dimensions of fiscal policy, namely complementary domestic and global fiscal commitments, socioeconomic equality within and between countries as well as transparency, participation and public oversight of domestic and global tax and fiscal decision-making. Additionally, the report proposes a set of six specific targets to be embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Civil Society urges OWG to foster human rights in post-2015 development agenda



A broad alliance of civil society organizations published a joint statement critically assessing the inclusion of human rights in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda prior to the session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals from May 5 to May 9. The CSOs applaud the universality of a working document of the OWG proposing fifteen focus areas and specific targets for possible SDGs, which reflect the current state of negotiations within the OWG. On the other hand, the supporters of the CSO statement criticize a number of shortcomings: although economic and social rights were represented in several goals and focus areas they were not recognized as human rights in themselves. Furthermore, the document lacked clear provisions to ensure that the private sector and international financial institutions remain accountable and fully respect human rights and the environment. Though, some progress may be achieved, the OWG needs to step up its efforts to fully incorporate human rights into the post-2015 development agenda according to the statement.

Call for Women's Right to Safe Abortion in Post-2015 Agenda



The International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion calls for an inclusion of the right to safe abortion in the post-2015 agenda. The International Campaign is a coalition of organizations and networks, which aims to improve women's human right to safe and legal abortion. As laid down in its statement women should be able to make their own decisions, without facing degrading treatment, discrimination or risks to their health or lives.

Hold the powerful to account



On May 1, 2014 Roberto Bissio, Social Watch Coordinator, participated in the UN General Assembly's Dialogue "Elements for a Monitoring and Accountability Framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda". He highlighted that accountability is only meaningful if the powerful can be held to account. He said that it is up to citizens to hold their own governments accountable. Corporations have to be made accountable not only to their owners and consumers but to their workers and to the people that are affected by their operations. Corporate accountability requires rules set by governments, respect for human rights and environmental due diligence as well as reporting, ensuring access by those negatively affected to an effective remedy, tax transparency, proper land appropriation rules, etc.

Human rights organizations focus on financing for development negotiations

rightingfinance At the Special High-Level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), held in New York on April 14-15, 2014, governments discussed about features of new development goals which will replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Commitments to financing the new goals are expected to play an important role in those negotiations. In this regard, human rights organizations argue that human rights should inform commitments to finance the new development agenda.

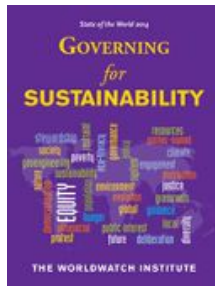
Inquiry: New investigation into the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld



The Hammarskjöld Commission, a voluntary body of four international jurists, deals with circumstances of the tragic death of the former UN chief Dag Hammarskjöld. In September 1961 the Secretary-General died with all other passengers in a plane crash. Until today inquiries into the crash did not find specific causes. The Hammarskjöld Commission's report, published in September 2013, selects new evidence which shows that the aircraft may have been shot down

on the way to peace negotiations in what is now Zambia. According to the report the new findings now available would justify that the UN reopens its inquiry.

State of the World 2014: Governing for Sustainability



The Worldwatch Institute is releasing the 2014 edition of its “State of the World” series. “Governing for Sustainability” examines how action—on climate, species loss, inequity, and other sustainability crises—is being driven by local, people’s, women’s, and grassroots movements around the world, often in opposition to the agendas pursued by governments and big corporations. The book’s contributors analyze a variety of trends and proposals, including regional and local climate initiatives, the rise of benefit corporations and worker-owned firms, the need for energy democracy, the Internet’s impact on sustainability, and the importance of eco-literacy. The book features an abridged version of GPF’s report on corporate influence in the Post-2015 Agenda.

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