



What's new

Spain's austerity criticized again in UN human rights review



The Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) reports about Spain's failure to protect economic and social rights in times of economic crisis, which has come under stern criticism from other states at the country's recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council. One after another, Spain's peers in the community of nations voiced their concern over the erosion of economic and social rights after four years of ill-conceived austerity measures. The gravity of the deprivations evidenced in information provided by CESR and its national allies resulted in an unprecedented level of attention to economic and social rights concerns at the 21st session of the UPR in Geneva on 21 January.

CSOs respond to proposed elements of Financing for Development Agenda



A very broad international group of Civil Society Organizations has published a critical response to a paper outlining elements of a Financing for Development (FfD) Agenda by the co-chairs of the preparatory process of the upcoming 3rd FfD Conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Overall, the CSOs say, the document provides a good starting point for the first drafting sessions and includes most (but not all) of the policy proposals necessary to ensure a successful outcome of the Addis Ababa conference. However, the activists are concerned that the Elements paper does not follow the

outcomes of previous FfD conferences, which raises several problems in terms of whose interests will be heard and what issues will be debated. Also, the lack of explicit language on the "global partnership for development" and the duties of states under the Human Rights and Millennium Declarations are highlighted.

Joint Statement of the Chairpersons of UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies on Post-2015 Agenda



In a Joint Statement released by OHCHR, the Chairpersons of the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies give their opinion on the post-2015 development agenda and call for accountability to be strengthened. Their call was issued as UN Member States started discussions to finalize the draft set of 17 sustainable development goals which will be put forward for adoption by heads of state at a UN summit in New York in September 2015. The statement also highlights the important role to be played by the private sector in achieving the SDGs, and the importance of ensuring private sector accountability.

Reviewing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and Partnerships



In September 2015, the heads of state and government of the United Nations (UN) Member States are scheduled to decide on the Post-2015 agenda. This is to include not only a list of universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also a mechanism for monitoring and review. What would the review mechanism have to look like to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development?

Marianne Beisheim, researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) examines the debate taking place over the review process, highlights the positions of selected key actors, discusses criteria for designing a review, and applies these to analyze and assess existing review systems. Finally, she develops specific proposals for a universal, state-led, participatory, multi-level "Commit and Review" process that could serve as a central component of the follow-up process for the Post-2015 goals.

CSO submission to the UN General Assembly's new debt committee



Following the global financial crisis, low-, middle- and high-income countries are seeing increased levels of sovereign debt. Today, no international mechanism exists to deal comprehensively and effectively with sovereign debt problems. This submission to the UN ad hoc committee on debt that was prepared and endorsed by 27 Civil Society Organizations, calls for an international and independent debt workout mechanism.

Wealth: Having It All and Wanting More



Global wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small wealthy elite. These wealthy individuals have generated and sustained their vast riches through their interests and activities in a few important economic sectors, including finance and insurance and pharmaceuticals and healthcare. Companies from these sectors spend millions of dollars every year on lobbying to create a policy environment that protects and enhances their interests further. The most prolific lobbying activities in the US are on budget and tax issues; public resources that should be directed to benefit the whole population, rather than reflect the interests of powerful lobbyists. This briefing explains Oxfam's methodology and data sources and updates key inequality statistics, such as Oxfam's frequently cited fact in 2014: '85 billionaires have the same wealth as the bottom half of the world's population.'

Confronting Development: A Critical Assessment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals




In a new report released by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office, Barbara Adams and Kathryn Tobin give their take on the post-2015 process and suggest how various actors can intervene to shape proposed new goals. The Sustainable Development Goals will determine the global development agenda for years to come. They will affect not only the UN's Secretariat, funds and programmes but each member state as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector around the world. If processes converge to create a universal and effective agenda, which holds governments and others to account, the UN would reassert itself for addressing the many conflicts that cannot be resolved by individual countries. Such an accomplishment would have implications for a whole spectrum of issues, and it is not too late for the United Nations, member states, and international civil society to make this happen.

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