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# GPF Newsletter

March 13, 2015



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## Global Policy Watch

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### The 2015 Declaration: Meeting great expectations (maybe)



The most recent step in the post-2015 negotiations was the 17-20 February debate in New York on the Declaration, meant to be the framework political statement. Despite strong emphasis on transformation and high aspiration, traditional lines were drawn between (mostly) Northern and Southern positions.

*by Barbara Adams, Gretchen Luchsinger*

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### Statistics for the SDGs: the devil is in the indicators

The UN Statistical Commission concluded its meeting in New York last March 6 without agreeing on a list of indicators to measure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The body is composed of 24 governments and it oversees the work of the UN statistical Division, the most important global agency on world indicators, in charge, among other things of defining how GDP is conceptualized and counted.

*by Roberto Bissio, Social Watch*

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## **Development: Post-2015 declaration – one step forward, two steps back? – Pt. I**

As the discussion on the Declaration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda gets underway, differences between developing and developed countries that are likely to loom over the rest of the Post-2015 negotiations became clearer.

*by Ranja Sengupta and Mirza Alas, Third World Network*

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## **Development: Post-2015 declaration – one step forward, two steps back? – Pt. II**

The United Nations negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York saw Member States inching towards a political Declaration amidst considerable differences.

The Declaration is to lay the broader framework on which the more specific elements of the Agenda will rest in a separate outcome document. These will be adopted at the UN Summit on 25-27 September titled "Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda".

*by Ranja Sengupta, Third World Network*

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## **Christian Aid and CESR working paper: Indicators for a post-2015 'fiscal revolution'**

The United Nations negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York saw Member States inching towards a political Declaration amidst considerable differences.

The Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and Christian Aid have published an interesting paper on a set of preliminary global indicators for the SDGs, which was prepared for discussion by the UN Statistics Commission at its meeting this week.

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## **Development: South needs policy space to meet post-2015 agenda**

Developing countries need sufficient policy space in particular in the areas of trade, finance and industrial development if they are to meet the goals of the post-2015 development agenda, according to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In its latest Policy Brief (No. 31 of February 2015), UNCTAD said that buoyant demand at the global level and effective industrial policy at the national level have been key ingredients of successful development in recent decades.

*by Kanaga Raja, SUNS*

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## Can taxation be the answer?

Over the past twenty years we have heard constantly that the world has the resources to address global development challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation, diseases and inequalities. However, despite the resources “being there” human development plans have been consistently underfunded.

Clearly, existing “trickle-down” and redistribution mechanisms are not being effective and will be woefully inadequate to fund the implementation of the universal SDGs agenda.

*by Marina Ponti, Social Watch*

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## Is the UN fully equipped to respond to the needs of a changing world and of a new universal agenda?

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations discussed on 23-25 February the Secretary General report on the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review requested by the General Assembly. Under a cryptic title, the meeting addressed core issues, such as the UN development system’s role (and its relevance) in the post 2015 agenda.

*by Marina Ponti, Social Watch*

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## Upcoming events

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### GPF Workshops at the World Social Forum, Tunis March 24-28, 2015

#### **Goals for the Rich – Indispensable for a Universal Post-2015 Agenda**

Jointly organized with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Arab NGO Network for Development, Social Watch, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Third World Network

Wednesday, March 25, 08:30-11:00

Université de Tunis El Manar, Faculté de droits, salle de lecture n°1

“Post-2015” is currently right in the centre of the development discourse. The UN, governments, civil society organizations and researchers are discussing what will come after the MDGs. But the “Post-2015 Agenda” must be much more than just an updated list of MDGs.

The Post-2015 process offers the opportunity to respond to changing global realities – be it the shift in geopolitical and economic power

relations, or urgent global problems, such as accelerating global warming, growing inequalities, or the expansion of the global shadow financial system.

Conventional development concepts and their related goals and strategies do not provide adequate answers to these changing conditions and global problems.

That is why we need a truly universal Post-2015 Agenda that defines particularly the goals, responsibilities and commitments of rich countries. In order to overcome poverty, inequality and environmental degradation, the Post-2015 Agenda must become an “Agenda for the rich” and must include Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the rich.

The new paper of the Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives discusses how the responsibilities of the rich should be reflected in Post-2015 Agenda and its goals and targets. At the workshop we will present and discuss its key findings.

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### **Joining the global movement for a Treaty on human rights and corporate activity – An information and strategy session by the Treaty Alliance**

CCFD-Terre Solidaire/Forum citoyen pour la RSE, CIDSE, Franciscans International, FIDH, Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power, Polaris Institute, Transnational Institute (These include members of the “Treaty Alliance”)

Wednesday, 25 March, 15:00-17:30  
Université de Tunis El Manar, R 107

Civil society organizations and social movements around the world struggling against corporate abuse achieved a first victory in June last year when the UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 26/9, establishing an Intergovernmental Working Group whose the mandate shall be to elaborate an international legally-binding instrument to regulate the activities of business enterprises. However, there remain important challenges to ensure that a robust treaty ensuring genuine corporate accountability and access to justice will be drafted in a participatory and transparent manner. Indeed, corporate-related abuse continues, access to remedies for victims of corporate crimes remains blatantly insufficient, and in the rush for land and natural resources, social movements and human rights defenders denouncing corporate abuse face increased repression and harassment. Civil society, social movements and affected communities' mobilization is instrumental in the struggle to put people and the planet before profits. In this context, the Treaty Alliance, a coalition of more than 600 NGOs and 400 individuals across the globe seeking corporate accountability and social and environmental justice, hosts an information and strategy workshop directed at all those interested in joining the struggle for a binding Treaty regulating corporate activity.

The aim of this workshop is to inform about the process, challenges and opportunities in the treaty development, and to enable social movements and affected communities to take an active part in the struggle for a binding treaty on human rights and corporate activity. This event will enable to share experiences, create synergies and ultimately to build strategic alliances. Participants will be encouraged to develop activities for mobilisation in their respective regions, to

participate in advocacy around the process and content of the treaty discussions, and to remain engaged with the Treaty Alliance.

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### **Stopping human and labor rights abuses by corporations – New developments in international and national regulation**

Jointly organized with CCFD-Terre Solidaire/Forum citoyen pour la RSE, CIDSE, Franciscans International, FIDH, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Friends of the Earth Europe, Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power, Polaris Institute, Transnational Institute

Thursday, March 26, 2015, 15:00-17:30

Université de Tunis El Manar, Faculté de droits, salle de lecture n°1

Civil society organizations and social movements around the world are drawing attention to increasing situations of human and labor rights violations by business. There are important developments in corporate regulation both at international level and at national and regional levels. Following strong collective advocacy efforts by civil society within the “Treaty Alliance” for its establishment, the new United Nations inter-governmental working group on an international legally-binding instrument on business & human rights will hold its first meeting in July 2015. And proposals for national legislation requiring mandatory human rights due diligence by multinational companies have recently made important advances in some countries.

The aim of this workshop is to bring together a broad range of actors engaged against business impunity in order to raise awareness, share experiences, and inform strategies and collective actions. What obstacles do affected communities face in preventing and responding to human and labor rights abuses by powerful corporations (presentation of case studies)? What are current national and regional initiatives in order to promote corporate human rights due diligence obligations and access to justice? How could an international binding treaty help overcome obstacles, what are the next steps in this process, and how can organizations engage?

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### **Promoting Tax Justice by Strengthening Global Tax Governance**

Jointly organized with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Arab NGO Network for Development, Global Alliance for Tax Justice, CIDSE, Eurodad, CNCD-11.11.11, MISEREOR, Oxfam, Public Services International, Action Aid and Christian Aid

Friday, March 27, 2015, 08:30-11:00

Université de Tunis El Manar, Faculté de droits, salle de lecture n°1

International cooperation in tax matters has intensified in the last few years. Processes under the anti-BEPS framework at the OECD/G20 are proof of that. Nevertheless, countries in the global South that are suffering from the results of tax evasion and avoidance the most are still to a great deal marginalized and excluded from this. In some cases, countries in the global South are even suffering from a non-conducive global environment that limits their policy space in tax matters. For the poor, this means losing vast amounts of resources, where they could

have been allocated to sustainable development. With the Financing for Development Conference coming up in July, now is the time to set the course towards fighting tax avoidance and evasion by the rich and powerful corporations. The UN Secretary General calls for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on tax cooperation under the auspices of the UN. Would such a committee foster dialogue and cooperation without marginalizing a majority of governments and people? Will this be a meaningful space outside the exclusive clubs of the OECD? The UN appears to be the natural place for this. But even more visionary solutions are conceivable.

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## What's new

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### Expert Commission Responds to One-Sided Tax Debate

Responding to widespread anger about corporate tax avoidance, the impacts of such avoidance on inequality and poverty, and concerns that current tax reform processes are inadequate, a new nonpartisan body, the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT), has been established to propose reforms from the perspective of the public interest. ICRICT was initiated by a broad coalition that includes Action Aid, Alliance-Sud, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, Christian Aid, the Council for Global Unions, the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, Oxfam, Public Services International, Tax Justice Network and the World Council of Churches and is supported by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

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### NGOs remind Juncker of effective tax policies



Several European NGOs are urging Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, to step up the ambition level for a comprehensive tax reform package for the EU. Several scandals have recently shaken the continent and shown that EU members are damaging themselves and one another with unfair and divisive tax policies. Furthermore, EU policies and positions are making it difficult for countries in the Global South to raise urgently needed resources to fund the realization of human rights. To

this end, the organizations are calling for a set of concrete policy reforms that could be enacted and supported by the EU.

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### The systematic destruction of cultural heritage at the hands of the Islamic State



A new article by Marina Lostal on the recent destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq. Iraqi officials have reported that, last Saturday 7 of March, the Islamic State destroyed Hatra, a 2,000-year-old fortified city around 100 km south-west of Mosul. The Islamic State is believed to have bulldozed the site and looted the

cultural artifacts housed inside, including gold and silver objects. The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has declared that “[t]he destruction of Hatra marks a turning point in the appalling strategy of cultural cleansing underway in Iraq.”

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## Indicators for a post-2015 'fiscal revolution'



The new working paper by Christian Aid and the Center for Economic and Social Rights responds to the list of preliminary indicators that the the United Nations Statistical Commission is considering. Their analysis and concrete proposals are based on the premise that a human rights-aligned fiscal data revolution is essential to expose the hidden injustices buried in the way resource-related policies are conducted, and who truly benefits from them.

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## DAWN briefing on Financing for Development (FfD)



On January 28-30, 2015, members of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) attended the First Drafting Session for the outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD3) at the United Nations Headquarters. As a result, a policy paper by Nicole Bidegain reviews the main elements of the FfD process in order to set current debates in context, identify conflict areas between the different blocks of countries, and introduce some of the recommendations DAWN has been promoting with the purpose of reorienting global economic governance and development patterns towards economic, ecological, and gender justice. It is available in English and Spanish.

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## UN Security Council banning all trade with Syrian antiquities



A new article by Marina Lostal about the UN Security Council banning all trade with Syrian antiquities. On 12 February 2015 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2199 (2015) banning all trade with Syrian antiquities removed from the country since 15 March 2011 and reaffirming the same prohibition concerning Iraqi cultural objects illegally exported since 6 August 1990.

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## Unhappy Meal: €1 Billion in Tax Avoidance on the Menu at McDonald's



A new report "Unhappy Meal: €1 Billion in Tax Avoidance on the Menu at McDonald's" by EFFAT, EPSU, SEIU and War on Want outlines in detail what the authors call tax avoidance strategies adopted by McDonald's and their tax impact both throughout Europe and in major markets like France, Italy, Spain and the U.K. The practice, the coalition says, essentially consisted of moving the European headquarters from the UK to Switzerland as well as using intra-group royalty payments and channeling them into a tiny Luxembourg based subsidiary with a Swiss branch. Between 2009 and 2013, the Luxembourg-based structure, which employs 13 people, registered a cumulative revenue of €3,7 billion, on which it reported a meager €16 million in tax.


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