



Global Policy Watch | What's new

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World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016

The United Nations has offered its annual assessment of prospects for 2016 in its World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report. It opened with: “The world economy stumbled in 2015, amid weak aggregate demand, falling commodity prices and increasing financial market volatility in major economies.” In addressing the impact of the downward pressure on economies, UN ASG Lenni Montiel, explained that many countries, “specifically LDCs which rely on commodity exports, will be unable to sustain public spending on health, education, and climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.” With LDCs reliant on the commodity export – most averaging 16% of GDP from the commodity industry – LDCs will not reach sustainable development goal 8, target 8.1, of 7% economic growth per year in GDP. (See WESP 2016, Box I.1 for more detailed outline of economic prospects for LDCs.)

Where next for the United Nations Development System?

By Barbara Adams and Sarah Dayringer

The UN has released the advance unedited version of its report of the UN Development System (UNDS), lightly entitled the “Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review [QCPR] of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.” The UNDS comprises the activities of some 30 agencies – coordinated by the UN Development Group – and the intergovernmental bodies that provide guidance and oversight, such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its commissions. This report is the key input for the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment to be held at the UNHQ on 22-24 February 2016.

Is business action on climate change believable?

by John Probert

One of a series of Guardian Members' events, hosted by Guardian Sustainable Business in partnership with Nordea Responsible Investments, the focus of this discussion, facilitated by a Guardian environmental journalist Karl Mathieson, was nominally on the "plethora of pledges from major businesses... in the lead-up to the UN talks".

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What's new

Gated Development - is the Gates Foundation always a force for good?



A new report by Global Justice Now demonstrates that the trend to involve business in addressing poverty and inequality is central to the priorities and funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The authors argue that this is far from a neutral charitable strategy but instead an ideological commitment to promote neoliberal economic policies and corporate globalization. Big business is directly benefitting, in particular in the fields of agriculture and health, as a result of the foundation's activities, despite evidence to show that business solutions are not the most

effective.

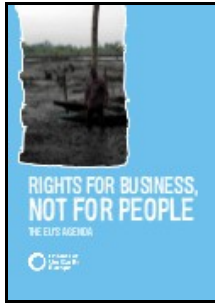
Transatlantic regulatory cooperation in TTIP – a business-driven lobby project



A new report by Corporate Europe Observatory and LobbyControl examines the origins and impacts of TTIP's proposals for regulatory cooperation and shows that the process has been dominated by big business right from the start. This part of the talks involves dismantling existing "regulatory barriers" and preventing new ones from emerging with public interest regulations having to go through lengthy procedures, including vetting by business for possible impacts on trade. The TTIP talks cover a wide range of policy areas from chemicals regulations to

employment policy, data protection to agriculture and are thus the biggest focal point for lobbying efforts right now in Brussels.

Rights for Business, not for People: the EU's Agenda




A new paper by Friends of the Earth Europe explains how the European Union is aggressively pursuing special rights for businesses whilst hampering efforts to hold corporations responsible for the human rights violations they commit. The European Commission and the EU member states have been pushing for special rights for European investors whose operations are internationally enforced by secretive, business-friendly tribunals in trade agreements such as the EU-US TTIP deal. Yet, the European countries and the European Commission are derailing attempts to develop a legally binding treaty at the UN level which would give citizens the opportunity to get access to justice and defend their human rights when these are being violated by corporations.

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