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# GPF Annual Report 2017



ANNUAL REPORT



## GPF Annual Report 2017

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# I. Overview

Global Policy Forum (GPF) is an independent policy watchdog that monitors the activities of the United Nations (UN). It scrutinizes global policymaking and promotes accountability and citizen participation in decisions related to social justice, sustainability, peace and security, human rights and international law.

GPF is convinced that active citizen participation is needed to defend and strengthen multilateralism and international governance institutions. While far from perfect, the human rights-based global governance system is the best defense against rising xenophobic, authoritarian and unilateralist trends that threaten peace, development and sustainability.

GPF monitors issues and processes, undertakes original research and maintains a dynamic communications programme that includes publications, newsletters, presentations, the Internet, and social media. It plays an active role in civil society networks and advocacy interest groups. GPF organizes meetings and conferences; publishes original research in reports and policy papers; and participates in policy dialogues and expert group meetings that address the implications of the changing world on multilateral principles, values and commitments.

## Basic facts

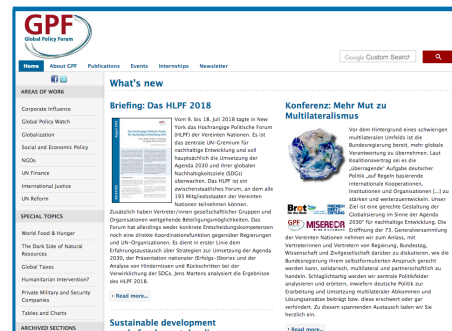
GPF was founded in New York in December 1993 by a group of progressive scholars and activists. GPF is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, with consultative status at the UN. It maintains an office at UN headquarters in New York. In September 2004, Global Policy Forum Europe (GPF Europe) was founded as the partner-organization of GPF. GPF Europe is registered as a not-for-profit organization in Germany. Its office is in Bonn, Germany.

## Programs

GPF uses a holistic approach, linking social with economic, financial, and environmental issues, peace and security, human rights and gender equity. GPF's and GPF Europe's programmes currently focus on sustainable development, human rights, financing for development and tax justice, corporate accountability and the influence and power of transnational corporations, UN reform and global governance. It follows through on its many programme commitments through two projects in which it plays a leadership role: Global Policy Watch (GPW), and the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## GPF Website

The GPF website ([www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org)) is its primary communications vehicle. With more than 30,000 documents, the GPF website is one of the most comprehensive independent sources for information on international politics worldwide. In 2017, 66 contributions were added to the site on the various GPF themes and these were visited 170,256 times. All in all, [www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org) was visited ca. 2 million times by about 1.15 million users in 2017.



## Networking

GPF and GPF Europe play an active role in international civil society networks and coalitions, which include Social Watch, the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, and the Treaty Alliance.<sup>1</sup> GPF corresponds and engages with many civil society organizations (CSOs), networks and foundations. Barbara Adams represents GPF on Social Watch's international coordinating committee.

## Partners and supporters of GPF and GPF Europe

A centerpiece of GPF's work has been its participation in the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives (now called the "Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"), which GPF founded in 2010 in collaboration with a number of international NGOs and networks. Central themes and challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) were discussed at numerous meetings and events. One result was the 2016 and 2017 reports: "Spotlight on Sustainable Development" (Spotlight Reports).

GPF activities are implemented in close cooperation with civil society organizations and networks. Active partners and supporters of GPF in 2017 include::



<sup>1</sup> An alliance of committed networks and campaign groups around the world are collectively organizing advocacy activities to develop a binding international instrument to address human rights abuses committed by transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The groups involved include: CETIM, CIDSE, Dismantle Corporate Power Campaign, ESCR-Net, FIAN, FIDH, Franciscans International, Friends of the Earth International, IBFAN-GIFA, Indonesia Global Justice, International Commission of Jurists, Legal Resources Center, PAN AP, Transnational Institute, TUCA.

## II. Programme areas 2017

The Global Policy Forum's work in 2017 continued to focus on the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Means of Implementation (MoI) of the SDGs. In addition, GPF participated actively in the discussions on the reform of the UN development system and on how to re-position it so it can fulfil the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda.

### 1. Global Policy Watch

One of GPF's major activities in 2017 was its participation in the Global Policy Watch (GPW) project, which it jointly implemented with ITEM/Social Watch. The overall objective of the project has been to promote accountability and empower citizens in the deliberations and implementation of the full scope of the 2030 Agenda.

During 2017 Global Policy Watch (GPW) has continued to be a valuable resource on United Nations and inter-governmental processes at UN headquarters. It has focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Financing for Development, and the SDGs. With a new Secretary-General (S-G), Antonio Guterres, at the helm in 2017, the UN has initiated wide-ranging reform measures, building on the 2030 Agenda. GPF and GPW have been the primary source of information on these developments for public interest groups, and a major channel for civil society input into the complex mandates and processes.

Working in the Global Policy Watch, GPF participated in the Financing for Development Follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the UN Statistical Commission's work with the Inter-Agency Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs) on global indicators for the SDGs. Additionally, GPF participated in the Commission on the Status of Women and advocated for the use of critical human rights tools, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) and its link to the 2030 Agenda. GPF has continued to organize civil society input into, and participated actively in, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'s operational activities for the development segment, and informal discussions on repositioning the UN development system. This included participating in expert group meetings and UN panels discussing reform proposals.

GPF aims to help bridge the gap between substantive public interest in sustainable development and civil societies' meaningful participation, as well as to enhance knowledge-sharing between their national and global efforts. This involves combining research, monitoring, advocacy, and networking. Global Policy Watch's contribution to the information flow, monitoring, and civil society advocacy around the 2030 Agenda will be a pivotal part of addressing future and unforeseen challenges to its implementation.



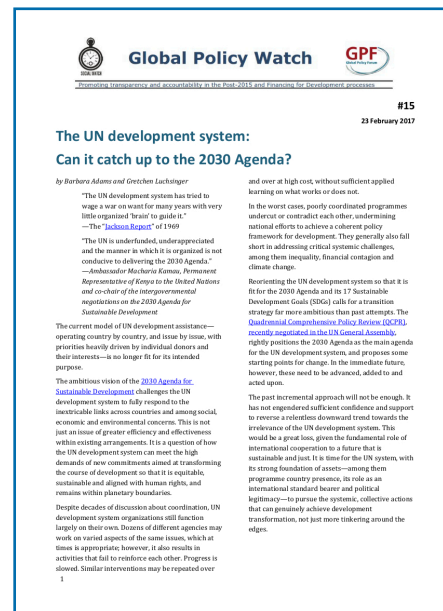
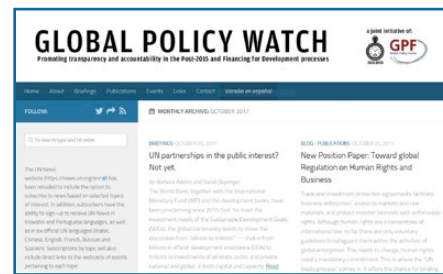
**Website:** The role of the website ([www.globalpolicywatch.org](http://www.globalpolicywatch.org)) is to monitor these project developments and provide the backbone for its information activities. The site features Global Policy Watch event priorities, blogs, and briefings on discussions happening inside the UN, primarily at the UN Headquarters in New York. The GPW homepage features the latest publications and Twitter feed, GPW highlights reel, and – recently added – alerts or press releases, which proved very successful during the 2017 HLPF.

GPW regularly publishes content that addresses key issues and alerts on government and UN positions on emerging and complex issues, such as GPW briefing #19: “[Data is the new gold – development players mine a new seam](#)”, published in November 2017.

As part of its work for the Global Policy Watch GPF published five briefing papers in 2017 that provided an in-depth analysis and snapshot of vital topics related to United Nations processes in New York. These were distributed at relevant meetings, through Twitter and frequently reproduced in the mailing lists of Social Watch, Global Policy Forum and other relevant/subject-specific mailing lists. They reached several thousand recipients. Their content was regularly quoted during negotiations by both Member States and civil society. All briefings are published in English, and the briefing on G20 is also available in German: “[Die G20 und die Agenda 2030](#)”, published in July 2017. The GPW Twitter account (@gpolicywatch) has become a reliable source of information and continues to be the main landing page for those who need trustworthy and real-time updates during important negotiations in New York.

For the GPW, GPF organized – in cooperation with various partners – a number of events related to the 2030 Agenda and its implementation:

- » [Side event, in preparation for the 2017 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development segment: “The 2030 Agenda and the UN development system - where are we in the process?”](#) (27 February 2017 at the Baha’i International Community in New York).
- » [Expert Group Meeting: “Strategies to achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls through the Gender- responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”](#), Barbara Adams was a panelist for Panel Discussion 8: “Ensuring institutional arrangements and financing to support the integrated implementation of the SDGs” (30–31 May 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York).
- » [Side event during the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development: “SDG-implementation: How are governments doing their part? The experience of Civil Society shadow \(or spotlight\) reporting. How it is key for meaningful participation and accountability”](#) (18 July 2017 at the Baha’i International Community in New York).
- » [International Strategy and Networking Workshop: “Strengthening Public Policies for the 2030 Agenda”](#). A three-day strategy workshop was organized in Beirut, Lebanon, in cooperation with the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) to open a space for civil society to come together and strategize about their role in implementing and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda (30 November – 2 December 2017 in Beirut).



## UN reform and repositioning the UN development system 2017

The 2030 Agenda's ambitious vision demands new commitments aimed at comprehensively transforming the United Nations. The S-G and his team are carrying out reform efforts under the umbrella of his "prevention agenda", targeting the peace and security architecture, repositioning the United Nations development system (UNDS), and reforming the management of the UN system. In particular, GPW has taken part in advocacy activities and published briefings concerning the development reform track.

This year the S-G set in motion his mandate from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) to "re-calibrate and enhance other critical United Nations skill sets to match the needs of the 2030 Agenda". This is not just an issue of greater efficiency and effectiveness within existing arrangements, but of how to transform the way the UN development system functions so that it is fully fit for the purpose of achieving the 2030 Agenda.

This is reflected in February's Global Policy Watch briefing #15, "The UN development system: Can it catch up to the 2030 Agenda?", which suggests that the Deputy Secretary-General (DS-G), in charge of the S-G's management reform and development reform tracks, should relook at partnerships across the UN development system, in line with a principle-based approach and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

## Expertise on Partnership Arrangements 2017

Member States, the UN and the new S-G have been active in promoting partnerships as a key means of implementing the sustainable development agenda, but their current approach fails to assess the effectiveness or commitment to UN norms and standards. Global Policy Watch has been active and effective in deepening the analysis and drawing attention to the role of partnerships in achieving this.

The UN General Assembly partnership resolution is the main intergovernmental framework in place to govern non-State partnerships and to hold them to account, yet it lacks robust reporting and implementation. Additionally, the UN Global Compact's 10 principles, emphasized in the 2015 resolution, pre-date and are inadequate for the 2030 Agenda.

Since its latest iteration: "Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners", two additional key UN processes on how best to govern partnerships have entered the debate.

One is the 2016 QCPR resolution, in which the S-G initiated "the creation of a draft set of guidelines intended to govern management of partnerships".

The other is the Human Rights Council resolution establishing an open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights (OEIGWG). This seeks "an international legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises" (A/HRC/RES/26/9). It met for its third session 23-27 October 2017, addressing the process and substance for advancing a binding international regulation of global business.

These two additional processes and the 2030 Agenda with which they are aligned, indicate that the UN General Assembly will need to do more to fulfil the "Towards global partnerships" resolution, which Member States decided to "defer, on an exceptional basis", to its seventy-third session.



## 2. Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

GPF continues to play an active role in the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (formerly the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives). The group has worked together for several years to address structural obstacles, such as the fragmentation of policy processes, the lack of policy coherence, and the influence of corporate vested interests. The group summarized its analyses and findings in the comprehensive report “No future without justice” (June 2012).

After the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015, the Reflection Group decided to continue its work and to develop, inter alia, a periodic “Spotlight Report” assessing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the structural obstacles to its realization with a particular focus on the rich and powerful. The GPF’s Core partners in the Reflection Group are Social Watch, Third World Network, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

In July 2017, the Reflection Group launched the second version of its Spotlight report “Reclaiming Policies for the Public”. The GPF New York office contributed a chapter and provided editorial support to its publication. The publication, which is published annually, provides the first independent review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its structural obstacles and challenges with a particular focus on inequalities, responsibility of the rich and powerful, means of implementation and systemic issues. The report channelled the findings of 21 international and regional civil society networks and 24 national civil society coalitions.

Carrying the subtitle “Reclaiming policies for the public. Privatization, partnerships, corporate capture and their impact on sustainability and inequality – assessments and alternatives”, the civil society ‘shadow’ report provides a wide-ranging independent assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. It looks at privatization, partnerships, corporate capture and the impact they have on sustainability and inequality. The report emphasizes that it is time to counter privatization trends, reclaim public policy space and take bold measures to strengthen public finance, regulate or reject Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and weaken the grip of corporate power on people’s lives. These are indispensable prerequisites to achieve the SDGs and to turn the vision of transforming our world, as proclaimed in the title of the 2030 Agenda, into reality.

A global coalition of civil society organizations and trade unions presented this Spotlight report on various occasions, inter alia in New York and Geneva:





- » Side event at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development: “Conversation with authors of the Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2017 Reclaiming policies for the public: Privatization, partnerships, corporate capture and their impact on sustainability and inequality - assessments and alternatives” (18 July 2017 at the Baha’i International Community in New York).

At the event the authors presented key findings and recommendations to participants for discussion. Speakers included Barbara Adams/Jens Martens (Global Policy Forum), Roberto Bissio (Social Watch), Ziad Abdel Samad (Arab NGO Network for Development), Corina Rodríguez Enríquez (DAWN), Chee Yoke Ling (Third World Network), Kate Donald (CESR), Stefano Prato (SID), Sandra Vermuyten (PSI).

- » The Civil Society Reflection Group Launch of the Spotlight report on Sustainable Development Report 2017 “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Reclaiming Policies for the Public” (23 October 2017 at the United Nations Office in Geneva).

The 2017 Spotlight report was launched at the UN in Geneva on 23 October, jointly organized by the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), and Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) – Geneva.

At the event, contributors presented and discussed the report’s key findings and recommendations.

### Partners of the report Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2017



## III. GPF Facts and Figures

### 1. GPF board, staff and finances

GPF operations are governed by a Board in New York, and the operations of GPF Europe by a separate Board in Bonn. GPF and GPF Europe receive most of their annual funding from foundations, partner organizations, membership fees and individual donations.

## The GPF board and staff 2017



*Barbara Adams*  
President

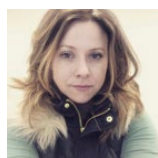


*Marina Lent*  
Vice President

*Abigail Neville*  
Treasurer



*Jens Martens*  
Secretary



Sarah Dayringer  
Programme Officer

Jasmine Elshear  
Programme Assistant

## 2. GPF website and social media

In addition to targeted mailings, GPF's strategic communications include an active presence on Twitter ([@globalpolicy](#)), and the GPF website ([www.globalpolicy.org](#)). With more than 30,000 documents, the GPF website is one of the most comprehensive independent sources for information on international politics worldwide.

## 3. Publications 2017

**Adams, Barbara/ Luchsinger, Gretchen (2017):** The UN development system: Can it catch up to the 2030 Agenda? Global Policy Watch Briefing #15, New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/02/22/undevelopment-system/>

**Adams, Barbara/Judd, Karen (2017):** Closing the Gender Gap: Advancing Equality through International Institutions, Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung, New York.

<http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/closing-the-gender-gap/>

**Adams, Barbara/Judd, Karen (2017):** Women's rights without borders: Combatting inequalities within and among countries is key to women's empowerment. Global Policy Watch Briefing #16, New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/03/14/women-rights-without-borders/>

**Global Policy Forum/DAWN/Third World Network et al. (Ed.) (2017):** Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2017: Reclaiming Policies for the Public – Report by the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/07/14/spotlight-on-sustainable-development-2017-reclaiming-policiesfor-the-public/>

**Martens, Jens (2017):** The G20 and the 2030 Agenda, Global Policy Watch Briefing #17, New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/09/21/theg20-and-the-2030-agenda/>

**Adams, Barbara/Dayringer, Sarah (2017):** UN Partnerships in the Public Interest? Not yet. Global Policy Watch Briefing #18, New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/10/25/unpartnerships-public-interest/>

**Adams, Barbara/Judd, Karen (2017):** Data is the new Gold - development players mine a new seam. Global Policy Watch Briefing #19, New York.

<https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/11/27/datais-the-new-gold/>

## 4. Chronology of GPF activities 2017

16 March	Panel discussion with Barbara Adams at the 61st Commission on the Status of Women side event: “Impact of Corporate Power on Women’s Economic Empowerment”, organized by the Association of Women’s Rights in Development (AWID).
17 March	Panel discussion with Barbara Adams at the 61st Commission on the Status of Women side event: “Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment through Human Rights”, organized by Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung.
24 May	Moderated by Barbara Adams, ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up side-event: “Public-Private Interfaces: New models of interaction between the public and private actors, successes and challenges and their meaning for development finance and the eradication of poverty”, co-organized by the NGO Committee on Social Development and the Civil Society Group on Financing for Development (CSO FfD group).
30-31 May	Panel discussion with Barbara Adams at Expert Group Meeting: “Strategies to achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls through the Gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Barbara Adams was a panellist for Panel Discussion 8: “Ensuring institutional arrangements and financing to support the integrated implementation of the SDGs”.
6-7 June	Jens Martens participated as a speaker at the international conference “Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights” at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Bonn.
19 June	Barbara Adams led the discussion: “The Global Political Landscape and the Role of the United Nations” during the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) 2017 Summer Academy: “A Training for Young International Policy Makers”.
13 July	Barbara Adams moderated the HLPF side-event: “Policy Coherence and Financing for Sustainable Development with 15 Equality” organized by the CSO FfD group.
13 October	Jens Martens participated as speaker in the international conference “The new multipolar global order and the challenge of the SDGs. ÖFSE 50th anniversary” organized by the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE).
20-21 November	Barbara Adams was a discussant at the workshop: “Knowledge and Politics in Setting and Measuring SDGs: An Independent Research Initiative Authors Workshop with Stakeholders Dialogue” co-sponsored by FES and UNDP.

