



Official Newsletter of the Global Social Observatory
Geneva, Switzerland

Fourteenth Issue, November-December 2017

Introduction

The Global Social Observatory is committed to action and collaboration in response to the challenges we face today, alarming as they may be. We must stand up for what is right and to act accordingly. We believe in and respect the benefits that come from the interdependence of all people for a just society in every part of the world. This final newsletter represents a culmination of GSO activities under the leadership of its current Management Committee and its current Executive Director. We look forward to our final activity for 2017 on 19 December. We hope you can join us to celebrate the achievements of the GSO and share ideas about the future for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogue and collaboration.

I. GSO Activities

Perspectives and Challenges

Celebratory Event, 19 December 2017

II. Commentary on International Organizations and NGOs

Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees

Nutrition and Multi-stakeholder Engagement

Partnering for a Triple Billion Target at the World Health Organization

The Rationale for an International Labour and Leisure Organization

III. Upcoming Events

Key upcoming events of interest to the GSO

IV. Who We Are

I. GSO Activities

Perspectives and Challenges

The GSO has been supporting four priorities as follows: (1) the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and (2) efforts to reduce inequality, with an emphasis on gender, along with (3) cross-cutting approaches to global health issues (with an emphasis on non-communicable diseases) and (4) building trust for multi-stakeholder collaboration through the prevention and management of conflicts of interest. The GSO Management Committee has recognized that the broadening arena for partnerships as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a welcome development. It is timely to look beyond the GSO to how partnerships are being launched in various international Geneva settings. This newsletter focuses on developments in five issue areas where the potential for partnering is being realized – the global compacts for migration and refugees, multi-stakeholder engagement on nutrition, partnering for the triple billion at the WHO, innovation at WIPO and the Global Deal at the ILO. We wish we could cover more of the issues of interest (e-commerce, investment, gender, privacy) to GSO Members and Friends - at UNCTAD, the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the WTO, the Internet Governance Forum and so many other settings. The SDG Lab and the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem are also taking off. We encourage our readers to explore the websites of these organizations, check the upcoming events section and embrace the opportunities for inclusiveness in the search for solutions and policy coherence.

[TOP](#)

Celebratory Event, 19 December 2017

Since its founding in 2004, the GSO has addressed a multi-sectoral approach to social issues, including in the areas of the world of work and global health. Our first objective for this event, therefore, is to stimulate a discussion on the prospects for adapting this particular nexus on health and workplace issues as a building block for cross-cutting collaboration in the future. Secondly, the GSO has traditionally brought participants together from all stakeholder groups. Our second objective is to stimulate a discussion on how participants might apply the lessons learned from the GSO to new forms of multi-stakeholder engagement.

The proposed programme will start with introductions and a quick overview of GSO accomplishments. The main programme will tackle the future of decent work, the role of innovation in the digital age, and the future of healthy lifestyles. This would then lead to a broader discussion with participants on the linkages and prospects for cross-cutting and collaborative action.

Moderator:	Deborah Vorhies, GSO President
10:30-10:45	Introductions and Reflections on the GSO Work and Vision
10:45 -11:15	Dialogue on the Innovation in the Digital Age with Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, and on the Future of Decent Work with a representative from the International Labour Organization
11:15-11:45	Dialogue on the Future of Healthy Lifestyles with Johanna Ralston, CEO, World Obesity Federation and David Nabarro, Facilitator for Sustainable Development
11:45-12:15	Roundtable Discussion with Participants
12:15-12:30	Closing Remarks from Katherine Hagen
12:30	Buffet Lunch

Please let us know if you are able to attend this celebratory event on 19 December. We will send you further details and look forward to seeing you there.

[TOP](#)

II. Commentary on International Organizations and NGOs

Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees

Following the high-level summit on migration and refugees in September 2016, the UN General Assembly set up a [two-year agenda](#) for adopting a set of “Global Compacts” – one on Refugees and the other on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The High Commissioner for Refugees has been mandated to prepare the Global Compact for Refugees and to incorporate it into his report to the UN General Assembly in September 2018. Meanwhile, the UN General Assembly has adopted a work plan leading to the negotiation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regularly Migration, which will also be on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in September 2018. The work plan refers to a key secretariat role for the International Organization for Migration, while the International Labour Organization also has an instrumental role in terms of its standards on the rights of migrants. In addition to these links to Geneva-based organizations, many of the consultation sessions for these two separate processes have been held in Geneva.

The GSO has been monitoring these developments, both as vehicles for significant new policy and as avenues for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement on these increasingly important phenomena. On the policy front, there has been some overlap of issues in the two tracks. For example, a lot of attention is being directed to “climate refugees” who are displaced as a result of natural disasters or climate change but are not technically being persecuted. But there are also differences. The new policy for refugees is oriented to broadening humanitarian relief strategies to encompass development and integration for refugees, while also broadening the range and geographic scope of stakeholders for a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility. The new policy for safe, orderly and

regular migration includes the adoption of a new “set of common principles and approaches” – a rough equivalent to the rights and responsibilities in the existing legal framework for refugees. New legal pathways, cross-border skills certification, and transforming the informal economy that operates as a magnet for irregular migration are among the action areas that are being addressed here.

The involvement of civil society groups is quite substantial. In fact, observers might note that it is the engagement of NGOs (mostly the humanitarian and faith-based organizations) that is providing the potential for linkages and policy coherence between the two tracks. One such coalition is focusing on a [human rights perspective](#). There are links, as well, to academic and research institutions specializing in migration and refugees. The private sector is less fully engaged but still there. Within the Global Forum for Migration and Development, the Private Sector Mechanism (housed in Geneva with the International Organization for Employers) has developed a set of recommendations and targeted actions. But there is also interest in the Global Compact for Refugees, where the UNHCR has invited business to sign a [Business Action Pledge in Response to the Refugee Crisis](#). Here is a list of relevant organizations and links.

- [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#)
- [ACT Alliance](#)
- [Global Coalition on Migration](#)
- [GFMD Business Mechanism](#)
- [Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development](#)
- [International Catholic Migration Commission](#)
- [Quaker United Nations Office](#)
- [Refugees International](#)

This is hardly a comprehensive list, but it is illustrative of the range of actors involved in the preparations for the two global compacts. Consultations and/or negotiations will commence in February 2018. For migration, a [stocktaking exercise](#) is being held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on 4 to 6 December 2017; for refugees, the High Commissioner’s annual [Dialogue on Protection](#)

[Challenges](#) is serving as the stocktaking exercise on 12 to 13 December 2017 in Geneva. A joint website with information on both tracks is available [here](#).

[TOP](#)

Nutrition and Multi-stakeholder Engagement

The GSO has had a long-standing interest in global policy on nutrition, with a particular commitment to assisting the promotion of multi-stakeholder engagement through the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement. The SUN Movement just held its fifth Global Gathering in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire on 7 to 9 November 2017. This was primarily an information sharing event, attracting some 1000 participants from the different stakeholder groups of the 60 SUN member countries, along with numerous representatives of global stakeholder groups. The GSO applauds the SUN Movement Secretariat for a successful event. It was part of a series of nutrition-related events in the past several weeks that illustrate how the issue is driven both by multi-stakeholder platforms involving governments, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and academia AND by a multi-sectoral approach involving primarily the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) but also UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Committee on Global Food Security (CFS). Recent events of interest to the GSO include a consultation process on guidance to address conflict of interest in nutrition at the WHO; linking nutrition with food security at the CFS; mobilizing additional resources at the Global Nutrition Summit: Milan; and assessing the outcome of the SUN Movement’s Global Gathering.

COI on Nutrition at the WHO: The WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development was mandated by the 2012 World Health Assembly to prepare guidelines for “Safeguarding against possible conflicts of interest in nutrition programmes”. See the resolution [here](#). It was only on 11 September 2017 that the Department issued the drafts for these guidelines – a set of three documents (a discussion paper, an introductory paper and a tool) – and held an online consultation through 29 September 2017. See the documents and full list of organizations providing feedback [here](#).

Feedback came from numerous sources – governments, UN agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and private sector entities. Some of the respondents were generally supportive of the proposed approach, but many were highly critical, including the US, the SUN Movement Secretariat and almost all of the private sector entities. A major criticism was that proposed alignments of interests to avoid a conflict of interest were so complex and exclusionary as to eliminate the food and beverage industry from any participation – and could even multi-sectoral private sector groups, much like the CFS Private Sector Mechanism from even participating in the CFS. The WHO methodology for classifying non-State actors also treated any multi-stakeholder entity with any private sector members as a private sector entity. The final version of the documents are scheduled for presentation to the WHO Executive Board in January. They may be subject to an additional intergovernmental consultation in December, but there is no public listing for this.

COI on Food Security and Nutrition at the CFS: Meanwhile, the CFS met in Rome from 5 to 8 October for its regular annual session, which included a [major report](#) from its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. The report has been requested by the CFS in order to strengthen the links between food security strategies (especially at the FAO) and nutrition strategies (at both FAO and WHO). The report contained ten recommendations for action, essentially encompassing the strengthening of national policies and global action on nutrition and food environments. At the end of the debate, the CFS endorsed the report and approved a policy convergence process for voluntary guidelines on food systems and nutrition for the next CFS in October 2018.

The GSO was especially interested in the recommendation relating to conflict of interest, which took a very different approach to the one at the WHO. First, the report recommends that the identification and acknowledging of COI should start with participatory mechanisms to address them in policy making and implementation – even where the evidence shows imbalanced power relationships between stakeholders. This is in stark contrast to the exclusionary approach taken by the WHO. Second, transparency and accountability should be conducted through “coordinated, open access monitoring systems”. And

third, any “undue influence and corruption” against nutrition sciences should be protected through “appropriate rules, effectively monitored and enforced.” The GSO welcomes the development of the CFS approach to voluntary guidelines and hopes there will be a constructive exchange between the WHO and CFS approaches.

New Multi-Stakeholder Directions from Milan to Abijan. The [2017 Global Nutrition Report](#) was launched at the Global Nutrition Summit in Milan on 4 November – and again at the 2017 Global Gathering of the SUN Movement in Abijan on 7 to 9 November 2017. The focus was very much on linking nutrition as a catalyst for sustainable development throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through multi-stakeholder collaboration. Additional concerns were also raised, especially at the Global Gathering, about the growing “double burden” of obesity and under-nutrition. At both the Milan Summit and the Abijan Global Gathering, furthermore, there was a recognition of the need to diversify resource mobilization for nutrition programmes, including more from developing country governments and private sector sources. The report of new pledges of \$640 million at the Milan Summit (bringing the total to \$3.4 billion) includes pledges from several governments and philanthropic foundations in developing countries. All of this suggests that multi-stakeholder partnering is moving in a new direction. See more on the Milan Summit [here](#) and on the Abijan Global Gathering [here](#).

[TOP](#)

Partnering for a Triple Billion Target at the World Health Organization

The strategic priorities for the World Health Organization have undergone a few refinements in the first four months of its new Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanem Ghebreyesus. On the first day of his new term, 1 July 2017, an [official press release](#) reiterated the five priorities of his election campaign. In a 23 August 2017 [concept note](#) for the 13th Global Programme of Work (GPW13), the priorities had been reshuffled and cut to four. In the [latest draft](#) of this GPW13, which came out on 1

November 2017, they have been folded into just three. No need to elaborate on the originals – they move things around a bit. And each one of the three is now tied to a billion person target – a “triple billion” in support of the health-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. And yes, the targets are also well integrated into support for the SDGs.

The three strategic priorities, then, are expanding health coverage to an additional billion people, making the world safer for another billion, and improving the lives of yet another billion people. Universal health coverage is and has always been Dr. Tedros’s first priority, while his second priority now incorporates all kinds of health emergencies into a capacity building environment for readiness, coordination, surveillance, laboratory services, response readiness and risk communication. The third priority is a bit more jumbled but sets out four priority areas – (1) women, children and adolescent health, (2) HIV and other communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance and polio, (3) non-communicable diseases including mental health, and (4) the health effects of climate change and the environment. And each one of these priority areas will have one “flagship initiative” issue area.

From the GSO perspective, the latest draft reflects good progress in a dynamic evolutionary process with WHO constituents. This is especially true in the draft’s articulation of the WHO’s role in promoting innovation within the organization but also externally to identify and connect with others, serve as a catalyst and help to amplify innovations of significance to improving life expectancy and healthy living. It acknowledges the WHO as a leader but with a bigger envelope of health funding that will benefit from partnerships. In this respect, the GSO is especially supportive of the reference in this latest draft (as was also articulated in the earlier draft) that the Framework for Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA) should be implemented “in such a way as to enable partnerships” – with the additional caveat, of course, that FENSA implementation will also need to protect “the integrity of the Organization”. An interesting additional sentence here appears in both August and November drafts: “Partnerships will also require humility on the part of the WHO.” See p. 23 of the 1 November 2017 document. The GSO hopes that this will include improvements in the approach to multi-

stakeholder entities (like the GSO), even though this was not evident in the way consultations were handled in September on conflict of interest guidance for nutrition. (See separate article on this.)

[TOP](#)

The Rationale for an International Labour and Leisure Organization

As the GSO has observed over the course of the past several months, trade liberalization is being blamed by many for the growing inequalities in income between rich and poor and for the loss of industrial-level jobs and decent work in many countries. Many experts, including at the latest WTO Public Forum in September 2017, have pontificated, however, that the blame should be directed at technology and not trade. Nonetheless, the apparent impact of both trade and technology on jobs and on growing inequalities has come to the forefront of the debate over trade liberalization. It has also become intertwined with a broader debate on the future of work. As ILO Director-General Guy Ryder observed, the world is experiencing an “unprecedented scale, speed and depth” to changes in the world of work. The debate had its most recent platform at the WTO at a special session on 21 November on “Trade and the Global Deal”. But it is useful first to draw on a number of events in the course of this year to highlight the significance of a twenty-first century twist to the future of work.

The Future of Work We Want: On the one hand, there are the pessimists who describe the digital revolution as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”. This was the tone of a major ILO event in April on the [future of work we want](#). Participants shared their concerns that big data, robots, and artificial intelligence are taking over so many jobs that there will be steadily shrinking amount of work in the world that can be income-producing. Some argued that a redistribution of such work into smaller units of working time is the only ultimate long-term solution.

Less work and more leisure for the same degree of individual and household welfare could even remake the ILO - into the International Labour AND Leisure Organization! The idea that people would be attracted to the concept of more time for leisure as long as they had

sufficient income to fulfill their expectations from less time at work could even lead to more constructive use and raising the value of leisure time. The same applies to raising the value of “care” activities. But it is even conceivable that there won’t be enough jobs, whether new or old, to serve as the source of sustainable livelihoods, thereby calling for something like a universal basic income regardless of work!

New Thinking at the G20: The April Forum might have ended on a pessimistic note, but the “new thinking” on the “future of work” that is being facilitated by the ILO does have a positive tone as well. This was reflected, for example, in the G20 Labour Ministerial in July, orchestrated in large part by leadership of a G20 Employment Task Force by the ILO. It is actually very inspiring that this particular [G20 Declaration on “Towards an Inclusive Future: Shaping the World of Work”](#) lays out four policy priorities for action that are rather persuasive for a future of work. These four priorities encompassed policies to address (1) structural change, (2) gender equality, (3) migration and (4) decent work with an emphasis on global supply chains. The message here was that solutions are available to open up new opportunities even with significant displacement of older opportunities.

Commission on the Future of Work: The positives and negatives in the forecasts on the future of work are central to the future of the ILO itself – and to the preparations for the Centennial celebrations of the ILO in 2019. On 21 August 2017, the ILO Director-General officially launched the establishment of a Commission on the Future of Work to spearhead the consolidation and analysis of this central issue. The ILO’s [Commission on the Future of Work](#) is a very creditable mix of professions, work experiences, geographic diversity and gender balance.

The two co-chairs of the Commission are heads of state or government; Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfgren has a strong trade union background in the industrial and post-industrial world; while Mauritian President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim has a scientist’s credentials and service as a college president to combine the appreciation for science, technology, engineering and math for future skills and employability preparation with the pragmatic focus on service-based careers. At [the](#)

[launch event](#) on 21 August 2017, both of them spoke about combatting the phenomenon of growing inequality with conscious policies for more inclusive economic growth and social cohesion. The labour market is a part of society, they reaffirmed, and it is through increasing productivity, along with conscious and conscientious political decisions, that there will be an increase in shared wealth for all.

The Global Deal: This brings us back to the most recent event at the WTO, a high-level seminar on 21 November 2017 entitled “[Global Deal and Trade](#)”, organized in fact by the Swedish Government and featuring the Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfgren. Officially launched by Sweden at the UN General Assembly in September, [the Global Deal](#) is a multi-stakeholder partnership, building on the tripartism of the ILO. It is actually a variation of “tripartism plus” – a loosely structured, voluntary global forum “where diverse stakeholders seek collective solutions to communal challenges”. The tripartite concept of “social dialogue” that is at the heart of the ILO is the foundation for the Global Deal, but it also encompasses other stakeholders, to facilitate a dialogue for making the global economy more inclusive. It is a linking of this multi-stakeholder partnership to Goal 17 on partnerships the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a stimulus for partnership in support of the other goals, and especially Goal 8 on decent work and inclusive growth and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities. The Global Deal opens up opportunities to chart a new path forward on trade as well as jobs. As the participants affirmed at this high-level seminar at the WTO, making the global economy more inclusive sets the stage for looking at how trade is structured to benefit people, not only as consumers but as producers of economic value. This does require agility and adaptability to search for country-specific or even region-specific solutions, but bringing all stakeholders together to address the challenges of the global labour market is the avenue for exchanging ideas, joint projects, lessons learned and policy advice.

[TOP](#)

III. Upcoming Events

Key upcoming events of interest to the GSO

- WIPO [Committee on Development and IP](#)
Geneva 27 Nov – 2 Dec
- UNCTAD [Trade and Development Commission](#)
Geneva 27 Nov – 2 Dec
- UNEP [Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly Nairobi](#) 27 Nov – 6 Dec
- UNHCHR [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) Geneva 27 Nov – 29 Nov
- WTO [Trade Negotiations Committee](#) Geneva 28 Nov
- IOM [108th Session of the Council](#) Geneva 28 Nov - 1 Dec
- WTO [General Council](#) Geneva 30 Nov – 1 Dec
- HRC [Human Rights Council organizational session](#) Geneva 4 Dec
- ILO [Global Forum on Just Transition](#) Geneva 4 Dec
- UN [Preparatory Meeting: Global Compact for Migration](#) Puerto Vallarta 4 Dec – 6 Dec
- ILO [GAIN Conference: Just Transition](#) Geneva 5 Dec – 6 Dec
- WTO [11th Ministerial Conference](#) Buenos Aires 10 Dec – 13 Dec
- UNHCR [High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges, 2017](#) Geneva 12 Dec – 13 Dec
- IGF [12th Annual Internet Governance Forum](#) Geneva 18 Dec – 21 Dec

[TOP](#)

IV. Who We Are

The Global Social Observatory (GSO) is an international organization founded in the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland in April 2004. The mission of the GSO is to initiate dialogue on social issues in order to encourage leaders to engage in a broadened search for solutions and policy coherence. This service is based on a participatory process in a neutral space that brings all interested parties together across national boundaries to identify solutions and policies that are coherent. These solutions can then contribute to policy-making at the governmental and intergovernmental levels. Visit our [website](#) for regular news and project updates.

Please send any comments, suggestions or feedback on the newsletter to [Ralph Doggett](#)

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[TOP](#)