# GSO NEWS

Official Newsletter of the Global Social Observatory
Geneva, Switzerland

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Welcome to our second issue of the new GSO newsletter to stimulate multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogue and information sharing. The newsletter has three sections providing: updates on GSO activities; commentary on developments in international organizations and NGOs involved in addressing multi-stakeholder engagement; and upcoming events of interest.

## I.    GSO Activities

### GSO-SUN Conflict of Interest Project – Report on the first Enhanced Learning Exercise in Accra, Ghana

With heartfelt thanks to Dr. Edith Tetteh, SUN Focal Point in Ghana, and her excellent planning committee, the first, in a series of four, Enhanced Learning Exercises (ELE) took place in Accra, Ghana on 1-2 April 2014.

This event brought together a diverse group of participants representing Ghanaian networks of civil society, academia, business, donors, UN agencies and government. In addition, there was participation by focal points and other SUN Movement stakeholders from Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire.

The objectives of the ELE was to assess how the Reference Note and Toolkit produced in Phase I of the project can be applied and used to support work in this area at country level. This was supplemented and ''tested'' against a case study, developed by members of the Ghana academia platform. The participants embraced the suggestions and guidance these documents provided to specific circumstances in their SUN network or affiliation. Click here for more details on the documents.

Lively panel discussions and interactive 'learning circles' focused on the issues raised in the Case Study in the context of the SUN Principles of Engagement

and the four main elements of the Reference Note and Toolkit prepared by the GSO-SMS partnership.

The lessons learned from each of the ELEs will be captured and consolidated into "An In-Practice Brief on Preventing and Managing Conflict of Interest" to be shared during the concluding conference in Geneva in January 2015. Click here to read the preliminary summary of the Accra ELE.

The next ELE is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 29 to 30 May 2014, followed by San Salvador, El Salvador from 17 to 18 July 2014 and the last in the series to take place in Jakarta, Indonesia during October 2014.

We will, of course, keep you updated on the progress of each ELE, but keep an eye out for regular updates on our website.

## An Open Interactive Dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Goals

The Global Social Observatory celebrated its tenth anniversary with an open interactive dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Goals on Thursday, 24 April 2014. The specific purpose of the dialogue was to explore the inter-linkages among key focus areas and identify how multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement can contribute to these linkages from a Geneva perspective. The tone and substance for the event was set by an impressive panel – the head of the International Trade Centre Arancha Gonzalez, the head of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement David Nabarro, David Evans from the WHO, Stephen Pursey from the ILO, Guillermo from UNCTAD and Marc van Ameringen from GAIN – and moderated by our own GSO President Deborah Vorhies. Drawing from the diversity of international interests in Geneva, over 70 participants came from NGOs, academia, the private sector, governments and international organizations – bringing with them a range of sectoral interests, including health and population dynamics, food security and nutrition, employment and trade. Most importantly, they brought an eagerness to engage with each other and to promote transformative thinking and action about what sustainable development means. We take note here of some of the key messages from the dialogue and the GSO's action plan for next steps.

First, the GSO participants discussed the fundamental role of economic growth as the foundation for sustainable development. Many critics see this emphasis on economic growth as a distraction from the social and environmental priorities of development, but in this setting, participants focused on economic growth as the foundation but not sufficient by itself for sustainable development. Inequalities between rich and poor, between men and women, young and old require a commitment to inclusive growth strategies. **The key is integration** across all of the goals of a post-2015 development agenda. Furthermore, this integration needs to be universally applied, which distinguishes the post-2015 debate on Sustainable Development Goals from the Millennium Development Goals that were adopted some 14 years ago. Many new ways of thinking apply to the SDGs - consumption as well as production, malnutrition generally, universal health coverage, entrepreneurship, etc. There is a basic underpinning for the SDGs on human rights. There is furthermore a new development framework in the works that includes multiple stakeholders and defines development in diverse ways.

Another significant point that came out of the 24 April dialogue is that there is a different environment regarding non-state actors in today's world as compared to when the MDGs were adopted. Participants did have different viewpoints regarding the role of non-state actors in policy deliberations and the issue of accountability – some favored revising the issue of governance to include multi-

stakeholder partnerships, while other participants preferred to emphasize the accountability of governments and politicians. Nonetheless, participants did recognize that policies, even at the global level, are being set through multiple networks and in different forums. Even so, there is an absence of effective machinery for non-state actor participation outside of specific issue areas; trust among many non-state actors (and interactions of non-state actors with governments) is missing.

The GSO dialogue also addressed the interlinkages among a number of specific issue areas, including trade, job creation, health and food security and nutrition. Participants raised the question of how one might imagine a transformative process in any of the SDG issues without trade. Trade is seen as an enabler of all other goals. Employment is a precondition for sustainable livelihoods. Governments don't create jobs on their own – they provide the enabling environment both generally and with regard to specific opportunities for SMEs, youth, women, entrepreneurship. Furthermore, economic growth and job creation do not happen on their own but are driven by the success of social support programmes involving education, health, social security programmes. The centrality of health to development is a clear example of how issues should be developed in the integrating context of inter-linkages with all other issues since everything does affect health (nutrition, exercise, mobility, education, energy, water and sanitation, etc.), just as health can affect everything (productivity of workers, capacity of students to do well in school, etc.). Participants, by the way, were especially motivated by the gender dimension in health but also noted (a) that gender equality is a concern for all SDGs and (b) that a stand-alone gender goal is not the best strategy. Finally, in contrast to the formation of the MDGs, participants recognized that hunger and malnutrition have become global issues. But it is hard to address malnutrition without addressing water, education, energy and the other SDGs.

The post-2015 discussions are mostly underway at the UN General Assembly in New York, but it is important for International Geneva to increase the visibility of its unique and far-reaching expertise and understanding of the issues. The priority of integrating trade with development is an obvious task for the likes of the WTO, UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre, but Geneva also has the UN Human Rights Council, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization as reflected in the messages developed by the participants at the GSO April dialogue. Then there are the many related perspectives of UN agencies – and non-state actors – in intellectual property, ICT, migration, humanitarian relief, and environmental concerns. For these reasons, the GSO Management Committee is developing a plan and proposal for further open and interactive dialogues on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and for exploring opportunities for new mechanisms to involve non-state actors across sectors and stakeholder groups. The GSO is also participating in other Geneva-based networks, including the Geneva Trade Cluster led by UNCTAD.

## II.   Commentary on International Organizations and NGOs

### Update on WHO's engagement with non-state actors.

The World Health Organization took another step forward in developing a new policy on engagement with non-State actors at a meeting open to all WHO member-States but closed to all others, including

non-State actors, on 26 to 27 March 2014. We understand that the meeting was an important step forward and that the possibility of an ultimate consideration of new policy by the World Health Assembly in May 2014 is very encouraging. The background document to support the discussion and an agenda laying out the three sessions for the meeting are available [here.](#)

Both the background document and the agenda present a three-pronged approach to a new policy on engagement with non-State actors. First is a "Proposed Overarching Framework" that includes the principles defining engagement, the boundaries of engagement and the types of interaction. Even here, the emphasis is on controlling the engagement (e.g. must "demonstrate a clear benefit to public health" and "Engagement with non-State actors must not compromise WHO's reputation") rather than elaborating more fully on the benefits of engagement.

The second element proposes WHO policies and operational procedures, and here the approach separates engagement with non-governmental organizations and private sector entities. NGOs are defined in the glossary as "non-profit entities that operate independently of governments. They are usually membership based with non-profit entities or individuals as members, or are otherwise constituted with nonprofit, public interest goals that are not related to any private interest. They include community organizations, civil society groups and networks, faith-based organizations, professional groups, disease specific groups, and patient groups".

In contrast, the private sector entities are defined as "commercial enterprises, i.e. businesses that are intended to make a profit for their owners. The terms also refer to entities that represent or are governed or controlled by private sector entities. This includes (but is not limited to) business associations representing commercial enterprises, entities not at "arm's length" of their commercial

sponsors, and partially or fully state owned enterprises acting like private sector entities". See the glossary in the background document here, with a note that they are provided "for the purposes of this document only". Philanthropic foundations and academic institutions are defined separately, and the next paper to be presented at the World Health Assembly is expected to have additional draft WHO policies and operational procedures for engagement with these two categories of entities.

The third element in the WHO's deliberations addresses the "Management of engagement with non-State actors". The background document does refer to both the benefits and the risks of engagement but focuses on the risks. The main risks include undue or improper influence on WHO's work, negatively impacting WHO's reputation and credibility, and misusing collaboration with the WHO for its own benefits. It further defines a conflict of interest as "a set of circumstances in which professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest (WHO's work) may be unduly influenced by a secondary interest (a vested interest in the outcome of WHO's work in a given area)." The emphasis is on the potential for any secondary interest to affect "the independence and objectivity of WHO's work". Further provisions in this section address transparency, due diligence, risk assessment and risk management as key elements of the management approach. In this section, by the way, the proposed approach returns to treating all non-State actors with the same management criteria. We believe that the World Health Assembly will receive a revised proposal based on the discussions at this member-State consultation, and we look forward to monitoring the process.

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## New Groupings in Internet Governance

### a. Geneva Internet Governance Platform

The Geneva Internet Governance Platform was officially launched on 8 April 2014 as a forum for a multi-stakeholder and cross-cutting approach on digital policies. It is a new feature of the Diplo Foundation's active involvement in Internet governance issues through its Internet Governance Capacity Building Programme over the past ten years. The main sponsors of the Diplo Foundation are the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta. The Platform is committed to merging the "policy silos" in technology, security, human rights and intellectual property rights, with a particular attention to the needs of developing countries. The Platform will have the opportunity to deliver "a neutral, constructive and prospective view on how to foster a more inclusive global Internet governance, taking into consideration the concerns of the European continent, and emerging countries, as the US is now showing readiness for debate and suggestions". The Platform will be the host for a series of training courses throughout the year, including one on "online privacy and data protection" in September, and another on "cybersecurity and human rights" in November.

### b. CAUSE

A new coalition has been formed with the acronym CAUSE, the Coalition against Unlawful Surveillance Exports, with secretariat support coming from an NGO called Privacy International. The Coalition is opposed to the international trade in communication surveillance technologies (spying software and related tools) not only because they are considered to violate the right to privacy and "a host of other human rights" but also because they may fall into the hands of unscrupulous dictatorships. Besides Privacy International, the original Coalition includes the International

Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Amnesty International, Digitale Gesellschaft, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), New America Foundations, Open Technology Institute, and Reporters without Borders.

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## NETmundial Outcome Document

The Global Multi-Stakeholder Conference on the Future of Internet Governance was held in Sao Paolo, Brazil from 23 to 24 April 2014. The outcome document for this Conference states, "This is the non-binding outcome of a bottom-up, open, and participatory process involving thousands of people from governments, private sector, civil society, technical community, and academia from around the world. The NETmundial conference was the first of its kind. It hopefully contributes to the evolution of the Internet governance ecosystem." As the head of the Internet Society, Kathy Brown, noted in her closing statement at Netmundial, this is only the beginning of a series of multi-stakeholder meetings in the coming months. These include the deliberations on "enhanced cooperation" at the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva on 12-16 May 2014, the "WSIS+10" high-level meeting on 10-13 June 2014 in Geneva, the Internet Governance Forum in Istanbul in September and the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunications Union in October in Busan, Republic of Korea. There is also the ongoing process of restructuring the "IANA" functions of which the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers is a part – and which the US Government has announced its readiness to spin off from its US base.

The outcome document has two sections – one on Internet Governance principles and the other on a Roadmap for future evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem. The first section is rather extensive, with basic Internet governance principles as well as Internet governance "process" principles. As one would expect, these include freedom of expression, freedom of association, privacy, and accessibility, freedom of information and access to information, development plus transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.

The second section emphasizes the multi-stakeholder nature of Internet governance and even endorses a strengthened role for the Internet Governance Forum. There are still advocates of a more intergovernmental, multi-lateral governance for the Internet, and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union Hamadan Tour even announced at Netmundial that Internet infrastructure would definitely be on the agenda at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in October. On the other hand, several governments, led by Canada, have committed to funding the Internet Governance Forum, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that Ambassador Jānis Kārkliņš of Latvia will be the Chair of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group of the Internet Governance Forum. Strengthened Internet governance is to be promoted, said the Secretary-General, "through broader participation, not only be Governments, but also the private sector and civil society, including the academic and technical communities".

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## III.    Upcoming Events

### GSO events

GSO Management Committee – 13 May 2014

GSO General Assembly – 3 July 2014
Second Enhanced Learning Exercise in Nairobi, Kenya – 29-30 May 2014

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### Key upcoming events of interest to the GSO

- UNOHCHR Universal Periodic Review / 19th session  23 Apr – 9 May
- UNOHCHR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights / 52nd session  28 Apr – 23 May
- UNOHCHR Committee against Torture / 52nd session  28 Apr – 23 May
- UNCTAD Trade and Development Commission, sixth session  5 May – 9 May
- OECD OECD forum 2014 on Resilient Economies for Inclusive Societies Paris 5 May – 6 May
- UNOHCHR WG on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice / 10th session  5 May – 9 May
- UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development 11th Session New York,  5 May – 9 May
- UNOHCHR Working Group on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises / 8th session  5 May – 9 May
- ITU 2014 Session of the Council Geneva, Switzerland 6 May – 15 May
- WTO Book launch: "WTO Domestic Regulation and Services Trade: Putting Principles into Practice" Geneva 7 May
- WEF World Economic Forum on Africa Abuja, Nigeria 7 May – 9 May
- WIPO Extraordinary Session of the WIPO Assemblies  8 -9 May
- CEM Fifth Clean Energy Ministerial Conference, 12-13 May Seoul, Korea
- UNCTAD Commission on Science and Technology for Development, seventeenth session  12 May – 16 May

- UN Global Compact Children's Rights and Business Principles – Annual Conference Nairobi, Kenya 12 May
- WTO General Council Geneva 12 May - 13 May
- World Bank "Measuring for Success" St. Petersburg, Russian Federation 12 May – 16 May
- UNOHCHR Working Group on the Right to Development / 15th session 12 May – 16 May
- IAEA International Conference on Human Resource Development for Introducing and Expanding Nuclear Power Programmes: Building and Sustaining Capacity Vienna 12 May – 16 May
- ILO Global Dialogue Forum on Employment Relationships in the Media and Culture Sector 14 May – 15 May
- UNECE, UNWATER Third Meeting of the Implementation Committee of the UNECE Water Convention 15 May – 16 May
- UNOHCHR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights / 52nd session 28 Apr – 23 May
- UNOHCHR Committee against Torture / 52nd session 28 Apr – 23 May
- UNEP and others, International Conference on Sustainability in the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, 19-20 May Bonn
- WHO 67th World Health Assembly 19 May - 24 May
- UNWATER International Conference on Sustainability in the Water-Energy-Food Nexus Bonn, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany 19 May – 20 May
- FAO, FAO/UNECE , FAO and others CFS Open Ended Working Group on RAI, Global meeting Rome, Italy 19 May – 23 May
- World Resources Forum, Global Infrastructure Basel 2014 Conference, Basel, 21-22 May
- UN High-Level Event -North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation and ICT for development New York, 21-22 May
- ITC Helping SMEs to internationalize: Navigating through thick borders Astana,Kazakhstan 22 May

- WTO Dispute Settlement Body Geneva 23 May
- CMBD Global Health Diplomacy 26 May
- UNOHCHR Human Rights Council – Organizational Meeting / 26th session, 26 May
- WHO, 125th Executive Board 26 May – 27 May
- UNOHCHR Committee on the Rights of Child / 66th session 26 May – 13 Jun
- IAEA International Symposium on Understanding Moderate Malnutrition in Children for Effective Interventions Vienna 27 May
- WTO Trade Policy Review: Ghana Geneva 26 May - 28 May
- IMF Africa Rising: Building to the Future Maputo, Mozambique 29 May – 30 May
- ILO 103rd International Labour Conference 28 May – 12 Jun
- ECOSOC Youth Forum New York 2 Jun – 3 Jun
- UNOHCHR Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture / 23rd session 2 Jun – 6 Jul
- UNOHCHR Meeting of Special Rapporteurs /Representatives /Independent Experts and Chairpersons of WG of the HRC / 21st session 2 Jun – 6 Jun
- WTO Trade Policy Review: Mongolia Geneva 3 Jun - 5 Jun
- WFP Annual Session of the Executive Board Rome, Italy 3 Jun – 6 Jun
- ICC 2014 Annual Summit on Commercial Dispute Resolution in China Paris,France 4 Jun
- UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference Bonn, Germany 4 Jun - 15 Jun
- WTO Global Trade: A Trade System for the 21st Century Chatham House 9 Jun - 10 Jun
- UN Global Compact Global Compact XII Annual Local Network Forum and UN System Private Sector Focal Points Meeting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 9 Jun - 13 Jun
- UNOHCHR Human Rights Council, Twenty-sixth session Geneva, Switzerland 10 Jun - 27 Jun
- UNOSDP 6th IWG World Conference on Women and Sport Helsinki, Finland 12 Jun - 15 Jun

- ICC [ICC YAF Europe Regional Conference in Rome](#) Rome, Italy 13 Jun - 14 Jun

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## 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.

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