



Official Newsletter of the Global Social Observatory  
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## So it begins

Welcome to the launch issue of the Global Social Observatory (GSO) News. This newsletter, sent to GSO members bi-monthly, will keep you informed and updated on our projects, future endeavours and relevant news from Geneva, Switzerland.

Feel free to share this newsletter with colleagues, family or friends that would be interested in [our work](#) and encourage them to [become members](#).

We welcome your comments and suggestions on any of the articles, so [get in touch](#) and share your thoughts.

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## Progress on the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement conflict of interest project

In 2013, the GSO received a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement a consultation process on Conflict of Interest issues associated with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and develop a Reference Note and Toolkit on Preventing and Managing Conflicts of Interest in the SUN Movement.

The process for developing this Reference Note has included a series of three consultation events with participants from all five the SUN Networks during 2013. The Reference Note will serve as a "living document", to be used in a series of "enhanced learning exercises" that will be carried out by the GSO in close cooperation with the SUN Movement Secretariat, in 2014. These exercises will help to further refine the Reference Note and expand on the inventory of tools and mechanisms in the Toolkit.

The enhanced learning exercises are being proposed for four regions: Central America, Asia, East Africa and West Africa.

Each of the enhanced learning exercises will identify an issue and facilitate an interactive dialogue to promote a search for consensus on the issue at hand and will include:

- A research paper
- Formation of a regional advisory group
- Organising and convening the meeting
- A meeting report

The first of these exercises are currently being planned for late March 2014. We will provide an update on the progress made in the next newsletter.

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## Deliberations are underway for a Post-2015 Development Agenda

Deliberations are underway for a comprehensive proposal on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to be presented to the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2014. The coordination of the many different initiatives is well presented at a website for the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, available [here](#). The main initiative is the “Open Working Group on Sustainable Development” (OWG), made up of 30 geographically balanced “country teams”. The OWG has completed a series of thematic hearings, most recently on 3 to 7 February 2014. The OWG will shift to preparing its overall proposal in March. Meanwhile, the President of the UN General Assembly is hosting a new series of high-level meetings and thematic debates. The first thematic debate is on 18 to 19 February 2014 on “*Water, sanitation and sustainable energy*”. The first high-level event is on 6 to 7 March 2014 on “*Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.”

There is also a separate role for the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which has the mandate to integrate, promote and monitor a balanced innovation of the three dimensions of sustainable development. ECOSOC will have a joint event with the UN General Assembly, a Partnerships Forum, on 9 to 10 April 2014, and its own high-level segment will be on 7 to 11 July 2014.

The GSO is monitoring yet another set of deliberations led by the new Secretary-General for UNCTAD, Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, for a Geneva Dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with three distinct features. First, UNCTAD has expertise on the economic perspective of development and a better understanding of the role of trade and development, including finance, technology and investment, for the post-2015 agenda. Second, UNCTAD is a forum for looking at the systemic constraints on inclusive growth and development and mobilizing resources for new goals for durable economic gains, job creation and protection of the environment. And thirdly, UNCTAD is providing a

forum for redefining partnerships, and for bringing the private sector and civil society into a united effort.

The GSO, in collaboration with the Council for Multilateral Business Diplomacy (CMBD) hosted two webinars on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The GSO interns prepared reports covering the main topics of concern. Download the slideshows for [April 2013](#) and [December 2013](#) for more details.

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

During October 2013, the WHO's Director-General organized an informal consultation with Member States and non-State actors on their engagement with non-State actors.

The GSO's Executive Director, Katherine Hagen, delivered the following statement during the October 2013 consultation, highlighting the importance of non-state actor involvement and collaboration.

*“The Global Social Observatory commends you, Director-General Chan, for presiding over this initiative and supports your search for a better understanding of the many views on how the WHO might evolve in its rules of engagement with non-state actors. The mission of the GSO is to facilitate dialogue and disseminate information on social issues in order to encourage all interested stakeholders to engage in a broadened search for solutions and in finding a common ground for working together. We understand that an important distinction is that the GSO provides a neutral forum that is separate from the intergovernmental processes of the WHO and other UN agencies, but it is also the case that in our programs, we seek to engage participants who embrace certain shared values and principles, including:*

- *A shared commitment to promoting an integrative and holistic approach to sustainable development;*
- *A shared respect for basic human rights, cultural diversity and gender equality;*
- *A commitment to engage in areas of common interest*

*We want to highlight the suggestion by Professor Zellner for bridge building between and among different non-state actors. The GSO is a unique forum that encourages this kind of cross-stakeholder dialogue, and we believe it is useful for all stakeholders to listen and learn from others in an interactive format. In one of our current projects, we are developing guidance on conflict of interest in a multi-stakeholder setting, and the very three changes to the management of engagement that are proposed in your discussion paper are management approaches that we have identified as important, that is:*

- *A due diligence approach to examining all interests*
- *A risk-based approach to identifying conflicts of interest and*
- *Increasing transparency*

*The GSO has worked in several settings where the concern about undue influence of powerful groups has been raised but where the key message is that they are indeed there in the world around us and that transparency, due diligence and risk management are the preferred ways to counter the possibilities of undue influence.*

*As you explore the possibilities for differentiation among the different categories of non-state actors, we encourage that you do so within the context of applying the overarching principles you have listed in the discussion paper to all categories of non-state actors and to incorporate the approaches on due diligence and risk management and with a particular emphasis on the benefits of transparency.”*

In January 2014, the WHO Executive Board provided guidance for the development of new policy on its relations with non-State actors. The main debate centered around a report by the Secretariat laying out a “Framework of engagement with non-State actors”, part of the overall WHO reform package on priority setting, governance and managerial reforms. The Board also debated the role of non-State actors in the fight against NCDs.

The Framework of engagement laid out the five “overarching principles” for engagement and the four “clear boundaries” of where not to engage. The Framework also had a useful set of proposals for increasing transparency and conducting due

diligence, risk assessment and risk management for WHO’s engagement with non-State actors. The Board liked these elements of the Framework but asked for more on how one might classify the types of entities and types of interactions that should be part of any new policy. It was agreed to hold further consultations open to all Member-States to develop “separate policies and operational procedures for different types of non-State actors”.

This member-state consultation is expected to occur in March, to be followed by another consultation in April dealing with the mandate from the UN General Assembly for the WHO to develop a “global coordinating mechanism” to support global action against non-communicable diseases. This mechanism is supposed to be multi-sectoral and to complement the WHO’s Global Action Plan on NCDs and a parallel UN Inter-Agency Task Force on NCDs. Dr. Chan promised to be present at this consultation and reaffirmed that the NCD campaign can’t make progress without NGOs and the private sector. Many Board members described this new NCD-related mechanism as an “unprecedented and innovative entity” that should include multiple stakeholders. The GSO will report on these consultations along with the other preparations for the World Health Assembly which is meeting in May.

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## Related news articles

SUN Movement Coordinator, Dr David Nabarro, describes his priorities for 2014 in this [statement](#).

Global leaders, CEO’s of global companies and even the United Nations’ Secretary General has signed a declaration of support for the [Zero Hunger Challenge](#) in Davos on Thursday 23 January 2014. More [here](#) and [here](#).

It was announced in Davos that the commitments from Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit will be integrated into the SUN Business Network. This incorporation will mean a single global platform for businesses. More [here](#).

IFAD is increasing their commitment of resources to issues related to nutrition. Read about their efforts in supporting Agriculture [here](#).

UNCTAD has released a Policy Brief in November 2013 highlighting their focus for the Post-2015 Development in the areas of finance, technology and trade and sustainable development. Read the full brief [here](#).

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### In the next issue

- Report on the first enhanced learning exercise
- Internet Governance
- Preparations for the World Health Assembly
- Progress on Post-2015 Development Agenda

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### GSO events

GSO Management Committee – 13 May 2014  
GSO General Assembly – 3 July 2014

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### Key upcoming events of interest to the GSO

- WFP [First Regular Session of the Executive Board](#) Rome, Italy 10 Feb – 14 Feb
- UNDESA [52nd Session of the Commission for Social Development \(CSocD\)](#) New York 11 Feb – 21 Feb
- UNFCCC [77th Meeting of the CDM Executive Board](#) Bonn 17 Feb – 21 Feb
- UNOHCHR [Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises / 7th session](#) Geneva 17 Feb – 21 Feb
- IAEA [International Experts' Meeting on Radiation Protection after the Fukushima Daiichi Accident](#) Vienna, Austria 17 Feb – 21 Feb

- ITU [WSIS+10 Multistakeholder Preparatory Platform \(MPP\)](#) Geneva, Switzerland 17 Feb – 18 Feb
- UNGA [Thematic Debate - Water, sanitation and sustainable energy](#) New York 18-19 Feb
- IFAD [Thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council](#) Rome, Italy 19 Feb – 20 Feb
- UNOHCHR [Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council / 12th session](#) Geneva 24 - 28 Feb
- UNCTAD, [Third meeting of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation \(WGEC\) of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development](#) Geneva 24 – 28 Feb
- WTO [Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights](#) Geneva 25 Feb – 26 Feb
- WIPO [IPC Union – Committee of Experts: Forty-Sixth Session](#) Geneva 26 Feb – 28 Feb
- OHCHR [25<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Human Rights Council](#) Geneva 3-28 Mar
- UN Global Compact [6th Annual Women's Empowerment Principles Event: Gender Equality and the Global Jobs Challenge](#) New York 5 Mar – 6 Mar
- ILO/IPEC [Child Labour Platform](#) 6 – 7 March
- UNGA [High-Level Event on "The Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda"](#), New York 6-7 March
- WIPO [Coordination Committee: sixty-ninth \(25<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary\) Session](#) Geneva 6 – 7 Mar
- OECD [Growth, Jobs, & Prosperity in the Digital Age: OECD Shapes the Policy Environment](#), Washington, DC 10 March
- UNWOMEN [Commission on the Status of Women](#) New York 10 Mar - 21 Mar
- UNODC [High-level review of the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action](#) Vienna 13 Mar - 14 Mar
- ILO [320<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Body](#) Geneva 13 Mar – 17 Mar
- WTO [General Council](#), 14 Mar Geneva
- ITC [Roundtable at the L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival](#) Melbourne 16 Mar - 22 Mar
- OECD [European Symposium on Ethics and Governance](#) Paris 17 Mar - 18 Mar
- OECD [Integrity Week](#), 17-21 Mar Paris
- Codex [Codex Committee on Food Additives](#) Hong Kong, China 17 Mar - 21 Mar

- [Codex Committee on Food Additives 46th Session](#) Hong Kong 17 Mar - 21 Mar

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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.

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