



Official Newsletter of the Global Social Observatory
Geneva, Switzerland

Third issue, June 2014 (bimonthly)

Welcome to our third issue of the [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.

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I. GSO Activities

GSO-SUN Conflict of Interest Project – Report on the second Enhanced Learning Exercise in Nairobi, Kenya

The second Enhanced Learning Exercise for the Consultation Process on Engaging in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement took place in Nairobi Kenya on 29 to 30 May 2014. The second ELE continued to address the Reference Note and Toolkit on Preventing and Managing Conflict of Interest in the SUN Movement. There were about 60 participants all told, including 35 from Kenya, and three representatives each from Burundi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Our deep thanks to the excellent leadership of Ms. Terrie Wefwafwa, the Kenya Focal Point for the SUN Movement, and her Planning Committee.

The interactive format included several panels and plenary discussions drawn from and moderated by the participants, and three rounds of small-group “learning circles” to facilitate inclusive involvement by all participants. We include some highlights from the meeting here in this newsletter, and readers are encouraged to read the full report on the GSO website [here](#).

Participants emphasized the responsibility of government to establish transparent frameworks for

the engagement of all actors, including the private sector, in the development of policy and the implementation of national nutrition plans. Conflict of interest policies should adapt the Reference Note and Toolkit to local circumstances and, where appropriate, build on existing national legislation or policies, be widely disseminated and should be part of the broader commitment to scaling up nutrition.

The promotion by the private-sector (and others) of breast-milk substitutes and complementary foods in a way that undermines exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and continued breast feeding with appropriate complementary foods for up to two years or beyond, was identified as a central concern for many participants. For this reason, some participants suggested that the language regarding the exclusion of those violating the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly Resolutions in the SUN Roadmap be repeated in the Reference Note. Other participants shared their experiences of having had effective dialogue with companies that were identified as violators of the Code elsewhere, but not in their particular country where the legal framework was stricter than the Code. Questions were raised by several participants about how to apply a “no-go” zone on this issue.

Participants recognised that all stakeholders have the potential to have a conflict of interest and should be aware of this in their activities. For example, government line ministries often take different positions based on their core priorities. The ethics expert, Dr. Samuel Kobia provided a useful analysis of how interests can flow into values or alternatively into conflicts of interest and further into corruption, which many participants mentioned as a problem. Several participants requested the GSO to convene country-level workshops similar to the Enhanced Learning Exercise. In any case, inclusive dialogue, replicating the enhanced learning exercise in each country, and developing strong advocacy groups should be encouraged.

Applying the lessons learned from the Accra and Nairobi Enhanced Learning Exercises, the GSO will convene two additional Enhanced Learning Exercises in San Salvador (17-18 July 2014) and Jakarta (proposed, for some time in October 2014). There will be a concluding conference in Geneva in January 2015 for refining the Reference Note and Toolkit and recommending further steps for the SUN Lead Group.

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Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The Geneva Perspective, Phase Two

The Global Social Observatory convened a roundtable on 11 June 2014 to take advantage of the latest OWG document for the purpose of identifying possible linkages among the proposed goals and targets from a Geneva perspective. This was the second such recent exercise, building on a panel discussion and an open interactive dialogue on 24 April 2014. Key messages from the dialogue on 24 April supported the momentum in sustainable development policy towards inclusiveness and universality and new ways of thinking about what sustainability means - attentiveness to trade as a key enabler, but also new thinking about consumption as well as production, over-nutrition as well as under-nutrition, sustainable livelihoods through entrepreneurship, and health for all rather than disease-specific initiatives. Participants observed the increasing presence of non-state actors in global policy debates and called for new mechanisms and trust-building for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships.

At the 11 June event, participants were invited to reflect on how the OWG “zero draft” had evolved and where a Geneva-based dialogue might create further linkages among the goals and targets. The

GSO event was facilitated by lead discussants who stimulated lively discussions on cross-cutting linkages from an employment perspective (Constance Thomas, former ILO Director of the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour), from a trade perspective (Alice Tipping, leading the Environment and Natural Resources program at ICTSD), a food security perspective (Cécile Molinier, former Geneva head of UNDP) and, finally, a health perspective (Katherine Hagen, Executive Director of the GSO).

Participants were reminded that the SDG process is building on the success of the Millennium Development Goals, but it is not clear yet what the SDGs should actually do. From one perspective, the SDGs are an updated articulation of good development as we understand it in the world today. A second perspective, however, is that they should serve as a global agenda for the international community and member states to implement by working together for the welfare of all. A third perspective is that they are a binding set of commitments for the world to avoid “heading over the cliff”, as one participant described it. One may worry that the goals will prove to be too aspirational and high reaching and that no one will be able to do anything with them.

Participants agreed that the SDGs need to be realistic and based on changes that can be achieved in the current system. The process will be difficult to move from the aspirational to the pragmatic, but there are some hopeful signs. One is that the targets for action are being seen as responsibilities that go in both directions from developed countries and from developing countries. Another encouraging development is the approach being taken to the means of implementation, a late addition to the SDGs but one that is being taken very seriously, to link accountability to building the capacity to deliver on the commitments. Pragmatism and inclusiveness highlighted the approaches taken by the participants in this roundtable - identifying ways to connect the

goals and targets to realistic but comprehensive priorities for global collaboration. A significant message from participants was that the GSO is part of a Geneva space that was defined by many participants as far more multi-stakeholder than what one finds at the UN General Assembly in New York. Geneva-based UN agencies and other international organizations here have been more involved in technical capacity building - with a policy focus, to be sure, but less driven by the political dynamics of the UN that dominate the intergovernmental deliberations in New York.

A strong and growing concentration of non-state actors in the midst of the multiplicity of international organizations in the Geneva international scene may become an expanding opportunity for implementation and accountability by non-state actors and multi-stakeholder partnerships. More thought should be directed to the opportunities for multi-stakeholder coalitions here, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, and on how to manage both trust-building and accountability. Readers are encouraged to read the full report of the 11 June dialogue on the GSO website [here](#).

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II. **Commentary on International Organizations and NGOs**

The Next Stages on the Post-2015 Road to Development

The Open Working Group (OWG) on the Sustainable Development Goals has been the focus of our attention on the deliberations regarding the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and we are pleased to confirm that our summary reports from 24 April and 11 June have been received by the OWG. Meanwhile, there is a different venue that is running parallel to the OWG. This is the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) that has replaced the Commission on

Sustainable Development as a result of the decisions taken at the Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development in June 2012. The HLPF met for the first time at the level of heads of state in September 2013. It is holding its second meeting from 30 June to 9 July 2014 in association with the Economic and Social Council of the UN in New York and includes both a “moderated dialogues” segment in the first week and a “high-level segment with ministerial dialogues” on 7 to 9 July 2014. This HLPF is the “implementing” body for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

A review of the programme for the HLPF suggests that there are certain new “buzz words” that are flitting up to the surface. There are “moderated dialogues” on sustainable consumption and production, on “means of implementation”, on the role of science, on partnerships, and on countries in “special situations”. The programme also includes some broader visionary dialogues to share assessments on the progress in advancing the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit, the future of the HLPF, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We are impressed that one of the “moderated dialogues” on 2 July was moderated by our friend and head of the Scaling Up Nutrition Secretariat David Nabarro. We are not surprised to note that it is entitled “From silos to integrated policy-making”. A review of the event as webcast from the UN confirms that the GSO is on the same track in promoting the inter-linkages among goals and targets in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The High-Level Political Forum continues on 7 to 9 July with yet another round of thematic dialogues, this time at the ministerial level. There will be a ministerial declaration at the end of this event, and the GSO looks forward to reviewing the priorities there. We do understand that the deliberations at a different recent event, the first gathering of the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi in June 2014 included a prediction that the SDGs will eventually be consolidated into an overarching framework of

three “transformational” and integrative goals – (1) Leave no one behind; (2) Live within a safe operating space; and (3) Build assets for the future. Each goal will, so the prediction goes, have only five targets – one for incorporating each of the three pillars of sustainable development and two for means of implementation.

The OWG, meanwhile, is proving to be a highly consultative process managed by its co-chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Kenya Macharia Kamau and of Hungary Csaba Körösi to the United Nations in New York. They have issued a “revised zero draft” of goals and targets for consideration at the concluding session of the OWG on 14 to 18 July 2014. See the revised draft [here](#). There are fewer targets than in the original zero draft (down from 212), but there are still 17 goals. In particular, we understand that the targets for the goal on “means of implementation” have been cut back. In general revisions have been made with regard to the main task of connecting global commitments to national ones. The final OWG on 14 to 18 July will be preceded by three days of “informal informal consultations” on 9 to 11 July – overlapping slightly with the concluding session of the High-level Political Forum. There will be no further OWG meetings after 18 July 2014.

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The UNCTAD Contribution to Financing of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The launch of the UNCTAD 2014 Investment Report occurred on 24 June 2014, with updates on international inward and outward trends for foreign direct investment, as well as domestic and international policy implications. With regard to the Post—2015 Development Agenda, the 2014 Investment Report devotes its thematic section to the challenge of investing in the post-2015

Sustainable Development Goals and proposes a bold Action Plan for Promoting Private Contributions.

The UNCTAD report notes that the investment gap for the SDGs is huge, taking into account the goals of poverty eradication, food security, healthy lifestyles for all at all ages, education, climate change, infrastructure and related requirements for the preliminary targets among these 17 or so goals. One estimate used in the UNCTAD report suggests that the total needed for investment in these goals is \$3.9 trillion, while the currently available overseas development assistance is at \$1.4 trillion. That leaves a gap of \$2.5 trillion. The report presents the Action Plan for Promoting Private Contributions on the basis of the credible assumption that private financial sources are needed as the main source of financing for this gap. The Action Plan focuses in on water and sanitation, other infrastructure needs, agriculture and climate change mitigation as the channels where one might maximize impact and decrease risks through private sector engagement. Others, such as education, health or even climate change adaptation (as opposed to mitigation) might be more difficult to integrate with private sector financing. The UNCTAD report identifies certain “priority action packages” and urges governments to develop new investment promotion strategies and institutions. The key is to develop a “changing global business mindset” and “developing SDG investment expertise”. This bold action plan for SDGs is described more fully [here](#).

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A divided Human Rights Council moves ahead with two views on business and human rights

Many observers of the 26th session of the Human Rights Council which met from 10 June to 28 June 2014 have remarked about how divided the Council’s membership has become, voting in blocs

and exacerbating the North-South divide in its deliberations. This was especially pronounced in the failure to reach a consensus on a single resolution to address the renewal of the Council’s mandate for the Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

The “renewal” resolution (A/HRC/26/L.1) was sponsored by Norway and supported by a “core group” that included Argentina, Ghana, the Russian Federation and India (who dropped out of the core group at an early stage). The competition came from a resolution sponsored by Ecuador and South Africa to establish a new working group – an open-ended, inter-governmental working group - to proceed with inter-governmental negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other “business entities” with respect to human rights. Numerous informal consultations were convened by Ecuador on the one side, and by Norway on the other, each claiming to be prepared to accommodate the other but neither side being really forthcoming about it.

On the closing days of the session, the sponsors of the competing resolution held firm to their position to proceed with their resolution as modified ([A/HRC/26/L.22 Rev](#)), calling for the drafting of an international legally binding instrument. The opposing side called for a vote, which ended up with 20 in favor, 14 against, and 13 abstaining. The 14 opposing the resolution were all developed countries. A closer scrutiny of the vote shows that the Latin American and African states were divided between voting yes and abstaining, but all of the Asian states voted yes. Later, when the final version of the Norwegian resolution ([language for A/HCR/26/L.1 Rev](#)) came back up, it was approved without a vote.

The mandate for negotiating an international legally binding instrument will start with a five-day session sometime before September 2015 and will continue with additional sessions aimed at the drafting of the actual instrument no later than 2017. Meanwhile,

the resolution put forward by Norway and the core group provides for a variety of parallel initiatives on the issue of “access to remedy”, which has been the driving issue for the international legally binding instrument. In other words, the resolution contains a large array of initiatives that will proceed at the same time as the open-ended, inter-governmental working group does its work.

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III. Upcoming Events

GSO events

- GSO Management Committee – 8 July 2014
- Third Enhanced Learning Exercise in San Salvador, El Salvador – 17-18 July 2014
- GSO General Assembly – September 2014. Stay tuned for date and time

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Key upcoming events of interest to the GSO

- UNCTAD [Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation, second session \(trade facilitation\)](#) Geneva, Switzerland 30 Jun – 7 Jul
- UNOHCHR [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women / 58th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 30 Jun – 18 Jul
- CMBD [Webinar on The Skills Gap](#) 1 July 2014
- WTO [Trade Policy Review: China](#) Geneva, Switzerland 1 Jul – 3 Jul
- UNCTAD, UNEP, UNFCCC, World Bank [Africa Carbon Forum](#) Luanda, Angola 2 – 4 July
- UNCTAD [Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy, fourteenth session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 7 Jul – 9 Jul
- ECOSOC [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) New York 30 Jun - 11 Jul
- UNOHCHR [Expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples / 7th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 7 Jul – 11 Jul
- UNOHCHR [Human Rights Committee / 111th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 7 Jul – 25 Jul
- Codex [Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission](#) Geneva, Switzerland 8 Jul – 11 Jul
- UNGA [High-level Meeting for the comprehensive review and assessment of progress on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases](#) New York 10 Jul – 11 Jul
- ECOSOC [Coordination and Management Meeting](#) 14 Jul – 16 Jul
- UN [13th session of the OWG on the SDGs](#) New York 14 Jul – 18 Jul
- Codex [Codex Alimentarius Commission](#) Geneva, Switzerland 14 Jul – 18 Jul
- UNICEF, UNWOMEN [20th International AIDS conference](#) Melbourne, Australia 20 Jul – 25 Jul
- ECOSOC [Organizational session for 2014-15 programme of work](#) 21 Jul – 22 Jul
- CMBD [Post-2015 Development Agenda: Priorities and Indicators for Trade and Economic Growth](#) 29 Jul (note date change from 22 July)
- WTO [Dispute Settlement Body](#) Geneva, Switzerland 22 Jul
- WTO [Trade Policy Review: Panama](#) Geneva, Switzerland 23 Jul – 25 Jul
- UN [UNGA Dialogue 4 on Technology Transfer Mechanism](#) New York, USA 23 Jul
- WTO [General Council](#) Geneva, Switzerland 24 Jul – 25 Jul
- UNESCO [Access to Water for All in Africa](#) Yamoussoukro, Cote d’Ivoire 30 Jul – 31 Jul
- UN [Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing](#) New York 4 Aug – 8 Aug
- CBD [Eastern Africa Regional Workshop of the UN-Water Initiative “Capacity Development to Support National Drought Management Policies”](#) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 5 Aug - 8 Aug
- ICC [2014 Panama Launch of ICC Mediation Rules](#) Panama 6 Aug
- UNIDO [Third Meeting of the UN Steering Committee on Statistics of economies based on natural resources](#) Vienna, Austria 6 Aug - 8 Aug

- UNOHCHR [Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council / 13th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland
11 Aug - 15 Aug
- UNOHCHR [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination / 85th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland
11 Aug - 29 Aug
- FAO [29th International Horticultural Congress](#) Brisbane, Australia 17 Aug - 24 Aug
- UNOHCHR [WG on communications / 15th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 18 Aug - 22 Aug
- CBD [International Workshop on Financing for Biodiversity](#) Ittingen, Switzerland 18 Aug - 19 Aug
- ILO [XX Congress on Safety and Health at Work: "Sharing a Vision for Sustainable Prevention"](#) Frankfurt am Main, Germany 24 Aug - 27 Aug
- UNOHCHR [Human Rights Council – Organizational meeting / 27th session](#) Geneva, Switzerland 25 Aug
- CMBD [UN General Assembly Forecasts](#) 26 Aug
- CBD [Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Pacific Region on Traditional Knowledge and Customary sustainable use under the CBD](#) Apia, Samoa 27 Aug - 29 Aug
- WHO [Global Conference on Climate Change and Health](#) 27 Aug – 29 Aug
- IEA [Launch of Medium-Term Renewable Energy Market Report 2014](#) Bonn 28 Aug

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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.

www.gsogeneva.ch