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# GPF Newsletter

September 6, 2019



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## Upcoming Events

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### Who's paying the bill? – Reshaping Governance for Sustainability

**Spotlight Report Launch Brussels, 11 September 2019**



Four years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda the world is off-track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to turn the transformational vision of the 2030 Agenda into real transformational policies, there needs to be a shift towards more coherent fiscal and regulatory policies. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is not just a matter of better policies. It requires more holistic and more sweeping shifts in how and where power is vested, including through institutional, legal, social, economic and political commitments to realising human rights and ecological justice. This is the key message of this year's "Spotlight Report on Sustainable Development" that is co-authored by a network of international NGOs, human rights organisations, think tanks, and trade unions since 2016. In addition, policy coherence for sustainable development requires to fully take into account the externalities and spill-over effects of European policies, production and consumption patterns. With an emphasis on environmental and social impact beyond our borders, the "Spotlight Report Sustainability in Europe. Who is paying the Bill?" was published this year

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### Spotlight Report Launch Brussels

### Who's paying the bill? – Reshaping Governance for Sustainability

**Wednesday, 11 September 2019 16h00 to 18h30**

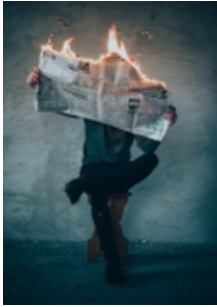
**EKD Office Brussels Rue Joseph II 166, 1000 Brussels**

Download the [invitation and draft programme here](#).

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## UN-Gipfel in New York – Reagiert die Politik auf Klimakrise und Armut?

Pressebriefing in Berlin, 11. September 2019



Die Zahl der Hungernden steigt wieder, die Ungleichheit zwischen Armen und Reichen wächst, Artenvielfalt schwindet und die Klimakrise ist allgegenwärtig. In dieser Situation kommen Staats- und Regierungschefs, darunter Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel, im September zu einem Gipfel-Marathon in New York zusammen. Am 23. September lädt UN-Generalsekretär António Guterres zum Klimagipfel, direkt im Anschluss (24.-25.9.) findet der sogenannte „SDG-Gipfel“ zu den Zielen für nachhaltige Entwicklung statt. Am 26. September folgt eine Konferenz zur Finanzierung nachhaltiger Entwicklung. Bei unserem Pressebriefing wollen wir mit Ihnen über unsere Erwartungen an die Gipfel diskutieren.

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### Pressebriefing in Berlin

## UN-Gipfel in New York – Reagiert die Politik auf Klimakrise und Armut?

Pressebriefing von BUND, DNR, Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung und Global Policy Forum

Mittwoch, 11. September 2019, 09:00 Uhr Hotel Albrechtshof (Bankettsaal, Albrechtsstraße 8, 10117 Berlin)

Zum Programm [geht es hier](#).

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## Global Policy Watch

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### UN General Assembly Week of Summits: Q&A

*From Barbara Adams, Roberto Bissio, Karen Judd and Elena Marmo*

Over a hundred Heads of State or Government are expected to arrive to New York in the last week of September for a series of back-to-back summit meetings at the opening of the General Assembly of the United Nations. On top of the usual photo opportunities and a myriad of bilateral meetings between leaders, this High-level week provides an opportunity for multilateral action to shift away from ‘business as usual’ and address some enormous current challenges.

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### VNRs and Progress Measurement Beyond the HLPF

*By Elena Marmo*

Since 2016, 142 countries worldwide have submitted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) as part of the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), reporting on progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the action plan of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The VNRs play a prominent role in the annual Economic

and Social Council (ECOSOC) HLPF with both criticism and acclaim. However, it's important to consider how VNRs are taking hold beyond the formal sessions in the HLPF every year. The VNRs elucidate gaps in the global indicator framework and are appearing in discussions of UN Country Teams (UNCTs), the UN Statistical Commission and the Committee for Development Policy (CDP).

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## Technocratic Fiddling While the Planet Burns: Towards a Higher Level of Ambition for the HLPF

*By Kate Donald, Director, Human Rights in Economic and Social Policy, Center for Economic and Social Rights*

The 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development—the global platform for reviewing progress on the SDGs—took place last week at the UN in New York, and in general terms, it was more of the same. Admirable rhetoric, but not much evidence of serious efforts at comprehensive implementation, and a host of major flaws and limitations to contend with. As CESR has observed at previous HLPFs (see 2017 and 2018), the space given to civil society is far too limited, most of the Voluntary National Reviews feel very disconnected from reality, and one leaves with the feeling that most governments are at best timidly tinkering around the edges, making minor adjustments to business-as-usual while the planet burns.

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## VNRs, National “Spotlight” Reports and the Future of the HLPF

Every year since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, governments are invited to present Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on their progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the UN. This process is heralded by some as a great opportunity to hold governments accountable to their actions and by others as a beauty contest riddled with misrepresentation and power imbalances. Civil society organizations in many countries produce their own alternative “spotlight reports,” playing with the name of “shadow reports” traditionally given to such independent voices in the Human Rights context.

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**Check our new [Global Policy Watch Notice Board](#) for updates on current affairs around the United Nations in New York.**

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**GLOBAL POLICY  
WATCH**

**Spotlight on  
Sustainable Development**  
Report by the Reflection Group  
on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**2030AGENDA<sub>de</sub>**  
Infos zu den **SDGs**

**So geht Nachhaltigkeit!**  
Deutschland und die  
globale Nachhaltigkeitsagenda

### Red carpet courts: 10 stories of how the rich and powerful hijacked justice



Imagine an environmentally or socially destructive corporate project – say, a toxic mine, which could poison your local supply of water, or a luxury real estate project, which would displace hundreds of people in its neighbourhood. You and your community oppose the plans, the courts judge in your favour and the project is stopped. Seems like a community victory right? But then, the company behind the project sues your country for interfering with its profits, demanding millions or even billions in compensation, including for future profits. Actually, you do not need to imagine all this. It is the reality. The ISDS parallel justice system for big business is again and again used as a corporate weapon against the public interest. In a new report by Friends of the Earth Europe and International, the Transnational Institute (TNI) and Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), the organizations present 10 recent cases from around the world that show how the red carpet courts continue to thrive and reinforce injustice across the world.

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### UN signs deal with Davos that threatens democratic principles



A global corporate and government marriage took place mid June 2019 – and governments and citizens were not even invited as guests. The occasion was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the corporate-led World Economic Forum (WEF) and the United Nations. The nuptial agreement commits the two institutions to unprecedented levels of cooperation and coordination in the fields of education, women, financing, climate change, and health. At first glance, this agreement may sound entirely beneficial. Harris Gleckman, senior fellow at the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the University of Massachusetts Boston and Director of Benchmark Environmental Consulting warns in this article that the memorandum is not just about cooperation, but rather establishes an institutional home for multinational corporations inside the UN. There is no similar space in the UN system for civil society, for academics, for religious leaders, or for youth. In its strong advocacy for a “multistakeholder” approach to global governance which demotes the primacy of states to make global decisions, it also marks a fundamental challenge to a nation-state global governance system that - despite its flaws - has clear obligations, responsibilities and liabilities.

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### Citizens demand the EU stops stalling on a treaty to ensure that businesses respect human rights



This week saw the publication of the landmark revised draft of a UN treaty which aims to prevent human rights abuses by transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and close existing gaps in access to justice for victims. A coalition of 20 European civil society groups welcomes in its joint press release the publication of the revised draft UN Treaty on business and human rights and calls on the EU to conduct a thorough analysis of it. This is particularly important as the revised draft addresses many of the EU's previous concerns, by building on the existing UN Principles on Business and Human Rights and defining which business activities should be covered. A new analysis should build the basis for a determined, proactive EU engagement in the upcoming 5th session, taking place in October 2019 in Geneva. The undersigned therefore urge the EU and its Member States to analyse the content of the revised draft and work in a transparent, inclusive process.

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