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GPF Newsletter
May 21, 2020

Latest from GPF
Global Policy Watch
What's new

 Latest from GPF

Webinar: Finanzierung nachhaltiger Entwicklung in der Corona-Krise

Die Corona-Pandemie hat die Welt überraschend und unvorbereitet in eine Dreifachkrise geworfen: eine Gesundheitskrise, eine Wirtschaftskrise und eine Finanzkrise. In einem Webinar von VENRO erläutert Bodo Ellmers, welche neuen Rahmenbedingungen für die Agenda 2030 und die Finanzierung nachhaltiger Entwicklung sich damit ergeben.

Weathering the storm?

Developing countries have been hit hard by the economic fallout of the coronavirus crisis. Commodity prices have collapsed, and with them their export revenues. Since mass unemployment has spread in the global north, remittances from migrant workers have also been falling. Quarantines and travel restrictions have made tourism nonexistant. Capital flight from developing countries since the beginning of the corona crisis has been faster and
greater than during the great financial crisis of 2008. In March alone, an estimated $100 billion left the Global South towards ostensibly safer havens. The article by Bodo Ellmers assesses why the recently agreed debt relief by the G20 is far from what is needed. The author argues that states must prioritize human rights-related expenditures - such as for education and health services - over debt servicing when funds run out.

Global Policy Watch

UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up on UN Sustainable Development Activities – 14/05/2020

UN Secretary-General António Guterres introduce a report and assessment of progress in the reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) which will be deliberated during the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS). This segment will take place virtually, 19-22 May, and 27 May, and its official programme and a series of reports are now available online.

Feminist Solidarity for a Collective Response to COVID-19

By Emilia Reyes

Members of the Civil Society Community have launched a website on feminist responses to COVID-19, an initiative born out of an alliance between members of feminist networks working on multilateral platforms. The below guest blog is an introduction to the initiative, a feminist analysis of COVID-19 and a collection of feminist principles and actions needed to create urgent and systemic change.

UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up 05/05/2020

The 2020 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is scheduled to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and progress towards the SDGs on 7-16 July 2020. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has released a provisional programme and concept note for the 2020 HLPF. DESA has also announced new modalities for virtual side events and exhibitions.

UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up 30/04/2020

The International Labour Organization (ILO) issued a COVID-19 monitor on the world of work in light of the global coronavirus on 29 April. This was accompanied by a press release specifically focusing on informal work. It reports that: “1.6 billion workers in the informal economy – that is nearly half of the global workforce – stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed” due to COVID-19.
UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up 28/04/2020

WHO ACT Accelerator
On 24 April, the World Health Organization announced a multi-stakeholder initiative called the “Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, or the ACT Accelerator”. The ACT Accelerator describes itself as “a collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies”. It is “grounded in a vision of a planet protected from human suffering and the devastating social and economic consequences of COVID-19”.

UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up 23/04/2020

Member States adopted General Assembly Resolution “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19” on 20 April under silence procedure.

Corona: Curse or Opportunity?
Guest blog by Ziad Abdel Samad
Ziad Abdel Samad of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) offers a critical analysis of the far-reaching impacts of the coronavirus and its role in exposing fault lines, from social safety nets to global trade and financial systems. In this guest blog, which highlights the experience of Arab States, he also explores the importance and impact of the state and interstate dynamics in protecting humanity a human rights.

UN Monitor: COVID-19 Round-Up 21/04/2020

The Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (FACTI) Panel, a joint General Assembly and ECOSOC initiative established in early 2020, will hold a virtual consultation with Member States on 24 April. The Panel has made available an overview of existing mechanisms and a concept note of their work. Among their priorities will be addressing financial secrecy.


The global impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the responses have raised a wide range of human rights concerns. UN human rights experts and the UN High Commissioner have spoken out, collectively and individually, issuing statements covering the full range of civic, political, economic and cultural rights.

UN Monitor: COVID-19 & UN Silence Procedure – 17/04/2020
The UN General Assembly (UNGA) Member States have adopted by consensus a Resolution (A/RES/74/270) on COVID-19 that calls for “international cooperation” and “multilateralism”. The resolution recognizes the "unprecedented effects of the pandemic, including the severe disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global travel and commerce, and the devastating impact on the livelihood of people". It calls for "intensified international cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat the pandemic, including by exchanging information, scientific knowledge and best practices". It stresses "the need for full respect for human rights" and states that "there is no place for any form of discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the response to the pandemic".

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What's new

Corona Lobby Watch - Opportunistic lobbyists abuse the EU’s unprecedented health crisis

Lobbyists for many industries are opportunistically repackaging old demands, or developing new ones, and using the Corona Crisis to justify them, even though in many cases there is no clear link to the health emergency. Corporate Europe Observatory has set up Corona Lobby Watch, in order to ensure that civil society can continue to monitor the moves of 'Coronawashing' lobbyists.

CSOs call for halt to WTO negotiations during COVID-19 crisis

Over 250 civil society organizations (CSOs) have called for a halt to all trade and investment treaty negotiations during the COVID-19 outbreak and instead to refocus on access to medical supplies and saving lives. In an open letter to trade ministries as well as the World Trade Organization
(WTO), the CSOs said they were shocked that “some trade negotiations are still continuing in the WTO, as well as bilaterally and regionally, using virtual technologies.” The first and only priority for trade negotiators at this time should be to remove all obstacles, including intellectual property rules, in existing agreements that hinder timely and affordable access to medical supplies, such as lifesaving medicines, devices, diagnostics and vaccines, and the ability of governments to take whatever steps are necessary to address this crisis, they said.

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**Time to rally behind the World Health Organization**

The unprecedented outbreak of the new coronavirus once again places the WHO at the centre of global public action for health. Independent global health experts in countries around the world have highlighted the importance of the WHO in the response to this global public health crisis both in terms of transparency and timeliness of recommendations and decisions. This is no small feat given heavy critique of its handling of the Ebola Crisis in West Africa in 2014/15, the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic in 2009, and the SARS outbreak of 2003. It shows that this unique UN Organization has taken a big step forward in the performance as the coordinating agency in global health. US President Donald Trump’s serious accusations, disgraceful campaigning and threats of withholding WHO funding can only be understood as a blame-game by a government that scapegoats others for its own lack of responsibility and failure to prevent and manage the crisis. In a joint letter, members of the Geneva Global Health Hub condemn this tirade against WHO as baseless and unacceptable, particularly in such a critical situation that requires solidarity.