

2020
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2020 IN REVIEW



“Today, we face a global public enemy like no other. In an interconnected world, none of us is safe until all of us are safe. COVID-19 respects no borders. COVID-19 anywhere is a threat to people everywhere.”

-- UN Secretary-General António Guterres, at the launch of the COVAX Initiative in April 2020

Human-centered and value-based multilateralism is essential to address current challenges in the complex world order. COVID-19 has not only made this more urgent, but has also exposed the fault lines and gaps in the international architecture. The United Nations presents opportunities to strengthen international cooperation and a value-driven, rules-based international order. Still, it needs to confront policy gaps, address interlinkages among a myriad of issues, and design policies and actions in an interconnected way.

To inform the necessary transformation required of the current UN System, Global Policy Forum (GPF) continues to monitor and report on intergovernmental and United Nations activities, scrutinizing the UN system and engaging with country representatives and UN officials to advance human rights and sustainability.

In early 2020, the intergovernmental system was confronted with responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, from immediate humanitarian and health needs to medium and longer-term socio-economic policy. 2020 saw the creation of several new initiatives, including the High-level process on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19, and Beyond and the World Health Organization’s COVAX initiative.

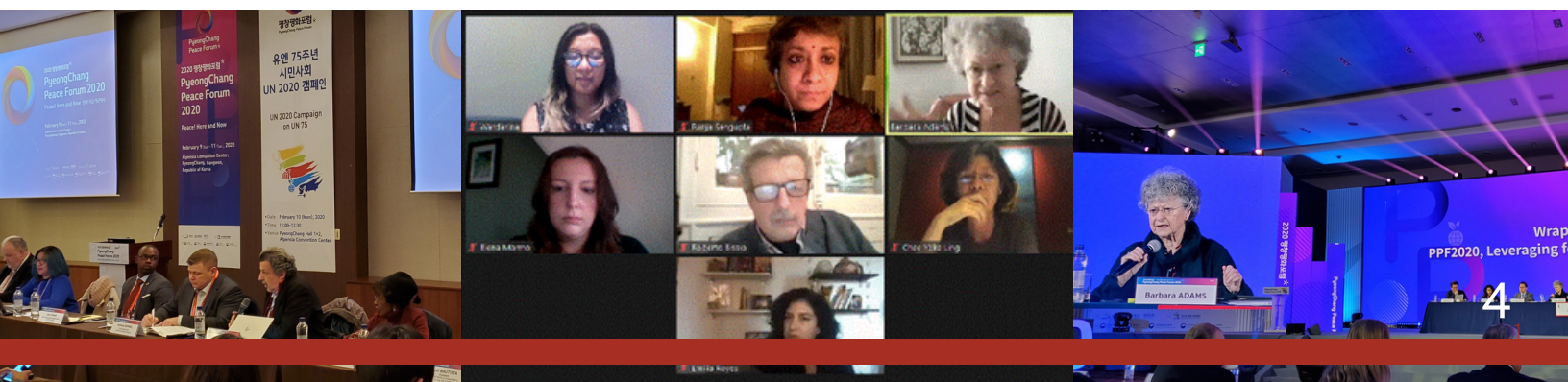
Additionally, longstanding intergovernmental fora turned their focus to the impact of COVID-19, including the UN Statistical Commission, Commission on the Status of Women, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Operational Activities for Development Segment, The High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and the General Assembly Plenary and its Committees.

Notably, 2020 also marked the beginning of the Decade of Action on Sustainable Development, the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, and a critical year for reform across the UN System, including the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and the ECOSOC/HLPF Review.

In addition, there were a series of high-level meetings at the 75th Session of the General Assembly: the first annual “SDG Moment” launching the Decade of Action, the High-level meeting to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the UN, the Biodiversity Summit, the High-level meeting on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing +25) and the High-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The General Assembly also held its 31st Special session in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the 3rd and 4th of December 2020.

GPF contributes constructively to the policy considerations of Member States and helps bridge the gap between public interest in sustainable development and meaningful participation of civil society in global policy decisions through enhanced knowledge sharing. GPF’s strategy combines three components: monitoring, advocacy, and networking through a multidirectional communications strategy. This strategy consists of leveraging GPF’s expertise, proximity, and relationships to inform policy decision-making by Member States and international institutions as well as real-time reporting from the United Nations in New York to inform public interest groups and civil society.

The work of Global Policy Forum during 2020 continued the monitoring, advocacy, and networking activities of previous years with an emphasis on reporting and accountability, as well as an added focus on the impact of COVID-19. Active citizen participation is needed to defend and strengthen multilateralism and international governance institutions against rising xenophobic, authoritarian, and unilateralist trends that threaten peace, development, and sustainability.



GLOBAL POLICY WATCH

Global Policy Watch, the main project of GPF – convened with the Instituto del Tercer Mundo (Social Watch) – was developed to promote accountability and to engage Civil Society Organizations working on the full range of issues of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Social Watch’s network of local, national, and regional CSOs enables GPW to reach a wide audience with its analysis and to support CSO activities. GPF leads the Global Policy Watch project by applying its two-pronged organizational approach to monitoring and advocating on UN policy processes and meetings related to the 2030 Agenda. It is used by public interest groups as a primary source of information and analysis on UN developments.

The website (www.globalpolicywatch.org) serves as the monitoring tool of the project and the backbone of its information activities. It is updated regularly with content based on the current UN dialogues and negotiations, mainly those related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, measurement of the SDGs, the Financing for Development processes, and UN reform. Website content is produced primarily in the English language. There were 11 posts on the website in Spanish in 2020 and 2021. Occasionally, information can be found in German or other key languages.

The site features Global Policy Watch blogs, UN meeting highlights, press releases, and briefings on issues of priority for Member States at the UN Headquarters in New York. Over the course of 2020, Global Policy Watch produced five briefings, 11 UN Monitors, 12 COVID-19 Round-ups, 11 blog entries, and six press-releases – a list can be found in Annex 2. The website (English version) received 8,142 visits from 141 countries (13,944 page views). The Spanish version of the website received 33,932 visits from 113 countries (39,374 page views). This translates to a total of 42,074 visits and 53,318 page views.

WRITTEN PUBLICATIONS

Global Policy Forum publications provide a detailed assessment of UN processes and are used to inspire and prompt policy advances/advocacy among Member States, UN Staff, and CSOs. In 2020, GPF introduced the “COVID-19 Round-Up” as a tool for quickly and succinctly summarizing key intergovernmental developments, meetings, and advocacy opportunities. The Round-Up served to distill complex and disparate information which was deeply needed as COVID-19 recovery efforts, priorities, and data shifted quickly and was made available across a myriad of websites and sources. These became a one-stop-shop for Civil Society to understand the agenda, and for Member States and UN staff to note harmony and dissonance across policy processes and UN agencies.

See, for example [COVID-19 Round-Up #8](#) which was translated into both Spanish and French given the demand for pertinent information regarding the High-level Political Forum.

In addition, in 2020, GPF continued to make use of the UN Monitor which was added to their communications strategy in 2019 (cf. Annex 1). The UN Monitor serves a hybrid purpose – synthesizing negotiations and positions of Member States, while also making connections across policy processes, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



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The UN Monitor also serves as an accountability tool, holding governments accountable to positions they take, or applying pressure in other cases. Through the introduction of the UN Monitor, GPF has established a reputation amongst Member States, UN Staff, and Civil Society as a thoughtful and reputable source for monitoring and analysis of major negotiations.

[See, for example, UN Monitor 14: “Human Rights in the Digital Age” and UN Monitor 20: “From 2020 HLPF to the first annual ‘SDG Moment’”.](#)

Further, five briefing papers (cf. Annex 2) were prepared to provide an in-depth analysis and snapshot of issues addressed by the United Nations in New York. These papers were disseminated to international mailing lists, reaching several thousand recipients (mainly in the global South), as well as on Global Policy Watch’s own mailing list. They proved highly popular and the content was regularly quoted during negotiations by both Member States and civil society.

In addition, the briefings were regularly forwarded to public and private mailing lists. In particular, the moderated list “Global Social Justice”, a list comprised of researchers and policy-makers specializing on global development issues, frequently reproduces and distributes GPW briefings and UN Monitors, expanding their reach among a specialized audience critical to shaping policy decisions.



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REFLECTION GROUP ON THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Established in 2010, the Reflection Group addresses the structural obstacles that hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, such as the fragmentation of policy processes, the lack of policy coherence, and the influence of corporate vested interests.

Since the 2015 UN Summit on Sustainable Development, the Reflection Group has produced a periodic “Spotlight on Sustainable Development Report” to assess success and setbacks in implementing the 2030 Agenda. GPF has participated in the editorial board for these reports since 2016, as well as being a regular contributor.

The Reflection Group published its fifth Spotlight Report “Shifting policies for systemic change” in September 2020. The GPF New York office contributed a chapter, provided editorial support, and facilitated the launch during the 2020 General Assembly. The report compiled the findings of 14 international and regional civil society networks and trade unions, and around 20 national civil society coalitions. [Download the full report here.](#)

**READ MORE
ONLINE:**

2030SPOTLIGHT.ORG



The virtual launching event of the Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2020 took place on Friday, 18 September 2020.



EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDERS

A few timely grants have helped GPF apply its detailed knowledge of the multilateral system and its strategic thinking on impact areas. Its major project, Global Policy Watch, has received funding from 2015–2020 through the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Additionally, support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund enabled the research, writing, and publication of *Fit for Whose Purpose?* – which has become a seminal publication for UN, Member State representatives, and CSOs alike, and has driven and inspired many initiatives.

As a co-convenor of the Global Civil Society Reflection Group, GPF facilitates thoughtful dialogue and cross-cutting analysis amongst civil society organizations dedicated to promoting accountability in global negotiations.

GPF has been monitoring and reporting (through written pieces, presentations, and informal advice) on the dynamics of global negotiations. General support will allow GPF to build upon its extensive expertise and respected position with CSOs to expand civic space in order to meaningfully shape and contribute to a critical reshaping of international institutions.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: GPF FACTS & FIGURES

GPF was founded in New York in December 1993 by a group of progressive scholars and activists. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, with consultative status at the UN, and maintains an office at UN headquarters in New York. In September 2004, Global Policy Forum Europe (GPF Europe) was founded as GPF's sister organization and is registered as a not-for-profit organization in Germany.

GPF operations are governed by a Board in New York, and GPF Europe's operations are governed by a separate Board in Bonn, Germany. Most of GPF's and GPF Europe's annual funding comes from foundations, partner organizations, membership fees and individual donations.

The GPF Board and staff 2020:

Barbara Adams – President
Marina Lent – Vice President
Marina Durano – Treasurer
Jens Martens – Secretary
Elena Marmo – Programme Officer
Sarah Dayringer – Programme Team Member
Carter Boyd – Summer Intern
Tejaswini Vavilala – Research Intern

ANNEX 2: BRIEFINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

UN75 Political Declaration: Perspectives on the lynchpin role of UN financing	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/04/un75-political-declaration-perspectives-on-the-lynchpin-role-of-un-financing/
COVID-19 and the SDGs	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/18/covid-19-and-the-sdgs/
Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/08/27/ffd-covid-19-and-beyond/
Financing Sustainable Development in the Era of Covid-19 and Beyond	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/12/09/financing-sustainable-development-in-the-era-of-covid-19-and-beyond/
Re-inventing multilateral solidarity: rhetoric, reaction or realignment of power?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/20/re-inventing-multilateral-solidarity/

ANNEX 3: UN MONITOR PUBLICATIONS

UN Monitor 12: UN Statistical Commission 2020. From Measurement to Management	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/02/19/un-statistical-commission-2020/
UN Monitor 13: Tackling Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) at the United Nations: what will the FACTI Panel deliver?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/02/20/tackling-illicit-financial-flows-iffs-at-the-united-nations-what-will-the-facti-panel-deliver/
UN Monitor 14: Human Rights in the Digital Age	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/05/human-rights-digital-age/
UN Monitor 15: UN Monitor: COVID-19 tests the UN's response to development challenges	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/11/covid-19-tests-the-uns-response/
UN Monitor 16: All protocols observed	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/12/un-monitor-all-protocols-observed/
UN Monitor 17: 2020 HLPF, one decade to go: tinkering or transformation?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/25/2020-hlpf-transformation/
UN Monitor 18: Heard at the 2020 HLPF	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/07/24/heard-at-the-2020-hlpf/
UN Monitor 19: The Impact of Digital Technologies: a UN75 Priority?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/01/un75-impact-digital-technologies/
UN Monitor 20: From 2020 HLPF to the first annual "SDG Moment"	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/18/from-2020-hlpf-to-the-first-annual-sdg-moment/
UN Monitor 21: UN Reform on the agenda in its 75th year	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/11/03/un-reform-75th-year/

ANNEX 4: OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Round Up 1	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/13/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-10-04-2020/
Round Up 2	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/20/un-monitor-covid-19/
Round Up 3	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/21/un-monitor-covid-19-2/
Round Up 4	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/22/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up/
Round Up 5	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/24/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-23-04-2020/
Round Up 6	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/29/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-28-04-2020/
Round Up 7	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/30/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-30-04-2020/
Round Up 8	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/05/05/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-05-05-2020/
Round Up 9	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/05/14/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-on-un-sustainable-development-activities/
Round Up 10	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/05/25/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-2/
Round Up 11	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/06/15/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-15-06-2020/
Round Up 12	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/07/un-monitor-covid-19-round-up-on-un-general-assembly-high-level-meetings-04-09-2020/

ANNEX 4: OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Weathering the Storm?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/21/weathering-the-storm/
Corona curse or opportunity?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/04/23/corona-curse-opportunity/
Feminist Solidarity for a Collective Response to COVID-19	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/05/07/feminist-solidarity-covid-19
US Leveraging its money in global and regional fora	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/11/us-leveraging-its-money-in-global-and-regional-fora/
Women's Major Group Position Paper on the HLPF Review	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/02/12/womens-major-group-position-paper-on-the-hlpf-review/
Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021: The yawning gap between development finance needs and political ambition	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/04/06/financing-for-sustainable-development-report-2021-the-yawning-gap-between-development-finance-needs-and-political-ambition/
Broad consensus, paltry results. The UN Forum on Financing for Development 2021	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/05/05/broad-consensus-paltry-results-the-un-forum-on-financing-for-development-2021/
World Economic Forum and the corporate takeover of the global governance of our food systems (guest blog by IATP)	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/03/11/world-economic-forum-and-the-corporate-takeover-of-the-global-governance-of-our-food-systems/
Don't say nobody warned us	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/03/27/dont-say-nobody-warned-us/
The global corona crisis – A summary of key policy mappings and databases	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/03/30/global-corona-crisis/
UN General Assembly Special Session: Transformation or Continuation of the Status Quo?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/12/03/un-general-assembly-special-session-transformation-or-continuation-of-the-status-quo/
Vague promises won't solve global crises	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/07/16/press-release-vague-promises-wont-solve-global-crisis/
Launch of the global civil society report Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2020	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/09/17/press-release-launch-of-the-global-civil-society-report-spotlight-on-sustainable-development-2020/
Launch of CDP Paper: National Reports on the 2030 Agenda: What do they (not) reveal?	https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2020/07/05/online-launch-of-cdp-paper/