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Global Policy Forum Annual Report 2018



Annual Report 2018



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I. Overview

Global Policy Forum (GPF) is an independent policy watchdog that monitors the activities of the United Nations (UN). It scrutinizes global policymaking and promotes accountability and civic participation in decisions related to social justice, sustainability, peace and security, human rights and international law.

GPF is convinced that active civic participation is needed to defend and strengthen multilateralism and international governance institutions. While far from perfect, the human rights-based global governance system is the best defense against rising xenophobic, authoritarian and unilateralist trends that threaten peace, development and sustainability.

GPF monitors UN negotiations and processes, undertakes original research and maintains a dynamic communications programme that includes publications, newsletters, presentations, and social media. It plays an active role in civil society networks and interest groups. GPF organizes meetings and conferences; publishes reports and policy papers; and participates in policy dialogues and expert group meetings that address the implications of the changing world on multilateral principles, values and commitments.

Basic facts

GPF was founded in New York in December 1993 by a group of progressive scholars and activists. GPF

is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, with consultative status at the UN. It maintains an office near the UN headquarters in New York. In September 2004, Global Policy Forum Europe (GPF Europe) was founded as the partner-organization of GPF. GPF Europe is registered as a not-for-profit organization in Germany. Its office is in Bonn, Germany. GPF provides expertise and is a resource for universities, United Nations staff and Member States.

Programs

GPF uses a holistic approach, linking social with economic, financial, and environmental issues, peace and security, human rights and gender equity. GPF's and GPF Europe's programmes currently focus on sustainable development, human rights, financing for development and tax justice, corporate accountability and the influence and power of transnational corporations, UN reform and global governance. The delivery of its many programme commitments includes two major projects in which it plays a leadership role: Global Policy Watch (GPW), and the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

GPF Website

The GPF website (www.globalpolicy.org) is its primary communications vehicle. The GPF website is one of the most comprehensive independent

The screenshot shows the GPF website homepage. At the top left is the GPF logo (Global Policy Forum). Below it is a navigation menu with links: Home, About GPF, Publications, Events, Internships, Newsletter. A Google Custom Search bar is on the top right. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'What's new' and features a 'Briefing: Das HLPF 2018' article with a thumbnail image of a document. The right column is titled 'Konferenz: Mehr Mut zu Multilateralismus' and features a thumbnail image of a globe. Below the globe image are logos for 'Brot für die Welt', 'MISERERE', and 'GPF'. The text in the right column discusses the challenges of globalization and the need for multilateralism.

sources for information on international politics worldwide. Over the course of 2018, the website received 1,310,991 visits from 189 countries and territories (1,894,052 page views).

Networking

GPF and GPF Europe play an active role in international civil society networks and coalitions, which include Social Watch, the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, and the Treaty Alliance and the 2020 UN Summit initiative. GPF corresponds and engages with many civil society organizations (CSOs), networks, foundations, students and the United Nations. In 2018 GPF conducted training sessions with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) and led graduate student seminars at Fordham University, The New School, and at the 27th International Alliance for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) Annual Conference.

Partners and supporters of GPF

A centerpiece of GPF's work has been its participation in the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives (now called the "Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"), which GPF founded in 2010 in collaboration with a number of international NGOs and networks. Central themes and challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) were discussed at numerous meetings and events. One result was the 2016, 2017 and 2018 reports: "Spotlight on Sustainable Development" (or Spotlight Reports). GPF activities are implemented in close cooperation with civil society organizations and networks. Active partners and supporters of GPF in 2018 include: the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Public Services International (PSI), Social Watch, Society for International Development (SID), Third World Network (TWN) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

II. Programme areas 2018

The Global Policy Forum's work in 2018 continued to focus on the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Means of Implementation (MoI) of the SDGs, and UN reform. In addition, GPF participated actively in the analysis, reporting and discussion on the SDG global indicators.

1. Global Policy Watch

One of GPF's major activities in 2018 was its participation in the Global Policy Watch (GPW) project, which it jointly implemented with ITEM/Social Watch. Barbara Adams represents GPF on Social Watch's international coordinating committee. The overall objective of the project has been to promote accountability and empower citizens in the deliberations and implementation of the full scope of the 2030 Agenda.

During 2018 GPW continued to be a valuable resource on United Nations and inter-governmental processes at the UN headquarters. It focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Financing for Development, and the SDG global indicator framework.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has become a premier driver and justification for institutional and financial reforms along with the collection and analysis of more and more sophisticated

data and statistics. Many UN Commissions are contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs. GPF coverage across UN political processes enabled informed analysis and reporting on the global indicator framework for the SDGs. GPF and GPW have been the primary source of information on these developments for public interest groups, and a major channel for civil society input into the complex mandates and processes.

The GPF office hosts Global Policy Watch, through which GPF participated in the Financing for Development Follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the UN Statistical Commission's work with the Inter-Agency Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs) on global indicators for the SDGs. Additionally, GPF participated in the Commission on the Status of Women and advocated for the use of critical human rights tools, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) and its link to the 2030 Agenda. GPF has continued to organize civil society input into, and participated actively in, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'s operational activities for the development segment, and informal discussions on repositioning the UN development system. This included participating in expert group meetings and UN panels discussing reform proposals.

The screenshot displays the Global Policy Watch website interface. At the top, the logo reads "GLOBAL POLICY WATCH Promoting transparency and accountability in the Post-2015 and Financing for Development processes" alongside the GPF logo. A navigation bar includes links for Home, About, Briefings, Publications, Events, Links, Contact, and a Spanish version. Below the navigation, there is a search bar and social media icons. The main content area features a blog post titled "How to finance SDGs to be discussed at UN next September 24" dated July 29, 2018. The post text states: "The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, will convene a one day meeting with Heads of State, bankers and 'innovators' to explore ways to make global finances work for the SDGs". To the left of the main post, there are sections for "BRIEFINGS" (dated July 12, 2018) titled "SDG shadow implementation – hidden in plain sight" and "ALERT" (dated July 11, 2018) titled "We need to revolutionize care systems if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda". A sidebar on the left contains a graphic for "Oversight Notes" and a text block recommending that the UN and system organizations engage with donors at a strategic level.

GPF aims to help bridge the gap between substantive public interest in sustainable development and civil societies' meaningful participation, as well as to enhance knowledge-sharing between their national and global efforts. This involves combining research, monitoring, advocacy, and networking. Global Policy Watch's contribution to the information flow, monitoring, and civil society advocacy around the 2030 Agenda will be a pivotal part of addressing future and unforeseen challenges to its implementation.

Website: The role of the website (www.globalpolicywatch.org) is to monitor these project developments and provide the backbone for its information activities. The site features Global Policy Watch event priorities, briefings on policy, and updates on discussions happening inside the UN Headquarters in New York. The GPW homepage features the latest publications and Twitter feed, GPW highlights reel, and press releases.

GPW regularly publishes content that addresses key multilateral issues and has become a go-to source for CSOs. As part of its work for the Global Policy Watch GPF took part in the production of six briefing papers in 2018 that provided an in-depth analysis and snapshot of vital topics related to United Nations processes in New York. These were distributed at relevant meetings, through Twitter and frequently reproduced in the mailing lists of Social Watch, Global Policy Forum and other relevant/subject-specific mailing lists. They reached several thousand recipients. Their content was regularly quoted during negotiations by both Member States and civil society. All briefings are published in English, and GPW briefing #22: "The Ups and Downs of Tiers: Measuring SDG Progress" is also published in Spanish on 9 May 2018. The GPW Twitter account (@gpolicywatch) has become a reliable source of information and continues to be the main landing page for those who need trustworthy and real-time updates during important negotiations in New York.

In the context of the GPW project, GPF organized – in cooperation with various partners – a number of events related to the 2030 Agenda and its implementation:

- » **Side event on the margins of the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women: "Strategies for Empowering Rural Women and Girls"** (12 March 2018 at the Church Center in New York).

- » **Side event, in preparation for the 2018 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) follow-up: "Looking forward: How can the FfD Follow-up live up to its full potential?"** (26 April 2018 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York).

- » **Side event on the margins of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: "SDG implementation at national level: What's the point of national reports? VNRs and shadow (or spotlight) reporting: How it is key for meaningful participation and accountability"** (13 July 2018 at We Work Grand Central in New York).

- » **Side event on the occasion of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: "Partnership or Business Case?"** (13 July 2018 at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations in New York).

UN reform and repositioning the UN development system

The 2030 Agenda demands new commitments aimed at a comprehensive transformation of the United Nations. This is the first occasion for the action to be taken on the Secretary-General's reform proposals. In 2018 GPF provided expertise and was an influential voice during the UN development system reform process. This was done through briefing regional groups in preparation for inter-governmental negotiations for the repositioning of the UN development system in A/RES/72/279 and distribution of analysis of key policy implications for the S-G's proposals. For example, this analysis is reflected in January's Global Policy Watch briefing #20, "The 2030 Agenda, donor priorities and UN mandates: Lessons from the WHO experience", which highlights the inadequacy of the quantity and quality of funding for the UN has featured centrally in the Secretary-General's commitments to reposition the UN development system.

In 2018 the UN General Assembly addressed reforms through other key intergovernmental processes, which are interlinked with the repositioning of the United Nations development system (UNDS), such as the 'ECOSOC review' process, and the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Barbara Adams, Senior Policy Advisor, Global Policy Forum, was chosen by the Major Group and other Stakeholders (MGoS) Coordination Mecha-

nism the Steering Group, upon the suggestion of the Co-Chairs (H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, Permanent Representative of Iceland) to participate in a UN retreat organized by the President of ECOSOC entitled: “Fulfilling the vision of the 2030 Agenda: integrated analyses from ECOSOC and its system”, in preparation of the upcoming review by the General Assembly of resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of ECOSOC from 2–3 February 2018 in New York.

Adams was nominated to represent the MGoS for her ability to address all the intricacies of the ECOSOC system, and bring some collective messages on how the ECOSOC system, and the meetings of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) can respond to emerging global development challenges; and workshop ideas to further enhance the results of the ECOSOC.

After the retreat, Barbara Adams was again extended an invitation to meet and discuss reform proposals with the co-Facilitators on 20 April 2018 at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Expertise on Partnership Arrangements

Inextricably linked to UN reforms and the 2030 Agenda, is the question of how to fund this transformative agenda. To that end, the blanket-term used to refer to funding, very often is ‘partnerships’, which have been considered necessary in order to fund the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

However, the UN approach to engaging partnerships is primarily aimed at corporate and powerful entities. And while the participation of the corporate sector can add much to the ability to finance some of the ambitious goals of the agreements, the partnership approach itself carries a number of risks and side-effects that require greater scrutiny regarding donor priorities and compatibility with UN mandates.

To address this, Barbara Adams brought GPF’s analysis to the ECOSOC operational activities segment on expert panel on “strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagements” in February. She pointed out that “civil society organizations are natural allies of the United Nations, but the partnership modality is not the primary way for civil society to engage with the UN”. From a CSO perspective, she added, the primary way of leveraging resources for the SDGs is fair and progressive taxation.

Inadequate financing of the UN and its mandates has prompted the UN and its Member States to embrace a range of different private sector partnerships and finance patterns, including through philanthropies and big business. While at the global level these have taken the form of multi-donor or multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve specific goals, at a national level, they are characterized by public private partnerships (PPPs).

While Member States, the UN, and the Secretary-General have been active in promoting partnerships as a key means of implementation for sustainable development, GPF has been active and



HLPF Side event on SDG implementation at national level

effective in deepening the analysis and attention to the need for an assessment of effectiveness and commitment to UN norms and standards in partnerships arrangements.

An example of GPF's analysis is found in Global Policy Watch briefing #24 "The Semantics of Partnership: Partnerships for Sustainable Development – inclusive and accountable or laissez-faire marketplace?", which highlights further the concept of public-private partnership engagement, which has been pursued on a one-way track, designed to adjust the public sphere to leverage the private interests and neglecting the public responsibilities of private sector partners.

Additionally, Barbara Adams was invited to present GPF's analysis at the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conference on 10 April 2018 in Geneva with regards to their reference to the JIU report "The United Nations System – Private Sector Partnerships Arrangements in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (JIU/2017/8), which the Secretary-General submitted for the consideration by the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly's 2nd Committee in their deliberations on the partnerships resolution.

This built on the work GPF produced in 2017 highlighting the importance of the UN addressing partnerships arrangements through the UN reform process. With increase in the UN system on the importance of partnership at all levels, the UN Staff College reached out to GPF on three occasions, to be a resource for The UN System Staff College (UNSSC) 2018 face-to-face course on building partnerships for sustainable development. Additionally, Barbara Adams was asked to contribute GPF's expertise on UN partnerships to a civil society coalition organizational meeting on existing UN partnership arrangements and the implications of such arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda and UN development system reform. She presented analysis on tri-sector/cross-sector partnerships, zooming in on specificities to partner with different groups such as civil society, private sector, foundations, academia.

In September she was also invited to be the expert speaker for the Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development online course during the 5th week of the course, and focused on the importance of global partnerships in achieving policy coherence in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

2. Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

GPF continues to play an active role in the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (formerly the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives). The group has worked together for several years to address structural obstacles, such as the fragmentation of policy processes, the lack of policy coherence, and the influence of corporate vested interests. The group summarized its analyses and findings in the comprehensive report "No future without justice" (June 2012).

After the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015, the Reflection Group decided to continue its work and to develop, inter alia, a periodic "Spotlight Report" assessing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the structural obstacles to its realization with a particular focus on the rich and powerful. Together with GPF, the Reflection Group's core contributors include, Social Watch, TWN, DAWN, ANND, SID and FES.

In July 2018, the Reflection Group launched the third version of its Spotlight report "Exploring new policy pathways". The GPF New York office contributed a chapter and provided editorial support to its publication.

Building on the content of the previous reports, the Spotlight Report 2018 dives more deeply into the policies, resources and actions that will actually be necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda, based in part on proposals and ideas that have already been discussed or attempted in different parts of the world. It highlights policies and approaches which depart from business as usual and prioritize fulfilment of human rights and respect for planetary boundaries.

The report channeled the findings of 24 international and regional civil society networks and 20 national civil society coalitions. But what all contributions have in common is the conviction that the world is still off-track in terms of achieving sustainable development and fundamental changes in policies and approaches are necessary – and possible – to unleash the transformative potential of the SDGs.

A global coalition of civil society organizations and trade unions presented this Spotlight report on various occasions, inter alia in New York and Geneva:

- » **Side event at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development:** “Conversation with authors of the Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2018 Exploring new policy pathways: How to overcome obstacles and contradictions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda” (12 July 2018, Church Center, New York). At the event the authors presented key findings and recommendations to participants for discussion. Speakers included Roberto Bissio (Social Watch), Ziad Abdel Samad (ANND), Corina Rodríguez Enríquez (DAWN), Kate Donald (CESR), Stefano Prato (SID), Sandra Vermuyten (PSI).

- » **The Civil Society Reflection Group Launch of the Spotlight report on Sustainable Development Report 2018:** “Changing Course for Sustainable Development: Bold Alternatives to Business as Usual” (17 September 2018, Palais des Nations, Geneva). At this event, co-organized by UNRISD and FES, some of the key findings and recommendations of the 2018 Spotlight Report were presented and discussed from various perspectives.



Spotlight on Sustainable Development – Report 2018

III. GPF Facts and Figures

1. GPF board, staff and finances

GPF operations are governed by a Board in New York, and the operations of GPF Europe by a separate Board in Bonn. GPF and GPF Europe receive most of their annual funding from foundations, partner organizations, membership fees and individual donations.

The GPF Board and staff 2018:

- » Barbara Adams – President
- » Marina Lent – Vice President
- » Abigail Neville – Treasurer
- » Jens Martens – Secretary
- » Sarah Dayringer – Programme Officer
- » Sophia Vartanian – Intern

2. GPF website and social media

In addition to targeted mailings, GPF's strategic communications include an active presence on Twitter (@globalpolicy), and the GPF website (www.globalpolicy.org). With more than 30,000 documents, the GPF website is one of the most comprehensive independent sources for information on international politics worldwide.

3. Publications

Adams, Barbara/ Judd, Karen (2018): The 2030 Agenda, donor priorities and UN mandates Lessons from the WHO experience. Global Policy Watch Briefing #20, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GPW20_2018_01_15.pdf

Adams, Barbara (2018): Smallholder Farmers' Rights are Women's Rights. Global Policy Watch Briefing #21, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GPW21_2018_03_20.pdf

Adams, Barbara/Martens Jens (2018): The UN Foundation – A foundation for the UN? The G20 and the 2030 Agenda, Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung and Global Policy Forum, New York.

https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/The_UN_Foundation_online.pdf

Adams, Barbara/Judd, Karen (2018): The Ups and Downs of Tiers: Measuring SDG Progress. Global Policy Watch Briefing #22, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GPW22_2018_04_30.pdf

Adams, Barbara/Mills, Laraine (2018): The semantics of partnerships: Partnerships for Sustainable Development – inclusive and accountable or laissez-faire marketplace? Global Policy Watch Briefing #24, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GPW24_2018_05_30.pdf

Global Policy Forum/Arab NGO Network/ CESR et al. (Ed.) (2018): Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2018: Exploring new policy pathways – Report by the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York.

<https://www.2030spotlight.org/en/book/1730/chapter/exploring-new-policy-pathways>

Adams, Barbara (2018): SDG shadow implementation – hidden in plain sight, Global Policy Watch Briefing #26, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GPW26_2018_07_13.pdf

Adams, Barbara/Judd Karen (2018): Desperately Seeking Indicators: different players, different priorities. Global Policy Watch Briefing #27, New York.

https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GPW27_2018_11_01.pdf

4. Chronology of GPF activities 2018

1 February Panel discussion with Barbara Adams at the 56th Commission on Social Development side event: “Income redistribution through public service provision – from inequality to equity”, organized by the Public Services International (PSI).

2–3 February Barbara Adams, in preparation for the General Assembly review of resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of ECOSOC, was invited to participate in a UN retreat: “Fulfilling the vision of the 2030 Agenda: integrated analyses from ECOSOC and its system”, organized by the President of ECOSOC.

27 February Barbara Adams was invited to be a speaker on an expert panel at the ECOSOC operational activities segment: “strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagements” organized by the UN Economic and Social Council.

17 March Barbara Adams was invited to give a presentation at Fordham Graduate School of Social Service event: “Advancing the Rights of Rural Women: Challenges and Best Practices”, organized for international participants attending the 62nd UN Commission on the Status of Women.

10 April Barbara Adams was invited by the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to give a presentation on partnership arrangements with the private sector in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at a JIU conference in Geneva.

23 April Barbara Adams and Jens Martens moderated the roundtable discussion: “Private donors and global partnerships – a way out of the funding dilemma of the United Nations?”, and New York launch of GPF publication: “The UN Foundation – a Foundation for the UN?”, co-organized by Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung.

23 May Barbara Adams was invited by the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) and the German Development Institute to be a speaker at the Expert Workshop: “Development Cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda: The Way Forward”, organized by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung New York Office.

20 June Barbara Adams gave a presentation entitled “The semantics of partnership and women’s human rights” during concurrent session 5: “Why Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are a Feminist Issue” during the 27th IAFFE Annual Conference at SUNY New Paltz.

26 July Barbara Adams was invited to give present to the The UN System Staff College (UNSSC) at the 1st session of their 2018 face-to-face course on building partnerships for sustainable development, organized by the UNSSC.

19–21 September Barbara Adams was invited to give present to the UNSSC at the 2nd and 3rd session of their 2018 face-to-face course on building partnerships for sustainable development, organized by the UNSSC.

15 October Barbara Adams was invited to be a panelist at the “UN2020 Information, Organization and Strategy Meeting: Responding to Multilateralism in Crisis”, organized by World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, the Stimson Center, CIVICUS, the Workable World Trust, FES New York, and the United Nations Association-UK.

15 October Sarah Dayringer was invited to give an overview of key actions taken in the ongoing UN development system reform process to the “UN2020 Information, Organization and Strategy Meeting: Responding to Multilateralism in Crisis”, organized by World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, the Stimson Center, CIVICUS, the Workable World Trust, FES New York, and the United Nations Association-UK

22 October Barbara Adams was invited to speak at the FES New York Office annual training for young international policy makers at the session entitled: “The Global Political Landscape, role of the UN, multilateralism and the SDGs”.

