



**Annual Meeting of the General Assembly  
of the Global Social Observatory  
150 Route de Ferney, Geneva, Switzerland  
23 June 2015**

**Annual Report of the Executive Director  
July 2014 to June 2015**

During its eleventh year, the activities of the Global Social Observatory continued active engagement in support of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogue, collaboration and action on global social issues. The main activity has continued to be a project involving a consultation process on the prevention and management of conflict of interest in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. The project for the SUN Movement elevated the resource base of the GSO as a result of a grant awarded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in April 2013 and a further grant awarded by the same Foundation in March 2014 for the GSO to implement this project through March 2015. Staffing and office space were directly handled by the GSO for this project.

The GSO has remained supportive of the NCD Alliance and others involved in advocating for multi-stakeholder engagement in the global campaign on the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases and the efforts of the WHO to develop a framework for engagement with non-state actors.

Additional activities have included the preparation of a concept note and action plan for a project on partnering to support the post-2015 Development Agenda (and the Climate Change Summit) and the continuation of a bimonthly newsletter on social and economic developments of interest to GSO members. This report includes brief descriptions of each of these activities.

Finally, this report provides, as usual, updates on changes in the GSO leadership.

**Consultation Process on the Prevention and Management of Conflict of Interest in the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement**

As we reported last year, a full proposal was submitted to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in January 2013, and approval was officially granted on 1 April 2013 to implement a consultation process on Conflict of Interest issues associated with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. An amendment with additional funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was approved in March 2014. The project as amended ran from April 2013 through March 2015.

The purpose of the project was to undertake a transparent process to address the issue of conflict of interest in the context of the SUN Movement, in order to ensure that all



stakeholders could contribute fully to achieving the Movement's objective of delivering better nutritional outcomes for mothers and children. The Movement is supporting government-led, multi-stakeholder initiatives in over 50 countries. As it has with programs to address HIV/AIDS, diabetes and non-communicable diseases, the GSO created a neutral space for all stakeholders committed to working together through the SUN Movement to end maternal and child under-nutrition, to build a mutual understanding of each stakeholder's objective; to prepare guidance on the practical meaning of engagement in the SUN Movement; and to explore ways to manage conflicts of interest that may arise.

The project was organized around three objectives – (1) mapping the issues regarding the Principles of Engagement for the SUN Movement; (2) establishing and implementing a consultative process to adopt a reference note and toolkit on the Principles of Engagement and conflict of interest; and (3) testing the potential for implementing the reference note and toolkit in specific country settings through a series of enhanced learning exercises.

The mapping exercise was completed prior to the first consultation event in June 2013. The consultation process involved participants from the various SUN networks (civil society, business, donor and UN) plus member governments. Three consultation events were convened on 11 June, 25 July and 16 October 2013. The reference note and toolkit were subsequently submitted for a legal review and cleared for use in the third phase by March 2015.

The third phase involved a series of four enhanced learning exercises - in Accra, Ghana (1-2 April 2014), Nairobi, Kenya (29-30 May 2014) and in Salinitas, El Salvador (17-18 July 2014) and Jakarta, Indonesia (1-2 December 2014). The presentation of the reference note and toolkit was supplemented at these events with the participation of ethics experts who were coordinated through a partnership with Globethics.net. The lessons learned from these enhanced learning exercises were integrated into an updated final reference note and toolkit. Two separate documents synthesizing the lessons learned and summarizing the ethics perspective were also presented at a concluding global conference organized by GSO in February 2015.

The global concluding conference was held on 16 to 17 February 2015 in Chavannes-de-Bogis, Geneva. The GSO benefited from additional support from USAID, GtZ, UNICEF, the SUN Business Network and the SUN Movement Secretariat itself to underwrite the additional costs for this conference. The updated reference note and toolkit, as well as an executive summary, are now available in English, French and Spanish, along with a final conference report and a final GSO report to the SUN Lead Group. The project was completed in April 2015.



## **Campaign on Prevention and Treatment of NCDs**

The GSO participated in early deliberations regarding the NCD Global Coordinating Mechanism and has supported the NCD Alliance in its effective coalition building on the WHO Global Action Plan and 2014 high-level meeting at the UN General Assembly to review progress on the 2011 Political Declaration on NCDs. The GSO participated in a consultation exercise with the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity in November 2014 and attended the WHO-sponsored Dialogue for the Global Coordinating Mechanism on NCDs on 20 to 21 April 2015 on NCDs and development cooperation.

## **WHO Action on Non-State Actors**

The GSO was invited to participate in a multi-stakeholder consultation on reform of WHO policy in relation to non-state actors in October 2013. The WHO deliberations on this issue have continued at the Executive Board in January 2014 and the World Health Assembly in May 2014, and again at the Executive Board in January 2015 and the World Health Assembly in May 2015. The GSO position has consistently been that approaches to non-state actors should be consistent among the different categories of non-state actors, including in the area of conflict of interest. In May 2015, the GSO position was included in a statement presented to the WHA by the Global Health Council.

## **Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Looking beyond the project addressing conflict of interest in the SUN Movement, the GSO has been promoting a multi-stakeholder, inter-active and cross-cutting approach to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This started with a webinar in April 2013 and continued with webinars in December 2013 and April 2014, two roundtable events on 24 April and 11 June 2014, a special session of the GSO General Assembly on 17 September 2014, and a panel discussion on sustainable consumption and production patterns at the WTO Public Forum on 1 October 2014. In 2015, the GSO negotiated for the United Nations Office at Geneva to be associated with its efforts to promote a Geneva-based platform for cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder partnerships on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Climate Change Summit. An interactive dialogue was convened on 8 April 2015, with the following three recommendations:

- Geneva is an excellent choice for establishing a platform for multi-stakeholder initiatives for achieving the SDGs because of the strong Swiss and Geneva commitment to the process and the concentration and diversity of technical expertise in Geneva-based international institutions;
- Country level ownership, accountability and responsibility should be integrated into building alliances that are receptive to multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships;



- There is a need for conducting a series of dialogues to establish linkages among the SDGs and also between the SDGs and the outcomes of the Climate Change Summit, emphasizing pragmatic partnerships that are issue and outcome-based.

Since then, the GSO has continued to refine the concept note and action plan to support a GSO project in the near future. Constructive feedback has been received from several diplomatic missions in Geneva. The GSO Executive Director also attended the informal consultations with non-state actors on the SDGs on 26 and 27 May 2015 in New York.

### **Bimonthly Newsletter**

In February 2014, the GSO introduced a bimonthly newsletter for GSO members. The newsletters include an update on GSO activities, commentary on international organizations and NGOs of interest to the GSO mandate and a listing of upcoming GSO and other events of interest. We hope this will continue to be a useful tool for a growing GSO membership base.

### **Changes on the GSO Management Committee**

Members of the Management Committee currently have two-year terms and can be re-elected without limit to the number of terms. The following members were elected or re-elected for two-year terms in 2014:

Ralph Doggett (Secretary/Treasurer)  
Katherine Hagen (Executive Director)  
Constance Thomas (Member)  
Mustapha Kamal Gueye (Member)

The following members are up for re-election for another two-year term from 2015 to 2017:

Deborah Vorhies (President)  
Linda Carrier-Walker (Member)  
Manzoor Ahmad (Member)

The Management Committee also recommends the election of new members for two-year terms from 2015 to 2017 as follows:

Mark Halle (Member)  
Chiedu Osakwe (Member)