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# 2021 IN REVIEW



"If the world is to recover from COVID-19 and we are to deliver on our promises to future generations – to secure a world where everyone can thrive in peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet – then 2021 must be the year we change gear."

-- UN Secretary-General António Guterres, at the UNGA High-level week in September 2021

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.

Throughout 2021, the intergovernmental system has continuously been 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. 2021 saw the creation of the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda", preparations for the Fifth Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC V), and the resumption of some in-person and hybrid meetings across UN Headquarters.

Global Policy Forum continued its mission as a New York-based 501c3 organization and independent policy watchdog, committed to holding decision-makers accountable to a rights-based approach to multilateralism. The programme areas included a focus on Least Developed Countries and Corporate Influence at UN Headquarters in addition to ongoing monitoring and analysis of the 2030 Agenda.

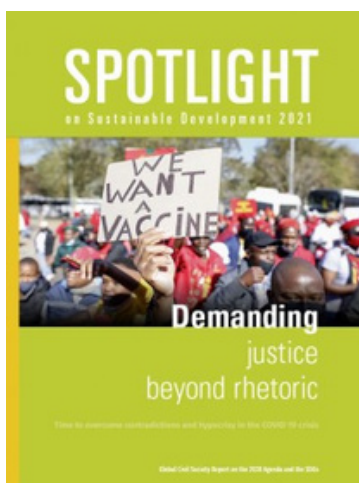
## 2030 AGENDA & THE SDGS

GPF has been active in advocacy for human-centered development since the inception of the SDGs, GPF leads the Global Policy Watch project, convened with the Instituto del Tercer Mundo (Social Watch), 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.

Throughout 2021, written analyses covered a range of topics including, but not limited to: the 2021 HLPF Review Process, the LDC V Preparations, UN Development System Reform, the 2021 HLPF, SDG Moment, General Assembly and newly introduced, "Our Common Agenda" process.

Additionally, GPF hosted a workshop at the SDG Global Festival of Action titled, "Making the 2030 Agenda Accountable: what is the role for civil society?" This workshop explored how the SDGs can be used to hold governments and the private sector accountable for global issues like climate, the pandemic or finances.

During the 2021 HLPF, GPF also participated in an official side event with the UN Committee for Development Policy to analyze the VNRs, highlighting the disconnect between the ambition of the agenda and the attention given to the transformative policies in such areas as productive capacities, pandemic preparedness, inequalities and sustainable consumption and production.



GPF also contributed to the Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2021: "Demanding justice beyond rhetoric – Time to overcome contradictions and hypocrisy in the COVID-19 crisis",

The report explored how policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis have greatly exacerbated national and global inequalities.



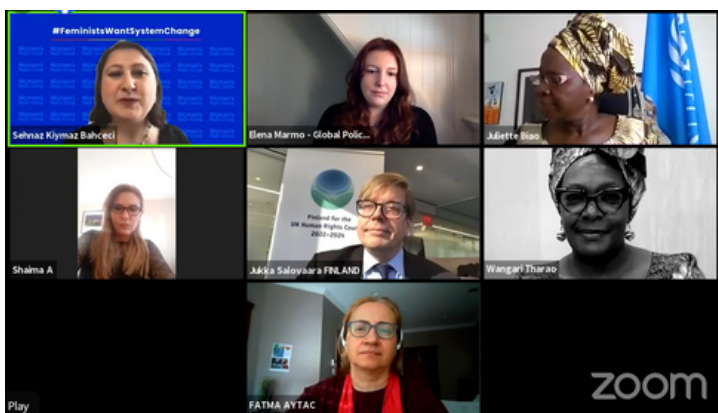
## REFORM & REVIEW OF THE UNDS

Throughout 2021, Global Policy Forum was active in UN Development System Reform processes. Two key publications and streams of work included the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and the HLPF and ECOSOC Review.

On the QCPR and the overall UNDS Reform, GPW conducted a survey of Civil Society in UN Programme Countries, to gauge perspectives on implementation of the UN Development System Reform. The resulting report, **“Where the rubber meets the road: How inclusive is UNDS Reform?”** details survey findings.

The report captured the attention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (OHCHR) Civic Space Unit and following the survey’s publication Barbara Adams and Roberto Bissio met with several staff members, at their request.

Additionally, GPF Programme Officer Elena Marmo served as a co-author on the **Women’s Major Group’s Position Paper on the HLPF Review**. Related to this process, Elena Marmo participated in an invitation-only meeting with the co-facilitators of HLPF Review Process and bilateral meetings with the delegations of Mexico, Finland, France, Sweden, EU, G77, and CARICOM. Elena Marmo was invited to participate as a speaker at the Women’s Major Group’s CSW65 Parallel Event titled, **“5 Years of SDGs and Feminist Paths to Just Recovery”**. A recording of the event (with Spanish and French translation in addition to English) is **available here**.



2021 was the 50th anniversary of the designation/establishment of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) category. Unlike the approach of the International Finance Institutions (IFI), the category includes commitments of the LDCs, and crucially, of their “development partners” in the form of International Support Measures (ISM).

GPF was very active in the lead-up to LDC5, from engagement with the United Nations to coalition-building and networking with CSOs (LDC and non-LDC). These wide-ranging activities included awareness-raising, outreach and capacity support to CSOs, facilitating CSOs consultations with the Member State co-facilitators of the LDC5 Preparatory Committee; monitoring and reporting on LDC substantive issues and the negotiations of the DPoA, and functioning as an active member of the CSO Core Group that steered CSO – UN engagements and designed the multi-day CSO Forum, an official component of LDC5.

With the postponement of LDC5 to March 2023 due to Covid related concerns, GPF will continue its engagement in 2022 with monitoring and reporting, coalition building, and programme design.

Some specific activities included:

- Assisted in preparation of the co-chairs’ consultations with CSOs (see list below). After mobilizing speakers for the first consultation and its success, the co-chairs sought additional engagement with CSOs seeking in particular their observations on the zero draft outcome document.
- Work to mobilize CSOs: priority to Global South CSOs especially with a presence in LDCs
- Design and development of the CSO Forum in Doha (set to take place in 2022)
- Engaging directly with CSO networks and coordination functions to maximize multiplier potential across Global North and Global South, with thematic expertise, knowledge of UN processes and follow-up capacity.

## PREPARATIONS FOR LDC V & THE CSO FORUM

In the lead-up to the originally scheduled date for LDC V and the CSO Forum, GPF released a series of publications:

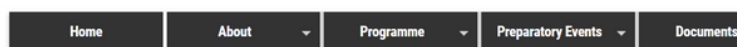
- UN Monitor #22: COVID-19 & LDCs: Upcoming opportunities to address structural impediments
- UN Monitor #24: CSO Perspectives on the LDC5 Programme of Action
- UN Monitor #25: LDCs present VNRs at the HLPF (13–15 July 2021)
- UN Monitor #25: Heard during UN LDC5 preparations
- UN Monitor #26: UN Convenes CSO Consultation for LDC5

Additionally, GPF facilitated substantive papers and inputs to Zero Draft of the Doha Programme of Action ([a complete list is available on the LDC V website here](#)).

GPF also provided support to LDC Watch in many ways from briefings on the process towards the LDC5 conference and key opportunities to engage to practical internal planning.

GPF was also involved in designing and developing the CSO Forum in Doha with a view to:

- Focus on post Doha implementation and accountability
- Establish a planning group and programme advisory group
- Structure to include plenaries (with different CSOs/INGOs to take leadership role); caucuses by LDCs, regions, themes; self-organized sessions



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### Engagement with Civil Society

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#### Second virtual Consultation with Civil Society Representatives

Convened by the Co-Chairs of the LDC5 Preparatory Committee

28 July 2021, 8:15-10:00am (NY Time)



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## CHALLENGING CORPORATE INFLUENCE IN UN DECISIONMAKING

2021 saw the beginning of project collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in NYC on project titled, "Challenging corporate influence in the United Nations". Throughout 2021, GPF closely tracked and uncovered the ways in which corporate influence is carried throughout the UN System. GPF also built upon these findings, completing additional research, several briefing papers and written outputs, as well as holding meetings with other civil society actors in an attempt to mobilize counter-strategies to remediate corporate capture.

The project explored what it means and what is at stake as corporations gain access and influence across the UN System. Particularly, what it means that proponents of corporate engagement within the UN position themselves as human rights advocates, despite demonstrated corporate exploitation of people and planet.

At large, this corporatization of the UN legitimizes the importance of the business and corporate sector in international decision-making, bringing business closer to the values of the UN. The success of this project's activities to uncover this influence can be measured through a number of publications and through GPF's ability to mobilize other Civil Society Actors including the Women's Major Group, the Campaign of Campaigns, and the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development.



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Specific activities included:

- A comprehensive catalogue of General Assembly Decisions related to partnerships and the corporate sector
- A briefing paper titled, “Private Sector Financing of UN Funds and Programmes”
- A UN Monitor titled, “Networked Multilateralism, Partnerships, and the Private Sector at the UNGA 76”
- Comprehensive research regarding transparency of partnerships between UN agencies or bodies and members of the private sector

Additionally, held on 24 September 2021 in the margins of the UNGA High-level meetings, Global Policy Forum organized a side event titled “Multi-lateralism & Multi-stakeholderism: where does accountability for the private sector fit in?”, along with co-sponsors the Women’s Major Group and the Campaign of Campaigns.

The event featured Barbara Adams of Global Policy Forum as the moderator alongside panelists including: Cai Yiping of Development Alternatives for Women (DAWN), Emilia Reyes of Campaign of Campaigns/Equidad de Genero, Debbie Stothard of ALTSEAN / Steering Committee of Corporate Accountability Working Group at ESCR-Net, and Chee Yoke Ling of Third World Network.

A recording of the event is [available here](#).

#UNGA76 #FeministsWantSystemChange

# Multilateralism & Multi-stakeholderism

Featuring: Barbara Adams, Emilia Reyes, Cai Yiping

24 September 8 AM New York

REGISTER:  
[bit.ly/AccountabilityForCorporateSector](https://bit.ly/AccountabilityForCorporateSector)

Where does accountability for the corporate sector fit in?

Women's Major Group GPF Global Policy Forum Campaign of Campaigns

# 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 2021:

Barbara Adams – President  
Marina Lent – Vice President  
Marina Durano – Treasurer  
Jens Martens – Secretary  
Elena Marmo – Programme Officer  
Alexa Sabatini – Policy & Advocacy Intern  
Tejaswini Vavilala – Research Intern

## ANNEX 2: BRIEFINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

Private Sector Financing of UN Funds and Programmes	<a href="https://www.globalpolicy.org/en/publication/private-sector-financing-un-funds-and-programmes">https://www.globalpolicy.org/en/publication/private-sector-financing-un-funds-and-programmes</a>
Where the Rubber Meets the Road	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/02/01/where-the-rubber-meets-the-road/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/02/01/where-the-rubber-meets-the-road/</a>
Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2021	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/09/17/press-release-launch-of-spotlight-on-sustainable-development-2021/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/09/17/press-release-launch-of-spotlight-on-sustainable-development-2021/</a>

## ANNEX 3: UN MONITOR PUBLICATIONS

UN Monitor #22: COVID-19 & LDCs: Upcoming opportunities to address structural impediments	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/02/19/covid-19-ldcs-upcoming-opportunities-to-address-structural-impediments/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/02/19/covid-19-ldcs-upcoming-opportunities-to-address-structural-impediments/</a>
UN Monitor #23: UNGA Revitalization and selecting the next Secretary-General	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/05/06/unga-revitalization-and-selecting-the-next-secretary-general/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/05/06/unga-revitalization-and-selecting-the-next-secretary-general/</a>
UN Monitor #24: CSO Perspectives on the LDC5 Programme of Action	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/02/cso-perspectives-on-the-ldc5-programme-of-action/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/02/cso-perspectives-on-the-ldc5-programme-of-action/</a>
UN Monitor #25: LDCs present VNRs at the HLPF (13–15 July 2021)	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/08/ldcs-present-vnrs-at-the-hlpf-13-15-july-2021/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/08/ldcs-present-vnrs-at-the-hlpf-13-15-july-2021/</a>
UN Monitor #26: Heard during UN LDC5 preparations	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/15/heard-during-un-ldc5-preparations/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/07/15/heard-during-un-ldc5-preparations/</a>
UN Monitor #27: UN Convenes CSO Consultation for LDC 5	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/08/24/un-convenes-cso-consultation-for-ldc5/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/08/24/un-convenes-cso-consultation-for-ldc5/</a>
UN Monitor #28: Networked Multilateralism, Partnerships, and the Private Sector at the UNGA 76	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/10/22/networked-multilateralism-partnerships-and-the-private-sector-at-the-unga-76/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/10/22/networked-multilateralism-partnerships-and-the-private-sector-at-the-unga-76/</a>
UN Monitor #29: Heard at the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly High-level meetings	<a href="https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/11/22/heard-at-the-76th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-high-level-meetings/">https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2021/11/22/heard-at-the-76th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-high-level-meetings/</a>

# 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. In 2021, GPF has received funding from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in New York and the Ford Foundation.

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.

