

January 22, 2019

Dear Watchers,

The year 2019 is starting full of uncertainties and also of hopes. In a fast changing and unpredictable world, our voice and the voices of the people that we try to express and amplify need to be heard. Our governments and the powerful of the world need to be made accountable.

In 2019, as we have been doing since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Social Watch network will contribute to the global Spotlight report and we will help disseminate the independent reporting of civil society and bring those findings to the United

Nations' High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

The HLPF is the United Nations body mandated by the 2030 Agenda to have a "central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level." The HLPF will meet at ministerial level in New York, next July 9 to 18 for an in-depth review of Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 (the so called "political goals", including inequalities, governance and implementation).

The theme will be "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

Fifty-one countries will present their voluntary national reviews¹ and there will be regional preparatory meetings in issue-specific conferences between February and June.

Social Watch groups are invited to contribute in 2019 in two different ways that are not exclusive (national groups can do both):

- a) **a comprehensive national alternative report**, looking at how your government is implementing its 2030 Agenda commitments. This can be a reaction to the official report of any of the 51 countries reporting this year, or to the official reports of previous years, many of which were not known to civil society with enough time to present their own alternative reports during the same Forum in which the official report was presented. It can also be an update of the reports of the last two previous years or a new report, whatever fits better your national lobbying and coalition-building needs. Those reports will be compiled and published in the websites of Social Watch and of the Spotlight report and their conclusions summarized in the introductory section of the global Spotlight report.
- b) one or several brief concrete **examples of policies that are relevant to the issues of governance, inequalities and implementation of the SDGs in your country**, either because of their contribution to achieving the Goals or because they are an

¹ See the whole list here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

obstacle to them. These contributions will be published in the website and might also be used as boxes in the global report, with due accreditation to their authors. Contributions referring to issues that civil society is campaigning for (or against) are particularly welcomed.

Format of national reports

Each national coalition can choose its own format and length for its national report, but in order to foster the sharing of experiences and allow for some comparisons, an "executive summary" of around 2500 words will be required. This summary will be translated into English and widely circulated. The whole report in its original language will also be made available in the Social Watch website.

Deadlines

by **15 March** **Deadline for short insights on specific policies/campaigns** (a few paragraphs outlining the issue to be highlighted)

by **10 May** **Final versions of national reports or their executive summaries**. After that date we cannot guarantee that reports will be edited and posted online by the time of the launch in July.

Reports received after that date will still be included in the website but will most likely not be published before the HLPF.

The **Spotlight** reports are published by the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and they mobilize contributions from a variety of trade unions, women groups, environmentalists, human rights defender and other organizations. See <http://www.2030spotlight.org>

The Reflection Group is formed by Social Watch, together with Global Policy Forum, Third World Network (TWN), the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Society for International Development (SID), Public Services International (PSI), and the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), with support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

The main theme of the 2019 report will be (working title!):

Reshaping the hardware of sustainable development

How to overcome structural flaws and institutional gaps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The first part will contain two overview articles: An executive summary of the report and a summary of national spotlight reports; and it will include several (approx. four) chapters on cross-cutting governance (reform) areas at global and national levels.

The chapters will address the following four questions:

1. What are the (governance) problems? These include:
 - the lack of effective institutions (governance gaps)
 - the privatization of decision-making structures and institutions (club governance)
 - the dominance of institutions serving business interests over sustainability and human rights (inappropriate governance hierarchy)
2. What are the underlying causes of these problems? Answers to this question will (necessarily) deal with ideologies, interests, power asymmetries and the political economy.
3. What are the impacts? How do governance gaps, shadow governance and imbalances in the governance architecture affect (or undermine) the implementation of the SDGs?
4. What are alternatives/solutions? What has to be done to create or strengthen inclusive, participatory, and effective models of governance at national and international level?

The second part will also include 17 brief articles, one on each of the SDGs. The focus of these articles will relate to aspects of global governance and some of the articles may highlight (good or bad) examples at national level.

The report will be complemented by civil society country reports. They will be provided by national groups and networks, including national Social Watch coalitions, listed as a kind of second volume of the Spotlight Report and published in full length on the web.

Inclusion of national inputs in the Spotlight report

1. As in the last three issues, since 2016, the Spotlight report will include a chapter summarizing the findings of national Social Watch coalitions. In order for your alternative reporting to be included, at least a summary of it should be sent to us by mid-March.
2. Additionally, short boxes illustrating the issues of the global report with national examples can be included in the different chapters of the Spotlight report. Those can refer to one or more of the 17 SDGs, or to the four major cross-cutting teams of the 2019 report:
 - a. Towards a new generation of global governance - HLPF review and UN2020, by Barbara Adams
 - b. Unveiling global club governance, by Roberto Bissio, with boxes on partnerships, on feminist approaches to multistakeholderism and on the governance of data reports
 - c. Preventing the next global financial crisis - drivers and brakemen of transforming the global financial architecture, by Stefano Prato and Kavaljit Singh

d. "Governance from below" and human rights governance (incl. rights of participation, Indigenous Peoples and the role of local authorities) by Kate Donald, Marina Lent and Monica Yriat

Issues around which civil society is campaigning at national level, from the marches for democracy in Sudan (triggered by IMF- imposed austerity measures) to the threats to indigenous peoples rights in Brazil can be highlighted and incorporated in the different chapters, with due credit to the persons and/or organizations contributing. Please send us a brief description of the situation or campaign and the editors will find out the best way to incorporate it to the report.

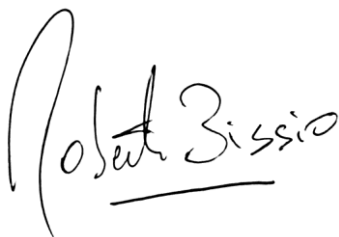
"Governance" in this context can be both a national issue (laws or norms or policies that promote positively aspects of sustainable development or create obstacles to the implementation of the SDGs) or a consequence of international governance arrangements (like policies imposed through conditionalities or trade and investment agreements, for example).

Country groups that for any reason are not submitting this year a comprehensive alternative report can always propose one issue of their interest to be included. Please do respect the deadlines as it will be impossible for the editorial team to take into account contributions submitted after March 15.

Comprehensive national alternative reports are likely to be finished after that date and they will always be welcomed in the Social Watch website, but a summary or highlights should reach the editorial team early in March in order to include a reference to them in the printed report to be launched in July in New York.

At the Social Watch secretariat we are looking forward to hearing from you about your plans for 2019 and we hope to be of help in your advocacy and campaigning.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Zissio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Do not hesitate to write to us with any questions or comments:
rbissio@item.org.uy or anaclau@item.org.uy