

# TGCI GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

*Global Development Update is a monthly bulletin that informs readers about the events, ideas, and people that are shaping an emerging world community. Click below to learn more about TGCI, and how to sign up for a free membership.*

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## FEATURED STORY

### UN adopts landmark reform resolution

In an exciting new development, the United Nations General Assembly has approved a landmark reform resolution, which will take effect in January 2019. The resolution will unite disparate UN efforts worldwide around the common theme of sustainable development. In addition, the more streamlined efforts—which will be clarified during the forthcoming implementation process—will make the system more responsive to the people it exists to serve. [Read on.](#)

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## HUMAN RIGHTS

Trump administration failing to defend

## human rights



With the 2016 election, the United States seemed to relinquish the mantle of global human rights defender. Evidence of this change was stark in two recent State Department reports: “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017” and the “2017 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.” The annual documents, required by law, seemed to focus more on promoting undefined “values” instead of “rights,” alarming human rights defenders in the country. [Read on.](#)

### Authoritarian states at the UN threaten human rights

NGOs are a key partner to help the UN achieve its mission of promoting human rights. But as authoritarian states increase their role at the UN, they have begun to diminish this longstanding partnership. Efforts include lobbying to decrease funding for human rights monitors or senior positions dedicated to human rights, and using leadership positions on the NGO Committee to sideline human rights NGOs. [Read on.](#)

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## GENDER EQUITY

### Gender inequality has a price tag: \$160.2 trillion

According to the World Bank, gender inequality costs the global economy \$160.2 trillion in unrealized GDP. Assuming women and men earn the same amount, the report found that wealth could increase by nearly 22 percent globally, based on data gathered from 144 countries. Presently, women account for—on average—merely 38% of human capital wealth. Closing the gap by facilitating equal access to education and opportunities will be essential to raise the quality of life for everyone. [Read on.](#)



### UN harassment exemptions let the accused off the hook

Recent allegations of sexual harassment against the Under-Secretary-General at the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) exposed the fact that the UN Secretary-General has no jurisdiction over the UN body created by the General Assembly. Instead, the accused figure is answerable only to member states. The loophole, applicable to other UN bodies such as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), demonstrate how ineffective the UN’s “zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse” really is. [Read on.](#)

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Climate to be the largest cause of human migration

Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recently sounded the alarm about a phenomenon that is only poised to increase: climate change could cause more migrants than wars. In a recent speech given in Buenos Aires, the leader noted that “four hundred million people live in developing countries in low-lying areas, in cities which are



### Confronting the plastic crisis

very close to the sea. If sea level rises, then people will have to move.” The issue of climate refugees is one that the global community appears unprepared to tackle. [Read on.](#)



We have produced nine billion tons of plastic since the ubiquitous material was developed—one-third of which has been single-use. Much of this material ends up in our environment, where particles make their way into our food chain, and eventually, our bodies. Some governments have taken action to curb this threat—Kenya and Rwanda have both banned throwaway plastic bags—but to have the necessary impact, our efforts will need to be collective, and on a massive scale. [Read on.](#)

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## POVERTY REDUCTION & INCOME INEQUALITY

### Trump trade actions threaten global economic stability

The World Bank sounded the alarm that escalating tensions between the US and major trading partners could set off a 2008-level crisis. Tides of economic nationalism threaten to isolate the US and “trigger a decline in global trade amounting to 9%.” Examples cited include border tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the EU, Canada and Mexico, and escalating tensions between the US and Beijing. [Read on.](#)



### UN Special Rapporteur report accuses US of criminalizing poverty

Mr. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, just released a dramatic indictment of the United States’ approach to domestic poverty. The launch follows a fact-finding mission Alston conducted across the US in 2017. The UN Special Rapporteur found that 40 million people live in poverty in the US—five million of whom live in conditions normally only found in the developing world. At fault, he says, are government policies that perpetuate inequality and stigmatize the most vulnerable. [Read on.](#)

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## GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & CONNECTIVITY

### Global compact on refugees in process

In 2016, all 193 Member States of the United Nations signed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, committing to protect individuals forced to flee and supporting the countries that provide shelter. UNHCR is now in the process of developing a ‘global compact on refugees’ and the High Commissioner will propose this new text in his 2018 annual report to the General Assembly. [Read on.](#)



### Global cooperation efforts reached new low in 2016

The Council of Councils recently released a report card on global cooperating efforts in 2016. The majority of respondents gave the world C-, down from a B in 2015. The group highlights Brexit, the inward-looking policies of Donald Trump, rising nationalism, and an inability to mitigate transnational threats as causes for the decline. [Read on.](#)



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## GLOBAL PEACE & JUSTICE

### Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a powerful force for pressuring governments to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As a result of the group's hard work, and despite escalating nuclear tensions worldwide, ICAN's Treaty Coordinator Tim Wright expects the treaty to be ratified by 2019. [Read on.](#)



### Humanitarian aid on the blockchain

Blockchain is a secure, transparent ledger of information stored on computers around the world. Its best known application is bitcoin, but the potential for blockchain technology in the humanitarian sphere is significant. A number of aid groups are evaluating the prospect of using blockchain to assign refugees a virtual identity and track aid dollars. By making the process of issuing humanitarian assistance more transparent, advocates hope to attract more investment.

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