



The Social Watch international secretariat is hosted by ITeM in Montevideo, Uruguay. ITeM (Instituto del Tercer Mundo) is an NGO with special consultative status with ECOSOC.

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Social Watch is an international network of citizens' organizations in the struggle to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realization of human rights. We are committed to peace, social, economic, environment and gender justice, and we emphasize the right of all people not to be poor.

Social Watch holds governments, the UN system and international organizations accountable for the fulfillment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty.

Social Watch achieves its objectives through a comprehensive strategy of advocacy, awareness-building, monitoring, organizational development and networking. Social Watch promotes people-centered sustainable development.

The following background and content is based on the input from the various discussions that took place in the framework of the 4th General Assembly of Social Watch, held in Accra in October 27 to 29, 2009. This document elaborates and updates the strategy adopted at the Social Watch Assembly in Sofia (2006) which outlined our principles, goals and objectives.

### 1. Background

Social Watch was created in 1995 as a "meeting place for non-governmental organizations concerned about social development and gender discrimination, and engaged in monitoring the policies which have an impact on inequality and on people who live in poverty."

The basic methodology of Social Watch still remains the same: to make governments accountable for their commitments and thus promote the political will to implement them. These commitments include:

- the 1995 Social Summit,
- the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women,
- the Millennium Declaration (2000) on which the Millennium Development Goals are based,
- 1992 Rio Summit commitments,
- The Human Rights framework, which includes Economic, Social and Cultural rights, labor rights, women rights, environmental rights, rights of indigenous peoples and of migrants and the right to development, and, national commitments, as formulated in national constitutions, government plans, budgets and laws, including in particular social, economic and cultural rights.

Social Watch believes that the key action to achieve poverty eradication, gender equality and social justice happen primarily at local and national level and, therefore, its international activities and structures should be accountable and at the service of national and local constituencies, and not the other way around.

Peace is a precondition for the realization of human and women's rights and the eradication of poverty. However, poverty and lack of respect for human rights are at the root of many armed conflicts. Therefore the devastating impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on people is of particular concern.

### **3. Influencing global and regional decision-making**

- The principle target institution for Social Watch is the UN as the legitimate universal institution. The focus of SW concentrates on the intergovernmental processes and events that are relevant to the main objectives of the network, among them the gender and Human Rights bodies, and the follow-up processes on financing for development and the UN conference on the financial and economic crisis. We will also participate in processes for reform of the UN system.
- In light of the financial crises and the responses, we take note of the reinforced role that the G-20 has taken upon itself and the attempt to strengthen the role of the IMF and the World Bank. Social Watch is against empowering these fora and institutions or expanding their mandate and supports the creation and strengthening of regional alternatives that reflect aspirations of the poor and marginalized populations.
- Social Watch will actively participate in the UN Summit on the MDGs (September 2010 in New York) and its preparatory process, highlighting the failure of the current approaches to poverty eradication and defending human rights based alternatives.
- Based on the notion of environmental justice, Social Watch will contribute to the current climate negotiations, an approach founded on its social and gender justice principles
- Social Watch will contribute to the global gender fora like the Beijing+15 review with the update, development and dissemination of its Gender Equity Index and the richness of experiences and analysis from its membership.

- Social Watch will actively participate in the UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Istanbul, 2011) and its preparatory process, in alliance with LDC Watch
- Social Watch will participate in the discussions around innovative sources of financing, including in them the consideration of migration/related issues.

#### **4. Advocacy strategies**

In August 2009, Social Watch established a permanent office in New York to enable a continuous presence at the United Nations and to coordinate advocacy efforts with country missions at the UN, international agencies and other NGO networks. It will assist the participation of members in global decision making processes and inform regularly about them to the national coalitions.

Advocacy, communications and campaigning strategies will complement each other to achieve our goals. The representative in that office is Natalia Cardona she can be reached at [ncardona@item.org.uy](mailto:ncardona@item.org.uy). The key advocacy events for the coming years are listed in the social watch calendar at [www.socwatch.org](http://www.socwatch.org)

#### **5. The major tools of Social Watch are:**

- The yearly report in several languages, plus country reports and regional reports.
- The Website.
- The Gender Equity and Basic Capabilities Indexes.

Additional advocacy tools include “benchmark documents”, collections of papers (SW series or “occasional papers”) and position papers, frequently authored and published in association with other organizations and networks.

##### **5.1 Capacity building and sustaining national level action**

Social Watch has started a three year programme to improve the capacity of its members in developing countries through a series of workshops in Africa, Asia and Latin America. There is an ongoing program to build the capacity of some members in Europe.

The content and methodology is defined by the host organizations and the participants with support from the secretariat. Improving the media outreach of the national coalitions is one of the areas to be addressed.

Social Watch actively supports the efforts of other regions and sub-regions to design and implement capacity building programmes for watchers.

In its advocacy, Social Watch builds alliances with trade unions, social movements and other civil society organizations and networks, in particular those advocating for climate justice, and it participates in the World Social Forum.

##### **5.2 The network at regional and sub-regional level**

Recognizing the growing importance of regional and sub-regional decision-making venues, Social Watch encourages regional and sub-regional cooperation among members and other actors to engage in advocacy and campaigning at that level. An organizational strategy is being developed in order to support and enhance regional work.

### **5.3 New members**

In the coming years, Social Watch will increase the number of its members in developing countries, especially Africa, and will initiate efforts to publish a Russian language version of the report as a tool to increase membership in “transition countries” of the former Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union in Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe.