

Mexico City
January 29 & 30, 2015

Corporate Capture Project Meeting Report



International Network for Economic,
Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)
Corporate Accountability Working Group

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1. Summary

The Project Advisory Group (PAG) of the Corporate Capture Project (CCP), a small group of ESCR-Net members steering the development and progress of the CCP, met in Mexico City on 29th and 30th January 2015. The PAG is made up of six civil society groups from different regions of the world, 5 which are ESCR-Net members. These members are Above Ground (Canada), Defend Job (The Philippines), the Habi Center for Environmental Law (Egypt), PODER (Mexico), the Sierra Leone Network on the Right to Food (Sierra Leone), together with CNS (India). The CCP originated as a collective priority of Members of the ESCR-Net Corporate Accountability Working Group (CAWG) during the 2013 ESCR-Net Peoples' Forum on Human Rights & Business in Bangkok, Thailand.

This meeting of the PAG in Mexico, co-hosted by both ESCR-Net & PODER, was called to engage in an in-depth discussion on the development of the CCP into specific activities for 2015 and 2016, aimed at progressing towards clear outcomes in support of a broad vision for this area of collective ESCR-Net membership activity.

Following the meeting the updated and refined vision of the CCP is to ensure a clear separation of the State from all other actors so that the power of the State is harnessed to realize the human rights of their people, and protected from undue economic influences.

Main objectives of the Project:

The main objectives of the project for 2015-16 will be to have a catalytic effect on global awareness of the characteristics of corporate capture, and the means available to address it. Thereby, the project aims to produce the outcome of mobilizing and supporting strong, effective, coordinated and sustained civil society and grassroots action, particularly at the national and sub-national level.

As a result of the discussions, general agreement was reached on the following:

- The Corporate Capture Project can serve many purposes, including as an organizing concept through which groups, including social movements, can focus their activities, and empower communities who face corporate abuse;
- No group or network of groups around the world is taking up the task of articulating Corporate Capture in an easily accessible way, nor elevating a coherent analysis of what the characteristics of Corporate Capture are and how they operated to directly and indirectly undermine human rights at the national and local level;
- Elements of Corporate Capture are being fought against by many groups in many places, albeit often without applying the conceptual overarching of Corporate Capture to their analysis and also often in isolation from groups fighting similar struggles elsewhere;
- Greater research and analysis is required in order to continue understanding the characteristics of Corporate Capture, and form a foundation of knowledge from which to elevate greater awareness of what Corporate Capture is, and what strategies exist to address it.

A 2015 timeline for actions of the PAG was developed at the Mexico meeting emanating from these agreements. For further information about the CCP activities, please contact Tatiana Bejar on tbejar@escr-net.org.

2. Review of the Steps Taken So Far

Day 1 focused on introductions and update on the project's progress, including a report from the People's Forum meeting in Bogota. In the afternoon participants delved deeper into specific approaches and thinking on the elaboration of the project's concept: vision, elements and objectives.

Evaluation of the project so far

The CCP has so far produced a Scoping Report and held strategic discussions at the ESCR-Net Peoples' Forum on Human Rights and Business in Bogota, in November 2014. In early 2015, a Project Advisory Group was formed and a draft Concept Note was developed to begin surveying prospective donors for this area of collective work. On Day One in Mexico the members gathered to evaluate the overall direction of the project, the Scoping Report and the Concept Note. The discussion revolved around several issues:

- The Concept Note is too ambitious for the two year time period
- Some of the activities contained in the Concept Note seem very defined and top-down, leaving little room for organic development of the project over time
- The Scoping Report does not categorise the features of Corporate Capture, but rather just profiles certain cases from different regions. It would be more strategic to go beyond profiling cases discovered through research and outline the nature of Corporate Capture through greater analysis of the way Corporate Capture is manifest *across cases*.

3. Charting the Course for the Project

- **The Vision; 'What is the world like without corporate capture?'**

The next phase of Day One considered the long-term, even fanciful, notion of what the world would look like if all the efforts underway worldwide to address Corporate Capture were successful. What is this vision?

On the basis of this discussion the PAG collectively developed the following vision for the CCP:

Ensure clear separation of the State from corporate actors in order to protect against undue influence, thereby reinforcing the State's role in realizing human rights.

While further work is needed to conceptualise Corporate Capture – as well as the vision of a world where it is brought under control – collectively defining the broad direction assisted the PAG in the following stages of defining what objectives and activities would be in the CCP for 2015 & 2016.

4. Designing Phases of the Project

- **Main Phases of the Project**

With a broad guiding vision defined, the discussions focused on what contribution this project would make towards contributing to the overall vision in the next 2 years. As the ideas developed by PAG members we grouped through interactive dialogues, a linear trajectory became apparent. The project would follow five activity phases:

- i. **Conceptualisation:**
From a human rights perspective, clearly define the concept of Corporate Capture in a way that appeals easily to as broad a range of groups and individuals as possible, starting with national and sub-national civil society organisations, including movements.
- ii. **Research & Analysis:**
In a coordinated way document and order information on as many cases of Corporate Capture as possible, and analyse the characteristics of Corporate Capture that are documented.
- iii. **Packaging the Idea**
Develop sophisticated online messaging and information sources for the Project, and develop a suite of appealing communications products that will increase the amount of interest in the project, and the ways groups can address Corporate Capture.
- iv. **Promotion & Awareness Raising**
Maximize the opportunities to elevate awareness of Corporate Capture and the ways groups are addressing it, including raising awareness at international human rights, labor union, media and other gatherings, attracting media attention through prizes for best coverage of Corporate Capture cases, etc.
- v. **Facilitating Support for Action**
Build a community of CSOs working in different ways to stop Corporate Capture to facilitate cross-regional sharing of strategies and support for action and connect groups together that would mutually benefit from actively collaborating.

For more information on the ongoing progress of the Project, please visit the CCP webpage [here](#).

5. List of Participants

Attendees – Project Capture Advisory Group	
Name	Organization
Fernanda Hopenhaym	PODER –Mexico
Alejandro Gonzalez	PODER –Mexico
Ben Cokelet	PODER –Mexico
Eduard Martin-Borregon	PODER –Mexico
Bobby Ramakant	Citizens News Service –India
Does Vandousselaere	Habi Center for Environmental Rights –Egypt
Karyn Keenan	Halifax Initiative –Canada
Lansana Hassan Sowa (2nd morning via Skype)	Sierra Leone Network on the Right to Food
Melona Raclan	Defend Job –Philippines
Niki Gamara	Defend Job –Philippines

