The following report is meant to complement the Background Notes, developed by members of each working group to provide an overview of the network’s strategic development, including actions and impacts, over the past three years. The ESCR-Net Board has drafted this report, building on the 2015 Board Report to Members and working to assess the network’s institutional development.

**Strengthening shared analysis and strategic direction**

To guide its efforts “to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all,” the 2013-2015 Board’s first major act was to support a network-wide, member-led strategic planning process. The *Strategic and Institutional Development Plan 2013-2016* reinforced the network’s founding principles and model of work, while articulating a common set of objectives for ESCR-Net, namely to:

1. Advance collective, strategic, transnational efforts to realize economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) for all, in interdependence with civil and political rights;
2. Strengthen international standards and accountability mechanisms, particularly in relationship to ESCR, ensuring that they are accessible to and shaped by the realities and advocacy of impoverished and marginalized communities, grassroots groups, and national-level NGOs;
3. Deepen Member-to-Member capacity building and advance shared analysis and strategy between groups across geographic, linguistic, and historic divisions and expertise;
4. Further the network’s role as a trusted global repository and collective source of vital information and key resources relevant to the ESCR field; and
5. Coordinate mutual support and solidarity to advance Members’ struggles.

Building on this strategic plan, the Board supported the Secretariat in establishing a consistent process and format for developing *working group work plans*, with a shared long-term vision, common shorter-term objectives, and prioritized activities. Progress is now being evaluated on an annual basis and work plans revised in the final quarter of every year by working group members. Working groups have developed towards defined memberships, with internal communications channels, and a variety of leadership structures (i.e. steering committees, project advisory groups, planning committees). Further, the network has prioritized regular, in-person meetings of working group and/or their steering committees to facilitate the development of shared analysis and collective planning by Members. The Corporate Accountability, Strategic Litigation, Women and ESCR, and Social Movement Working Groups have each held at least one in-person working group strategy meeting over the past three years, while a number of specific projects within working groups—i.e. the Corporate Capture Project or the Bank on Human Rights Campaign—have held project strategy meetings. The Global Strategy Meeting is an important next step in these efforts, aiming to deepen shared analysis, common objectives and coordinated action across the network.

**Strengthening core principles**

These strategic planning efforts and the network’s ongoing development have been guided by the core principles upon which ESCR-Net was founded, including:

- Member-led collective action;
- Centrality of grassroots groups and social movements in all areas of work;
- Regional balance of Members in working groups and related projects, aiming to strengthen joint advocacy at the international level and cross-regional exchange;
• Gender balance in leadership and intersectional analysis, with a commitment to advancing substantive equality; and
• Utilization of the human rights framework—secured via social struggles around the world—as a source of unity and basis for challenging unjust economic and political systems, while remaining attentive to particular histories of different communities.

The Board, working groups and the secretariat have worked to ensure the centrality of social movements, gender balance, and regional diversity in various leadership structures throughout ESCR-Net. The position of Membership and Solidarity Director was created to support Member engagement and prioritize outreach to social movements and in underrepresented regions. Eager to strengthen outreach in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and facilitate work across regions, the network also welcomed a Membership and Program Facilitator from and based in the region. In the past year, ESCR-Net has complemented its Spanish and English websites with parallel sites in Arabic and French. Regional events have allowed initial dialogues to build towards cross-regional solidarity and advocacy.

Clarifying the role of ESCR-Net
ESCR-Net is now over 220 organizational and 50 individual Members working collectively to make human rights and social justice a reality for all. The network provides a platform for building solidarity, deepening shared analysis, amplifying collective leadership on key human rights issues, and proactively advancing innovative strategies to secure social justice, foremost at the global level. Building on our diverse Membership across 76 countries, ESCR-Net is well-placed to identify emerging gaps in the realization of human rights and respond to international challenges and openings. With the oversight of the Board, the secretariat’s primary role is to facilitate and support this joint, member-led action.

Developing the secretariat and diversifying resources
In order to realize the strategic goals set by members, the Board has worked with the Executive Director to develop the Secretariat, pursue independent legal status, and secure diversified resources to support the collective work. In line with our Strategic and Institutional Development Plan 2013-2016, the Secretariat added a Communications Coordinator, who is promoting the work of member organizations, strengthening collective advocacy via mainstream and social media work, and improving internal communication between members. Similarly, new program hires have included a Program Coordinator focused on women and ESCR and a Legal Director. Further, an Institutional Development Director is now leading a strengthened administrative and development staff. In early 2017, the network envisions hiring a Program Coordinator focused on economic policy and human rights.

Beginning in 2004, ESCR-Net relied on the Tides Center for legal status in the US, as well as for accounting and human resource support; in exchange, Tides retained 9-15% of every grant that ESCR-Net received. After careful assessment, the Board encouraged the secretariat to pursue independent, tax-exempt status in the US. Despite new demands and obligations, the Board was convinced that this would free financial resources while giving the network a stronger identity in spaces like the UN. ESCR-Net became independent on 1 July 2016.

In undertaking growing advocacy, workshops, an annual Peoples’ Forum on Human Rights and Business, and a series of working group strategy meetings, the demand for resources has slowly grown. Over the past three years, ESCR-Net has added three core funders, as well as slowly bringing in new resources to support collective work prioritized by members in the areas of women and ESCR, corporate accountability, strategic litigation, and the System of Solidarity. The secretariat has also supported numerous members in raising funds for their respective organizations, facilitating initial contacts, writing
letters of recommendation, advocating funding for the wider ESCR field and inviting a range of potential funders to various events. In mid-2015, ESCR-Net hired its first part-time Development Assistant.

**Board oversight and representation**

Finally, as elected representatives of the Membership, the Board has reinforced its roles in overseeing the Secretariat and representing the network in regional and international spaces. The Board has held annual face-to-face board meetings, supplemented by quarterly conference calls, to provide institutional and financial oversight and overall coherence in advancing the mission. The Board worked with the Executive Director to develop regular working group and staff evaluation processes. In terms of representation, the Board has spoken on behalf of the shared principles and work of ESCR-Net at multiple events, with potential donors, and in ongoing outreach to allies and members.

From 2013-2015, ESCR-Net was guided by the following Board, elected from and by Members:

- **Hossam Bahgat**, ESCR-Net Board Chair  
  Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), Egypt
- **Cathy Albisa**, ESCR-Net Board Treasurer  
  National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI), United States
- **Ximena Andión Ibáñez**  
  Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir (ILSB), Mexico
- **Sandra Ratjen**  
  International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Switzerland
- **Saeed Baloch**  
  Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), Pakistan
- **Minerva (Niva) Gonzales**  
  ESCR-Asia, The Philippines
- **Legborsi Saro Pyagbara**  
  Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Nigeria

In January 2016, ESCR-Net welcomed a new Board, which will serve through 2018:

- **Francisco Rocael**, Board President  
  Consejo de Pueblos Wuxhtaj, Guatemala
- **Cathy Albisa**, Board Treasurer  
  National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI), United States
- **Sandra Ratjen**, Board Secretary  
  Franciscans International, Switzerland
- **Ruth Aura-Odhiambo**  
  Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya), Kenya
- **Saeed Baloch**  
  Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), Pakistan
- **Hasan Barghouthi**  
  Democracy and Workers' Rights Center (DWRC), Palestine
- **Herman Kumara**  
  National Fisheries Solidarity Movement (NAFSO), Sri Lanka

This has been a period of growth, deepening shared analysis and expanding collective work, as well as ongoing learning, for the Network. As fellow Members, we look forward to redoubling our common work “to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all.”