



The International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net) was officially founded in Bangkok in 2003. The initial General Assembly led to the election of ESCR-Net’s first formal Board—chosen from and by Members based on principles of gender balance, regional diversity, and inclusion of social movements—and to the adoption of a Governance Document. The initial impetus for the Network was at least threefold, namely a growing recognition of: the interdependence and importance of human rights in struggles to advance just, sustainable, poverty-free societies; the need to build a global movement to collectively address global challenges; and new technologies that expanded possibilities for consistent, affordable exchange and strategic, coordinated action. A second General Assembly in Nairobi, at the end of 2008, led to a strengthening of several working groups and to their adoption of annually revised objectives and collective work plans. Faced with the challenges of collaboration, particularly between grassroots groups/social movements/affected communities and NGOs/lawyers/academics, this Assembly affirmed the importance of grassroots leadership within the different structures of the Network, including on the Board. A new Board was elected in December 2012, and will help to guide the institutional development of the Network to effectively and strategically support the collective work of over 250 Members spanning 68 countries.

This plan has been revised via extensive discussions of the ESCR-Net Board in April and July 2013, and was initially developed based semi-structured interviews with roughly 25 leaders and representatives of different Working Groups. This plan also benefits from a half-day discussion with former leadership of the ESCR-Net Secretariat and Members involved in drafting the Governance Document, which helped to clarify key questions and issues. It draws from the analysis and objectives articulated in the annual work plans developed by each Working Group. Further, it is meant to build on the mission, goals, principles and model of work articulated in our Governance Document, which has overall provided an effective guide for collective work over the past decade, while critically reflecting both on our processes and impacts thus far and on existing gaps and emerging issues where ESCR-Net might be positioned to have a substantial impact. In July 2013, this plan was presented to ESCR-Net Members for final review and comment; broad approval and minor revisions are reflected in this final version.

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Mission

In drafting and adopting the mission, Members emphasized the interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights—the common struggle for a life of dignity that necessarily involves both civil and political freedom as well as economic and social well-being—as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The mission and related goals and principles have continued to guide our work.

Mission Statement

The International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net) is a collaborative initiative of groups and individuals from around the world working to secure economic and social justice through human rights. ESCR-Net seeks to strengthen the field of all human rights, with a special focus on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), and further develop the tools for achieving their promotion, protection and fulfillment. Through ESCR-Net, groups and individuals can exchange information, develop a collective voice, amplify their actions, develop new tools and strategies. By facilitating joint actions, enhancing communication and building solidarity across regions, the Network seeks to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all.

Goals and Principles

As a network that seeks to promote and advance economic, social and cultural rights, ESCR-Net works towards the following **goals**:

- Developing a flexible, supportive, and decentralised structure that enables groups from different parts of the world pursuing common interests in human rights and social justice to work together. The primary means to achieve this goal is through the operation of thematic working groups, which enable groups to share strategies and approaches as well as initiate joint projects and actions for the promotion and defense of economic, social and cultural rights.
- Enhancing the capacity of groups, organizations, activists and other actors, including, but not limited to women, marginalized groups, social movements, grassroots and social justice groups, to use human rights as a tool to strengthen their own work.
- Establishing direct links between groups from different parts of the world to strengthen and support each other's work, and create capacity to work in dynamic ways together, through a variety of means which include: exchanging information, coordinating actions, developing common agendas or strategies, creating new tools and joining national and international advocacy efforts.
- Building the field of ESCR, and facilitating the development of a collective voice on important ESCR issues worldwide.

ESCR-Net seeks to achieve these goals based on the following **principles**:

- ESCR-Net believes that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and is committed to the advancement of all human rights, with a specific focus on ESCR issues.
- ESCR-Net values diversity so it aims to be global, multilingual and inclusive. It seeks to promote the participation of women and marginalized groups, social movements, grassroots and social justice groups, as well as individuals and academics committed to ESCR.
- The activities of the Network shall be grounded in the lived experience of people affected by ESCR violations. Thus, the Network seeks to ensure the inclusion of social movements, grassroots organizations and other groups and individuals directly affected by ESCR violations and social injustice.
- The focus of ESCR-Net is on content and concrete action, and the thematic working groups are the primary bodies through which this is accomplished.

- ESCR-Net is open to direct participation by organizations and individuals in the work, actions and benefits of the Network.
- ESCR-Net strives to achieve consensus for decision-making, and respects the autonomy of individual participants' positions.

Theory of Change/Model of Work

The Governance Document of ESCR-Net, subsequent decisions by the General Assembly of Members and Board, and critical reflection on existing practices have strengthened a model of collaborative work that has had substantial impacts in advancing human rights and social justice for all. The basic understandings reflected in this model and informing ESCR-Net's theory of change are outlined below:

- The world has become increasingly interconnected due to trade and investment agreements, the reach and complexity of transnational corporations and financial actors, the rapid pace of technological development, and new forms of media and communication, as well as migration and militarization. ***The increasingly global nature of many issues requires coordinated, international responses to advance the primacy and realization of human rights.*** While utilizing new forms of interconnection and communication to facilitate common analysis and action, this also implies the necessity of bringing together organizations across regions and languages, with diverse expertise.
- While ESCR-Net is committed to challenging and supporting challenges to individual violations of human rights, ***our mission "to make human rights and social justice a reality for all" forces confrontation with the pervasive nature of human rights violations, analyzing and challenging the underlying economic and political conditions, policies, and forces commonly impacting communities around the world,*** despite local particularities.
- Human rights embody and have primarily evolved through ongoing social struggles for participation, an adequate standard of living, equality, decent working conditions and other elements of a dignified life. ***Grassroots groups and social movements, representing communities affected by human rights violations, need to be central to efforts to ensure the widespread realization of human rights.*** This requires building effective leaders at multiple levels and our collective capacity; supporting south-south, as well as north-south, exchanges and solidarity; and advocating the right of marginalized communities to meaningfully participate in decisions impacting their lives at the local and international levels. While foregrounding the leadership, analysis and conditions of multiple groups facing impoverishment, dispossession, exploitation, and/or oppression, particular ***attention should be given to the leadership, experiences, and substantive (in)equality of women across various communities.***
- International standards and institutions, in turn, provide recognized norms, tools for justice, and means for dismantling blame and isolation, as victims become actors. ***The international human rights framework evolves and its effectiveness deepens via ongoing advocacy, jurisprudence and implementation, policy change, strengthened public awareness, and academic analysis, emphasizing the need for diverse but interconnected expertise united in "a global movement."*** This attempt to build a global movement resonates with the core principles of human rights, affirming our common humanity and encouraging attention to our shared future.

Strategic Objectives and Related Criteria for Prioritizing Projects

The following represent overarching strategic objectives for the Network, 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 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.

In ultimately working “to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all” that is effective in engaging to emerging challenges and opportunities and responsive to poor and marginalized communities, ESCR-Net is committed to several additional criteria for prioritizing collective work and resources:

- Joint development and guidance by Members;
- Addressing a gap in the field or amplifies collective leadership in relationship to a key human rights issue;
- Including participation of marginalized or affected communities, foremost organized in grassroots groups or social movements;
- Assuring regional diversity of involved Members and allies; and
- Giving attention to women’s leadership, gender analysis, and substantive equality.

Evaluation of Network

In interviews with Members, as well as evaluations within Working Groups, a number of consistent themes emerged.

- **ESCR-Net has effectively identified, prioritized, and collectively addressed “important issues,” providing a vital focus and “unique space for advocacy” on ESCR.** Collective work has continued to deepen, with “clear areas of growth,” consistently articulating a clear ESCR analysis in key processes. The Network has “legitimacy,” due to its governance processes and its ongoing collective work. “ESCR-Net does close, careful follow-up on global issues with a strong local base.” Highlighting effective advocacy around the OP-ICESCR, one Member emphasized: “This is what the Network should be doing; it is perfectly placed via its Membership and potential collective power.”
- **Members have “more leverage in their work and advocacy by working through the Network.”** The Network has facilitated “more opportunities to engage at the international level, particularly for South groups.” Another member added that “the Network has an important role to play in fostering connections and facilitating strategy/analysis exchange between Members around the world.” ESCR-Net continues “to support Members thinking through strategies for international engagement and to address challenges at this level.”
- **Effectively bringing together NGOs, social movements, lawyers, and academics, “there is real democracy and legitimate ways for Members to guide Network,”** building on the Governance Documents and ongoing collaborative processes. The Network “listens to many voices” and gives careful attention to local issues, making the “link between local realities and international efforts.” Members also stressed that “the Network is able to bring together all kinds of actors, academics, NGOs, social movements, to act together through a common platform.” Several

Members also appreciate the Network tendency to credit Members and to facilitate work without insisting on ownership. “The broader network has gotten more organizations more interested in social rights, with the emphasis on social movements, giving them space to speak with lawyers who could dominate smaller networks.”

- **“It is the only international network on ESCR that people can look to for guidance and contacts.”** Workshops and events across areas of work are “quite diverse and robust.” ESCR-Net provides a unique space where Members “can share knowledge and experience on ESCR with people from different contexts and experiences.” Multiple members emphasized the value of being able to “network” or connect with other advocates, building solidarity and gaining resources/expertise/information to advance their work at the local or national level.
- **ESCR-Net is an important source of relevant “documents, material, information about global debates/issues which sometimes local members can’t keep up with.”** Various Members highlighted turning to the Network as a trusted “resource for information on ESCR: solidarity actions, discussions on different ESCR-related topics, alerts to particular violations, and substantive information produced on the OP.”
- **The Network has effectively mobilized “international solidarity in support of members facing urgent threats.”** In part, this has involved effectively **engaging social movements and “strengthening the connections between them.”**

However, Members also identified a number of areas for ongoing improvement and deepening work, much of which is reflected further below in terms of strategic openings for new work and priorities for institutional development.

- **“We need to look at whole context of ESCR, taking charge of the debates.** Are we really using our platform as a global network? We should be leading or strategically joining, not following.” A number of Members encouraged the Network to continue to deepen its ability to identify emerging or key issues and to facilitate shared analysis and action, particularly on transnational or systemic issues. In particular, various Members pointed to the growing importance of **China and other BRICS and G20 nations**, suggesting that ESCR-Net needed to identify strategic openings at the regional or international level to advance ESCR and human rights more broadly. Several Members encouraged new engagement at the intersection of **human rights and environment**; while climate change and other environmental harms threaten human rights to health, land and livelihood, initiatives to address climate change, from REDD+ to the Climate Investment Fund, have undermined human rights in some cases or allowed corporate influence to shape debates, as some argued has occurred via the UNFCCC or Rio+20.
- **Members face competing priorities and limited funding.** At least one Member identified this as a “structural problem,” in which the Network “[relies] on people who are over-stretched and can’t control how much time people give to projects. Decimation of resources among members exacerbates this.” Various Members encouraged expanded fundraising efforts. Notably, a few Members have facilitated fundraising connections, and many have co-hosted/co-sponsored workshops and events, as well as dedicating substantial time to collective projects.
- **Multiple Members suggested that ESCR-Net needs to better publicize and articulate the importance of its work.** “Work on OP has not been as adequately highlighted as a transformative mechanism.” ESCR-Net has “not been good about messaging our great work.”
- **In different forms, Members identified ongoing challenges or differing priorities in terms of facilitating collaborative work across distinct types of organizations and multiple regions and languages.** Some articulate the need to further engage grassroots groups, to “deepen our work in solidarity with local struggles, with amicus interventions, solidarity actions, direct presence.”

One social movement leader suggested initial disappointment at the early “predominance of NGOs setting direction in the Network,” which had been considerably addressed at the General Assembly in December 2008, and again through the hiring of a coordinator for the Social Movement Working Group in 2011. However, another Member felt that “too much focus on social movements” and immediate political demands could threaten “real institution-building on human rights.” Noting that “good work has advanced where people know each other and feel comfortable working together,” another Member emphasized the ongoing need to facilitate closer relationships and meaningful connections between Members.

- **A couple Board members noted that the extended leadership transition at the Secretariat and the need to address institutional questions, following the General Assembly in 2008, had threatened momentum.** While continuing to insist on consultation with and participation of all Members, a couple Members also encouraged the need to address issues and make decisions in a timely manner that supports and prioritizes strategic, collective, programmatic work.

International Trends and Positioning of Network

There is an increasing recognition that ongoing poverty and dispossession persist amid global abundance. In the Global North, support for the financial sector—considered ‘too big to fail’—and weak regulation have led to ongoing consolidation following the economic crisis, while austerity measures are pushed on the wider public. In much of the Global South, rapid and short-term capital inflows threaten future instability. Around the world, inequality within and between countries, systemic violations of human rights, and environmental harms—impacting human rights to health, food, water, housing, and livelihood—are seemingly caused or worsened by trade and investment agreements, economic policies, and legal frameworks that emerge from an uneven playing field between transnational corporations, financial institutions, states and people. ESCR-Net has played a central role in coordinating efforts to strengthen the accountability of private actors and reinforce the extra-territorial obligations of states. This has helped to ensure that human rights are debated at the international level in relation to business and other private sector actors and incorporated into corporate codes of conduct, but effective regulation and remedy are still lacking in most contexts. Similarly, while advancing strategic litigation of ESCR over the past decade, with Members celebrating a growing number of positive legal decisions, the ESCR-Net Adjudication Working Group is now also confronting the challenge of implementation.

From the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement to struggles against forced displacement and the undermining of public provision of education, health care or pensions, affected people have increasingly mobilized in the face of economic and political injustices. For many advocates, grassroots organizations, and emerging NGOs, international human rights standards provide an important framework for shaping demands. Many of these groups are eager to build capacity, solidarity and collective action with established human rights organizations and movements. In this context, ESCR-Net plays a vital role in coordinating collective support for emerging organizations to bring attention and capacity to their struggles, creating a platform for strong Global South organizations to broaden their reach and impact beyond barriers of region and language, and facilitating joint action and shared leadership of Members at the global level. This international engagement builds on a history of insisting on the central participation of impoverished and marginalized communities in decisions impacting their lives and the necessary leadership of Global South organizations in international processes. However, growing advocacy and mobilization is often met with the repression and criminalization of dissent, as well as attempts to foment new or renewed forms of racialization, intolerance, and discrimination. In times of urgent threat, ESCR-Net’s System of Solidarity and Support has become increasingly effective at

mobilizing the collective strength of the Network's Members to protect human rights defenders and affected communities.

Drawing on its diverse Membership across 68 countries, situated at the cusp of the grassroots and the global, ESCR-Net is well-placed to identify emerging gaps in on-the-ground realization of human rights and respond to international challenges and openings. No single organization working alone can effectively address the international challenges that impede the realization of human rights. ESCR-Net strives to build an effective international network of diverse groups able to develop a collective voice, amplify their actions and proactively advance innovative strategies to build a global movement to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights become a reality for all.

Envisioned Impacts of ESCR-Net within Five Years

Hundreds of organizations will provide collective, coordinated leadership at an international level to advance human rights and shift global policies and conditions that perpetuate poverty, marginalization and injustice. In turn, these organizations will have strengthened capacity and international solidarity to secure, implement, and realize human rights within their own contexts. Emerging from the strategies outlined in the two-year action plan below and refined over five years, ESCR-Net expects:

- Progressive ESCR legal precedents to be set at different levels and growing implementation of positive judgments, strengthening access to justice and remedy;
- A network of organizations, informed by a coordinated global strategy, that ensures public accountability for private actors and meaningfully impacts human rights in relation to emerging economic actors;
- Deepening recognition and enforcement of extra-territorial obligations of states, including regulation of corporate and financial actors and state aid policies attentive to conduct and result in advancing human rights;
- Improved implementation of women's ESCR, including a focus on substantive equality at the international and national level;
- Strengthened capacity among Members to analyze, impact, and propose human rights alternatives in economic policy processes;
- Human rights wins in varied struggles due to multilingual access to relevant resources, increased online and interactive capacity, and connections to Members with diverse expertise and experiences; and
- Efficient and effective solidarity responses by Members to strengthen protection of human rights defenders and forestall imminent threats to human rights.

Strategic Objectives and Primary Activities in the Short-Term

Overarching objectives are followed by primary activities for the next two years.

- 1. Advance collective, strategic, transnational efforts to realize economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) for all, in interdependence with civil and political rights.**
- Facilitate strategic guidance and advocacy to increase enforcement of positive ESCR decisions, building on regional workshops on enforcement in Africa in March 2012, and in Latin America in February 2013. Coordinate the collective expertise of Members to advance implementation of key decisions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

- Host a recurring People’s Forum on Business and Human Rights to be held in rotating regions, with the first Forum—predominantly with participants from the Global South and affected communities—to be co-hosted by Forum Asia in Bangkok, in November 2013. Develop elements of a shared international strategy to advance regulation of private actors and effective remedy.
- Coordinate collective engagement on emblematic cases of corporate violations of human rights, advancing extraterritorial state obligations and the duty of private actors to respect human rights.
- Identify and effectively utilize new strategic openings to advance human rights within international and regional processes and institutions. Strengthen shared analysis and collective advocacy through engagement in the World Bank Safeguards Review process and in challenging state aid policies tied to the extractive industries.

2. Strengthen international standards and accountability mechanisms, particularly in relationship to ESCR, ensuring that they are shaped by the realities and advocacy of impoverished and marginalized communities, grassroots groups, and national-level NGOs.

- Secure ongoing, regionally diverse, ultimately widespread ratifications of the OP-ICESCR; advance civil society awareness of this mechanism; and facilitate development and submission of cases to the Committee on ESCR and other human rights mechanisms which set positive precedent.
- Strengthen international human rights protection against violations by corporate and other private actors, with the leadership of affected communities and closely affiliated allies. Building on its roles in developing and now advancing the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations (ETOs) of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ESCR-Net will continue to serve on the Steering Committee of the ETO Consortium and emphasize ETOs in collective work on cases.
- Contribute to the development and harmonization of international norms and standards related to women’s ESCR. Advance implementation of women’s ESCR as a key strategy in increasing women’s substantive equality and reducing poverty through consultations and engagement with the Committee on ESCR (CESCR), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and other UN bodies.
- Facilitate strong ESCR analysis, as well as gender analysis, and amplify the voice of marginalized communities in international processes. Support effective shadow reporting to CESCR, CEDAW, or other treaty bodies, Universal Periodic Review submissions, and related regional or international engagement.

3. Deepen Member-to-Member capacity building and advance shared analysis and strategy between groups across geographic, linguistic, and historic divisions and expertise.

- Increase knowledge and ability of lawyers, advocates, and grassroots groups to effectively claim women’s ESCR.
- Deepen human rights learning and skills throughout the Network, particularly in relation to key areas of work like strategic litigation and corporate accountability.
- Facilitate collective strategic analysis and objectives for joint engagement via working group strategy meetings and regular online exchanges.
- Maintain commitments to translation and interpretation to facilitate the active engagement and leadership of Global South and grassroots groups throughout ESCR-Net, facilitating connections between and within regions.

4. Further role as a trusted global repository and collective source of vital information and key resources relevant to the ESCR field.

- Provide quality, relevant resources on development-induced displacement through a new online portal accessible to groups around the world.
- Ensure bilingual access to ESCR caselaw, including case materials, expert legal analysis and enforcement information, via the Caselaw Database, with over 130 cases receiving 500 unique visitors every month.
- Strengthen interaction and access to resources on ESCR monitoring through a new blog (versus listserv), and outreach to ensure diverse contributors. Map the monitoring and documentation skills and needs of Members to inform work plans.
- Demonstrate patterns of corporate abuse across regions and provide relevant tools to advance effective advocacy via Business and Human Rights Documentation Project (B-HRD) website. Support consistent human rights analysis of financial sector issues by helping to facilitate strong contributions to Righting Finance blog.

5. Coordinate mutual support and solidarity to advance Members' struggles.

- Facilitate effective, targeted leadership exchanges—including via interactive technology—between grassroots groups, building on learning exchanges in Thailand, Kenya, Brazil, and South Africa.
- Coordinate member-to-member support to advance ESCR cases, through documentation and research assistance, support for advocacy and media work, or legal advice.
- Strengthen protection and support for groups, communities and individuals confronting imminent violations of their human rights in an effective and timely manner through the System of Solidarity and Support (SOS).

*ESCR-Net will undertake ongoing qualitative evaluation with Members, Working Groups, Board members, and Secretariat staff in relation to particular projects and through focused outreach. Annually, each Working Group will evaluate its progress towards agreed goals and intended outcomes, informing new work plans. Similarly, at annual meetings and via quarterly calls, the Board will evaluate overall progress of the Network, as well as reviewing plans, activities and outcomes of Working Groups.

Institutional Development Priorities

In conversation with Members, the Board and Secretariat have prioritized the following institutional developments to ensure that effective facilitation of collective work and strategic priorities.

- **Working Group Strategy Meetings and General Assembly**

The Board, echoing Members, agreed that it is important to have spaces to develop shared analysis, set priorities, and collectively decide strategy. In addition to developing annual work plans via email and conference calls, in-person working group strategy meetings, ideally as part of other events or actions will be prioritized in recognition of the value of focused time and space to advance collaboration.

There is also a general consensus that periodic General Assemblies are valuable to set long-term objectives for the Network as a whole, build collective identity and ownership of the Network, ensure that all Members are invited into active engagement, and identify new areas of collective work beyond or between existing Working Groups. However, General Assemblies also require immense financial resources and staff capacity. This said, the Board encouraged targeting a General Assembly in the next 3-5 years, in conversation with Members, Working Groups, and potential supporters.

- **Strengthening Secretariat Capacity**

Although it is envisioned that the Secretariat would remain relatively small, the Board and multiple Members emphasized the value of a dedicated program staff member to coordinate each area of work, as well as additional support staff. Hiring new staff in the following areas has been prioritized:

- *Communications and media*: to deepen internal communication between members, facilitate new forms of interactive technology for collective work and capacity building, develop information-sharing and resources, strengthen collective advocacy via mainstream and alternative media, and support development efforts
- *Women and ESCR*: to expand this important and consistent area of work
- *Economic policy and ESCR*: very likely supporting our current program officer dedicated to this area and corporate accountability
- *Membership and solidarity*: strengthening the engagement of all Members in collective efforts, furthering our System of Solidarity and Support (SOS), and deepening targeted outreach

In the longer term, a deputy director or program director, additional program officers dedicated to emerging areas like monitoring of ESCR or new areas like human rights and environment, or a dedicated development staff member are conceivable.

In reference to the qualifications of future Secretariat staff hires, the following will be prioritized:

- Strong human rights and particularly ESCR background, analysis, and experience
- History of facilitating collective work and ability to strategically identify gaps and issues in dialogue with Members
- Language ability, particularly in French and Arabic (to complement English and Spanish skills)
- Regional diversity (of origin and contacts)

- **Board Oversight**

Board members, elected by and from Members, in collaboration with the Secretariat, have prioritized the following:

- Holding annual face-to-face board meetings, supplemented by quarterly conference calls, to provide institutional and financial oversight and overall coherence in advancing the mission;
- Participating in Working Groups, with at least one Board member in each Working Group (Hossam Bahgat – Adjudication; Legborsi Saro Pyagbara – Corporate Accountability; Niva Gonzales – Economic Policy; Saeed Baloch – Social Movements; Ximena Andion – Women and ESCR; Cathy Albisa – Monitoring; and Sandra Ratjen – NGO Campaign for the OP-ICESCR) to ensure participation in development of strategic objectives and work plans; and
- Ensuring a succession plan for the director of the Secretariat, both by electing officers who would serve as acting leadership in case of an unforeseen event and by taking responsibility for reviewing and hiring of the director. **Hossam Bahgat was selected as Chair, and Cathy Albisa was chosen as Treasurer.**

In addition, the Board unanimously adopted, at their April 2013 meeting, a **Policy Clarification on Network Positions and Campaigns** to guide Working Groups and Members, which will be published on the ESCR-Net website.

- **Location of the Secretariat**

Mandated to ensure the healthy functioning of the Secretariat and periodically consider its location, at its April 2013 meeting, the Board decided to keep the Secretariat in New York City. This was based on the cost of relocation and the relatively affordable price of international travel; proximity to international processes and certain branches and meetings of the United Nations; networking possibilities of NYC as an international hub through which many ESCR-Net Members travel; stability of

working environment; and existing funding relationships. In considering relocation, there were also concerns regarding becoming a regionally-focused network and likely facing substantial staff turnover due to the move. Due to cost, as well as legal and management challenges, the Board was also reluctant to open multiple regional offices. **However**, the Board endorsed making efforts to ensure regionally diverse hires by facilitating visas and relocation costs and considering individual hires based in different regions, who would travel to NYC for orientation and periodic meetings.

- **Fundraising**

Many Members help to support the collective work of ESCR-Net through co-sponsoring or hosting events, generously giving of their time and attention to collaborative efforts, or funding themselves or their allies to participate in workshops, strategy meetings, or projects. In addition, Board members have offered contacts, read proposals, and facilitated fundraising efforts of the Secretariat. In the past several months, two new sources of core funding have been added, helping to diversify and gradually expand a base of funding for Network activities and coordination. In 2013-2014, the Secretariat will approach at least two potential donors in each of the prioritized areas of women and ESCR, corporate accountability/economic policy, adjudication, and NGO Campaign for the OP-ICESCR, while ensuring regular and effective communications with current supporters. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to organize a 10th anniversary celebration of the Network, to be launched on 10 December 2013.

- **Tides Center and Legal Structure**

ESCR-Net relies on the Tides Center for its legal status in the US, as well as for accounting, legal, payroll and human resource support; in exchange, Tides takes 9% of all private donations, grants, and reimbursements, as well as 15% of any government grant. Leaving Tides would require ESCR-Net to set-up basic state and federal regulatory filing, finance and accounting systems, insurance, human resource policies, and Board by-laws and officers, while paying increased costs for benefits. Perhaps equally significant, ESCR-Net successfully secured UN accreditation via The Tides Center; this status would presumably stay with The Tides Center. Normally, an organization needs to be a nationally-accredited not-for-profit for three years, before applying for UN accreditation. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of achieving independent status in the next 1-2 years, continue to adopt more robust financial and administrative process and policies, and explore solutions for addressing UN status.