

Global Social Policy Digest (GSP 6.2)

The Global Policy Digest forms part of every issue of the journal Global Social Policy. All members of ICSW receive Global Social Policy every quarter.

In this issue the first section (Page 3) on redistribution gives coverage to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The second section (Page 5) moves on to discuss migration issues. The third section (Page 7) focuses on rights including the formation of the Human Rights Council and the various plays that have occurred in its formation and composition. Global Social Governance (Page 8) is the theme of the fourth section. Here you can read of the structural changes in the UN. Also there is a brief report on the ILO consideration of the report on the Social Dimensions of Globalization. The ILO sees a role for itself in advancing the 'decent work' agenda. (Page 9). Still in the same section (Page 10) coverage is given to some critical articles on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Finally in the fourth section on global governance, for those interested in the World Economic Forum, mention is made of the WEF Global Governance Initiative (Page 10). This includes an annual report on the international achievements in meeting the challenges of peace and security, poverty and hunger, education, health, the environment and human rights.

The fifth section (Page 11) takes us into International Actors and Social Policy. Health is the first subject with coverage of HIV/AIDS. Mention is then made of the build up to the May World Health Assembly where Kenya and Brazil have managed to have essential health research included on the agenda. The MDG debate continues (Page 11) with the issue of strengthening health systems becoming increasingly important as a prerequisite to meeting MDGs. The WHO is preparing a strategy for strengthening health systems as part of their work towards health-related MDGs.

The World Health Report 2006 (Page 12) focuses on human resources under the title Working Together for Health. The report contains an expert assessment of the current crisis in the global health workforce and proposals to tackle it over the next ten years. The OECD is looking at the same issue and has released a report on supply of physician services in OECD countries.

The World Bank is in trouble again with an article in The Lancet attacking the Bank for its ineffective interventions into Malaria.

And to finish us off on a gloomy note The Global Corruption Report 2006 (Page 13) centres on health and health systems. It suggests that the level of corruption is vast in health care in both rich and poor countries.

Leading the next section on social protection there is a report of a new book that continues the World Bank push for privatised pensions. The Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank (Page 14) is less sanguine in its report about the Bank's success in pension reform.

The ILO has been busy in its Social Security Department with some new thinking on social protection. (Page 14) The suggestion is that the ILO will develop "a vision of national social security systems that countries at different levels of development can afford". On a hopeful note, the OECD has suggested that in terms of pensions there was now a fading of fixation with fiscal sustainability issues and a resurgence of interest in the social aspects of pensions and a questioning of where the private pension push fitted in. (Page 14).

The section on social protection ends on a regional note with reference to the African Union advocating social pensions and cash transfers as an effective means of tackling poverty. (Page 15)

Moving on to education (Page 15) there are reports from UNESCO, the World Bank and ILO on Education of Girls and Women.

If you are interested in water there was a lot of activity around world water day on 22nd March. Numerous statements and reports surfaced at that time. (Page 17)

If you have read this far, then you are now into trade and social policy. Here (Page 18) you can find references to TRIPS, intellectual property and the Doha Development Round negotiations. In the field of trade in services the ILO has prepared a report focusing on trade in human labour titled Merchants of labour. The World Bank has published a book on Poverty and the WTO. (Page 19).

This ends the global section. We now move on to Southern Voices and Actors. (Page 19) The first subject is the establishment of Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA). The idea of SAPA was first proposed by regional civil society organizations at the 2005 ASEAN Civil Society Conference. The participants agreed on the need for a mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of civil society engagement with regional inter-governmental processes.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) launched a new report - The State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005. (Page 20) Pacific Island Government leaders have called for greater support to the sub-region's development efforts and regional cooperation in the Pacific. (Page 20)

At the 2006 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Consultative Conference on 26 April the leaders identified a number of priority projects such as trade and liberalisation and development, infrastructure building for regional integration, sustainable food security, social and human development, HIV/AIDS, and peace and security maintenance. (Page 21).

The African Union in May 2006 discussed the continent's top three killers namely the HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. (Page 21)

In the first mention of media in this summary the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) issued a report on the state of media freedom and freedom of expression in southern Africa 2005. (Page 21)

Civil society representatives from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries concluded at a meeting in April, "In fact, the overwhelming emphasis on liberalisation in the economic partnership agreements (EPA) negotiations proves that these negotiations are about expanding Europe's access to ACP markets, rather than about ACP countries' development." (Page 22)

The theme for the September 2006 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM) meeting in Sri Lanka is Agenda for Growth and Livelihoods. (Page 22)

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Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

Redistribution

The UK government produced a useful review in March 2006 (www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/cfa-g8-gleneaglesreport%20.pdf) of international and UK efforts to implement the recommendations of the G8 2005 Gleneagles' meeting and the Commission for Africa (www.commissionforafrica.org). An update was mounted on their site later (www2.dfid.gov.uk/g8/milestones.asp).

Following the establishment of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFI) in September 2005 with British, French, Italian, Spanish and Swedish support, Norway later added its support. The first bonds are being issued in April 2006. The French airline ticket solidarity tax will be launched on July 1st 2006. The proposals for a broader IFF and for a wider commitment to the airline ticket tax were discussed at a major international conference on Innovative Sources of Financing for Development hosted by France between 28th February and March 1st (www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/). The French are proposing an International Drug Purchasing Facility (IDPF) to provide a reliable source of funds over the long term for drugs to complement the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. A joint UK-French working group to "pursue further work on innovative financing mechanisms" has been established and will report to the September 2006 IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting. The conference attended by 90 countries and 60 NGOs marked a breakthrough from theory to practice with 11 additional countries agreeing to raise an airline ticket tax in the near future following the decision of France and Chile to do this. A larger group of 38 countries established a "pilot group for solidarity contributions for development".¹

The European Parliament considered on February 14th a resolution welcoming these developments and calling upon governments to examine the feasibility of a world lottery to fund actions to combat hunger (www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/glotax/aviation/2006/0214euffd.htm). While a currency transaction tax did not feature high on these agendas the EU's financial assistance enabled the production of the WEED Report Ready for Implementation: Technical and Legal Aspects of a Currency Transaction Tax and its Implementation in the EU (www2.weed-online.org/uploads/CTT_Ready_for_Implementation.pdf).

Meanwhile across the Atlantic and rather more conservatively Kernal Derviř, now at UNDP and Nancy Birdsall of the CGD have called for a "Stability and Social Investment Facility" (SSF)² (www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/5853). This "SSF to be housed either at the IMF or the World Bank would be a long-term facility to help high-debt emerging market countries cope with and ultimately overcome what will otherwise remain a chronic structural weakness. It would be an instrument providing a steady and predictable source of long-term funds as well as a strong policy signal to help high-debt emerging-market economies reduce their debt burden

¹ For information on this see:

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/actu/bulletin.gb.asp?liste=20060301.gb.html#Chapitre1>,
http://www.choike.org/documentos/paris2006_03.pdf,
http://www.choike.org/documentos/paris2006_04.pdf,
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/glotax/aviation/2006/02ngostatem.pdf>, <http://www.weed-online.org/show/110278.html>,
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/glotax/aviation/2006/0228french.pdf>

² Center for Global Development. Working Paper No 77, January 2006

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addition, this report presents a comparison of the recommendations emanating from the United Nations conferences and summits with the recommendations made by the Global Commission on International Migration. These recommendations are one of the inputs to the high-level dialogue that the General Assembly will conduct in September 2006. The comparison included in this report is meant to provide Member States with a better sense of where and how the Global Commission's recommendations have broken new ground.

Meanwhile Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Peter Sutherland, an international businessman, who headed the WTO, to serve as his Special Representative for Migration! In his new role, Mr. Sutherland will help the Secretary-General prepare for the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held in mid September. The new envoy will also be engaged in preparing an overview of migration and development issues requested by the General Assembly that will cover a range of issues, including migration's impact on development and the movements by highly skilled and educated migrant workers. The overview will also draw on the report and recommendations of the Global Commission on International Migration.

(www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17255&Cr=migrat&Cr1); for a Sutherland statement see www.un.org/news/Press/docs/2006/pop946.doc.htm

Queuing up to influence these upcoming deliberations are a number of publications, commission meetings, and seminars. Firstly, the 39th meeting of the Commission on Population convened between April 3rd and 7th in New York to address International Migration and Development (www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/comm2006.htm). Ocampo, Under-Secretary General at DESA, in his address to the Commission (www.un.org/esa/desa/ousg/statements/2006/20060403_cpd.html) remarked: "One of the major challenges related to migration today is the high mobility of the highly educated or skilled. The more that countries develop, the more they are in need of skilled workers. Yet developing countries also need persons with skills, particularly those involved in providing basic services, such as health and education, as well as in new dynamic activities associated with the spread of information and communications technology. To address the needs of developing countries in this respect will probably require a global approach to the formation of human capital, based on the principle of solidarity. Collaborative arrangements and partnerships to train required skilled personnel and to improve working conditions in home countries are urgently needed. Otherwise, the brain drain may continue to have an adverse effect on development in several developing countries in the coming decade". The UN Commission on the Status of Women 50th session (New York, 27 February – 10 March) convened a High-level panel on The Gender Dimensions of International Migration (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/50sess.htm). From the ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies, edited by Christiane Kuptsch, there is Merchants of Labour (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/merchants.pdf), which focuses on the role of private recruitment agencies. Managing Labour Migration in the Twenty-first Century (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/features/06/migration.htm); by Philip Martin, Manolo Abella and Christiane Kuptsch⁵ is a recent study, co-authored by two ILO

⁵ Martin, P. / Abella, M. / Kuptsch, C. (2006): Managing Labour Migration in the Twenty-first Century. New Haven and London: Yale University Press

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entitled Measuring Gender (In)equality: Introducing the Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID) (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/49/36228820.pdf).⁹

Global Social Governance

The UN has begun to make progress since September 2005 in its institutional reform agenda (see GSP Digest 6.1). Reform discussions are under way on a number of fronts including the establishment of the Human Rights Council (above), the Secretariat Management reform, and the reform of ECOSOC (www.globalpolicy.org/reform/topics/general/2006/0327hotting.htm). In addition the first steps have been taken to rationalise some of the overlapping and competing mandates that have been given to UN agencies over the years (www.un.org/mandatereview/executive.html). The inventory of mandates compiled by the Secretariat draws attention to the problems of overlap between UN organisations and gaps between mandates and resources. Among specific recommendations are those concerned to review all pre NEPAD mandates to streamline in the context of NEPAD, to coordinate humanitarian assistance, to strengthen the “United Nations work in the area of gender mainstreaming” and to consider “consolidating (UN training and research) institutions into one United Nations educational and training system”.

More significant and acting with some urgency is the new High-Level Panel on United Nations System-Wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. Appointed by Kofi Annan on 16th February and including Gordon Brown (UK), Ruth Jacoby (Sweden), Ricardo Escobar (Chile), and the prime ministers or presidents of Pakistan, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Norway it began work on April 5th. Annan intends that this panel will report on streamlining the UN in these three fields by September 2006

(www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10406.doc.htm). Northern and EU governments have already lobbied it hard: A group of 13 donors (EU countries and Canada) wrote to the Prime Minister of Norway, in his capacity of Co-chair, proposing a rationalisation of the UN in each country so that there will be one UN team under one UN coordinator and one UN programme (www.globalpolicy.org/reform/docs00/0328bigchanges.htm). In terms of social policy in the context of social development this appears to suggest that the UNDP will take on a more central role and hence upgrade its social policy analytical work in helping countries plan for the MDGs. The specialised agencies such as ILO and WHO would seem to be given a think-tank role in this scenario. More inter-agency dialogue about social policy and social protection between the emerging lead UNDP agency and these specialised agencies would be needed. This emerging scenario suggests that the UN would be strengthened in those areas where it might be said to have comparative advantage (peace, development, humanitarian, environment) leaving the fields of economics and trade to the IMF/Bank and WTO.

Some of the issues to be addressed in this upcoming reform were rehearsed by the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Acampo, in his address to

⁹ Jütting, J.P./Morrisson, C. / Dayton-Johnson, J. / Drechsler, D. (March 2006): Measuring Gender (In)equality: Introducing the Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID) DEV/DOC(2006)01 Working Paper No.247

the 44th Commission on Social Development (www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2006.htm). He noted that the “Commission will need to think about how ... the Commission contribute to ECOSOC’s reformed segments; to the new annual ministerial reviews, to the global policy dialogue and Development Cooperation Forum? ... It seems clear, however, that the Commission might want to add a standing agenda item on its relations to ECOSOC. And the Commission and Secretariat could make a practice of clearly identifying policy areas requiring the Council’s attention. Another related angle for consideration here is how the Commission will respond to the Summit’s major emphasis on achieving greater coherence and synergies in the United Nations’ operational, analytical, and normative work, at both country and headquarters levels. This could mean exploring ways to engage the United Nations’ funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies in the Commission’s work. And it could also involve the Commission and the Secretariat clearly identifying their work’s operational implications.

Further indications of the thinking of Kofi Annan may be found in his notes prepared for the ECOSOC meeting with the Bretton Woods Organisations, the WTO and UNCTAD on April 24th. (www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/bwi2006/index.html)

Further information about follow up to the September 2005 Summit may be found at www.un.org/ga/president/60/summitfollowup/. Jens Marten has addressed the implications of the UN reform discussions for role of NGOs within any reformed ECOSOC and the new Human Rights Council in The Future of NGO Participation at the United Nations after the 2005 World Summit (www.globalpolicy.org/eu/en/publ/briefingpaper-ngoandun01-2006.pdf). Meanwhile Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former UN Secretary General and now Chairman of the South Centre (www.southcentre.org), submitted a paper in February to the ‘Panel of Eminent Persons on Enhancing UNCTAD’s Impact’ (www.unctad.org/Templates/StartPage.asp?intItemID=3611&lang=1) set up by the G77 titled Reinventing UNCTAD (www.southcentre.org/ReinventingUNCTAD.pdf) that calls for UNCTAD to once again become the UN Agency “at the forefront of multi-lateral effort to deal with the current complex global development challenges”. This view about the importance of UNCTAD, which clearly diverges from the focus of UN reform discussions going on in New York, is reflected in the statements of the G77.¹⁰

The ILO Governing Body in March considered the Report of its Working Party on the Social Dimensions of Globalization The 2005 World Summit Outcome document: Implications for the ILO (www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb295/pdf/sdg-1.pdf). In it the working party saw opportunities for the ILO in advancing the ‘decent work’ agenda, in contributing centrally to the closer collaboration between UN agencies and to helping shape the ECOSOC reform.

¹⁰ See <http://www.g77.org/Speeches/A-C5-60-L37-Rev1.pdf> and <http://www.g77.org/newswire/index.htm>

Not to be out-done as a UN agency, UNESCO under its remit for the Social Sciences convened in Argentina and Uruguay between February 20th-24th the first International Forum on the Social Sciences-Policy Nexus to bring together international social sciences and UN agencies to advance policy related analysis in the areas of globalisation, social policy, migration and regionalism (www.unesco.org/shs/). Panels were convened by all UN agencies, by the World Bank (Anis Dani), UNRISD and universities. Within the context of the event was a High-Level Symposium on the Social Dimension of Regionalism convened jointly by UNESCO, MERCOSUR, GASPP and UNU-CRIS. The Forum as a whole concluded with the Buenos Aires Declaration, which called among other things for the UN to enhance the role of regional associations of countries and the development of regional social policies. UNESCO may carry this work forward under its MOST programme.

While the UN agencies jockey for position in the attempt to strengthen the UN a number of articles have appeared questioning the role of the World Bank and IMF. Jessica Einhorn, former Managing Director of the World Bank, writes in “Foreign Affairs” (Jan/Feb 2006) that the World Bank’s window for middle-income countries, the IBRD, “seems to be a dying institution”. She proposes ways that the institution might be phased out.¹¹ In an article, Martin Wolf of the “Financial Times” states: “Let us be brutal: the IMF is on the brink not just of “obscurity” as Mr. King (Governor, Bank of England) suggests but of irrelevance”.¹² In another article Fritz Fischer, Former Executive Director at the World Bank, calls for amalgamating the IMF and World Bank.¹³ This sense of crisis concerning the future of the Bank and Fund was reflected by the Institute of Policy Studies (www.ips-dc.org/overview.htm) in a strategy meeting of activists it convened in April during the Spring meeting of the Bank and Fund. The meeting drew attention to the increased disconnection of major developing countries from the two institutions and in particular the early repayment of debts by Argentina and Brazil and the refusal of other countries (China, Thailand, Philippines, India) to take out loans which was leading to a budgetary crisis in the IMF (www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/2006/0427ngo efforts.htm). Adding to the debate is Stephen Radelet with The Role of the IMF in Well-Performing Low-Income Countries¹⁴ (www.cgdev.org/files/6350_file_WP_83.pdf) in which he argues that in well performing low-income countries the IMF should use more non-funded programs, and it should play a much less dominant role in overall conditionality. These countries should be able to focus more on achieving high-priority development goals that are outside the expertise of the IMF, such as in health, water, education, private sector development, and agriculture. Despite all of this speculation the Bank and the IMF met as usual in April and little sense of this crisis was reflected in their communiqué.¹⁵

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOMMINT/NewsAndEvents/20898432/Apr_2006_DC_Communique_E.pdf

Earlier in the year in Davos the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting 2006 took place (www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Annual+Meeting+2006).

¹¹ <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20060101facomment85103/jessica-einhorn/reforming-the-world-bank.html>

¹² http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2006/02/martin_wolf_on_.html

¹³ http://www.europesworld.org/PDFs/Issue2/EuropesWorld_No2_Full.pdf

¹⁴ Center for Global Development, Working Paper No 83, Feb 2006

¹⁵ See also <http://www.imf.org/external/spring/2006/imfc/index.asp>

Among the reports considered was that of the Global Governance Initiative, an annual report on the international achievements in meeting the challenges of peace and security, poverty and hunger, education, health, the environment and human rights. Scores measure progress on these fronts – this year: 5/10 for poverty alleviation, 4/10 for hunger eradication, 5/10 for health improvements (the ‘higher’ score largely due to the funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

International Actors and Social Policy

Health

The follow-up to the outcome of the Twenty-Sixth Special Session: Implementation of the Declaration and Commitment on HIV/AIDS will take place from 31 May to 2 June in New York. The Report of the Secretary General preparing for the High Level Meeting (A/60/736) warns that the global HIV/AIDS response stands at a crossroads. Acknowledging that on the one hand important progress has been made and for the first time the world possesses the means to begin to reverse the global epidemic if all actors in the global response fulfil their potential it notes that on the other hand, failure to urgently strengthen the AIDS response could mean that the world will fail to achieve the 2010 targets of the MDG 6 as well fall short of other MDGs on poverty, hunger and childhood mortality

[.http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/20060324_SGReport_GA_A60737_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/20060324_SGReport_GA_A60737_en.pdf)

The Report of the Secretary General is accompanied by a note (A/60/737) focusing on the task of universalising access and an assessment by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. These include requirements for further action, which consist of sustainability of financing for HIV/AIDS programmes at national and international levels, strengthening human resources and health and social systems, ensuring access to affordable, quality HIV-prevention commodities (e.g. condoms), medicines and diagnostics and protection and promotion of the HIV/AIDS related human rights of people living with AIDS and of women, children and people of vulnerable groups. The report also urges that all countries should set ambitious targets on tackling HIV/AIDS and move as close as possible to universal access by 2010 (http://data.unaids.org/pub/InformationNote/2006/20060324_HLM_GA_A60737_en.pdf).

The WHO Executive Board was dealing with several trade, research and development related proposals and resolutions in its January meeting. The most debated resolution was made on essential health research and proposed by Kenya and Brazil to be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2006. The final wording of the resolution remains under discussion, but in spite of difficulties to get it to the Executive Board agenda, it is to proceed to the World Health Assembly. Raising the issue of building a global framework agreement on research and development for health as part of the WHO global agenda, the resolution is being followed closely by nongovernmental and consumer organisations.

<http://www.cptech.org/ip/health/rndtf/117who-rnd.html>

Other items of broader interest include a resolution on globalisation and health promotion and a resolution on trade, although the latter was weakened during the executive board’s redrafting. While the work of the WHO cannot be reduced to the

MDGs due to their limited focus, none-the-less as part of the MDG debate the issue of strengthening health systems has become increasingly important as a prerequisite to meeting MDGs. The WHO is preparing a strategy for strengthening health systems as part of their work towards health-related MDGs. The proposed strategy will be open to consultation with Member States and other stakeholders during 2006 before being submitted to the WHO governing body (EB117/INF.DOC./2) (www.who.int).

The WHO Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health finally managed to submit its report in April 2006 (www.who.int/intellectualproperty/en/). Its suggestions are not very action oriented or challenging to the existing system, but do provide insights and guidance on several issues of importance. The Report confirms the rights of governments to use compulsory licensing consistent with the TRIPS agreement. Further, it makes clear that bilateral trade agreements should not seek to incorporate more extensive patent protection, which could reduce access to medicines in developing countries. Also included are rather general suggestions that the WHO should develop a Global Plan of Action to secure enhanced and sustainable funding for, and make accessible products to, addressing diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries. However, the Report does make clear that the patent system does not play any significant role in supporting the development of medicines needed by the poor as patents only work when profitable markets exist. The Report is accompanied by a World Health Assembly resolution on the matter for the World Health Assembly in May 2006 (www.who.int).

The World Health Report 2006 focuses on human resources under the title Working Together for Health. The report contains an expert assessment of the current crisis in the global health workforce and proposals to tackle it over the next ten years. The report reveals an estimated shortage worldwide of almost 4.3 million doctors, midwives, nurses and support workers. The shortage is most severe in the poorest countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where health workers are most needed (www.who.int/whr/en/). Analysis of the European situation is provided by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (www.euro.who.int/observatory/Publications/20060112_1). The issue of human resources and work-force mobility is also on the OECD agenda, which has published a recent report on the supply of physician services in OECD countries (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/22/35987490.pdf). According to the OECD Health Update newsletter, the OECD also intends to engage in future work in the area of migration and health workforce planning. A recent analysis by Pond and McPake in the Lancet¹⁶ has drawn attention to specific policies in four OECD countries – the UK, the US, Germany and France – that have been important in the development of a human resources crisis affecting low-income countries and argue that this can be reversed by changing these specific policies (www.lancet.com).

The World Bank's Roll Back Malaria campaign, which was launched eight years ago and promised to halve malaria deaths this decade has been heavily criticised. The World Bank work and its claims about funding anti-malaria projects have now been

¹⁶ Pond B, McPake B. The health migration crisis: the role of four Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. Lancet 3006:367:1448-1455

assessed and criticised in a recent article in Lancet by Attaran et al.¹⁷ They assert that in the past five years the World Bank has claimed success for its malaria programmes by promulgating false epidemiological statistics, and has approved clinically obsolete treatments for a potentially deadly form of malaria as well as downsized its malaria staff. In conclusion they argue that the World Bank's technical expertise is insufficient and that it should wind up its malaria projects, and become a provider of un-programmed finance to institutions that are better situated to save lives more quickly such as the WHO (www.lancet.com). Information on WHOM, UNICEF and World Bank activities on malaria can be found on the specific global partnership pages on Roll Back Malaria (www.rbm.who.int/publications.html).

A report to the Commission on Human Rights by the special rapporteur Paul Hunt on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is available. The report suggests a human rights-based approach to health indicators and presents a set of structural, process and outcome indicators. The intent is to provide a common approach to indicators with the understanding that these will need to be revised and refined on the basis of experience (www2.essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre/rth/docs/CHR%202006.pdf).

UNU/WIDER (www.wider.unu.edu) has published two new research papers: Health Inequalities During the Last 40 Years and Investing in Health for Economic Development. It also plans to hold a conference on advancing health equity in September 2006.

The Global Corruption Report 2006 centres on health and health systems. According to the Report the world spends more than US \$3 trillion on health services every year, most of which is financed by taxpayers. The report claims that in both rich and poor countries the scale of corruption is vast. The focus of the report includes not only health services, but also the pharmaceutical sector. (www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/download_gcr)

Social Protection

While the World Bank has had a significant impact upon pension policy in many parts of the world it is still struggling to find allies and supporters in “old Europe”. A new volume by Holzmann and Palmer (2006)¹⁸ (www.worldbank.org/pensions) is clearly designed to shift the terms of the European discourse on this issue in favour of privatisation. The basic concept of the book – “notionally defined contributions (NDC)” – accepts (for now?) the practice of Pay As You Go but suggests that we should start thinking of the contributions employees make to the PAYG scheme as if they were being invested in a defined contribution scheme. This way future governments will be able to calculate what the contributions would have earned had they been so invested. As the book argues “notional accounts sets an automatic limit

¹⁷ Attaran A, Barnes K, Binka F, d'Alessandro U, Fanello C, Garret L, Mutabingwa TK, Roberts D, Sibley CH, Talisuna A, Van Geertruyden J-P, Watkins WM. The World Bank: false financial and statistical accounts and medical malpractice in malaria treatment. The Lancet/online 25 April 2006 DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)68545-0

¹⁸ Holzmann R and Palmer E (2006) *Pension Reform: Issues and Prospects for Non-Financial Defined Contributions*, Washington DC World Bank. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTPENSIOS/0,,contentMDK:20811726~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:396253,00.html>

to the claims of tomorrow's pensioners on tomorrow's workers". At the same time of course it shifts the language of pensions from those of intergenerational solidarity to a meaner language of individualised actuarial fairness¹⁹. The World Bank's own Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) reviewed recently the pension reform work of the Bank (www.worldbank.org/eig/pensions). This report was critical of the work in a number of respects: a) The long term impact of reforms "varied widely across countries", b) the Bank's concern to secure fiscal sustainability frequently led to "the neglect of the primary goal of pension systems: to reduce poverty and provide retirement income adequacy within a fiscal constraint", and c) a secondary objective of funded pillars "to increase savings and develop capital markets have remained largely unrealised".

Under the new leadership of Michael Cichon the ILO's Social Security Department (www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/index.htm) is developing a new department policy paper on Social Protection. A first indication of its contents was provided at an ILO-convened Inter-Agency "Show and Tell" seminar on February 20th. This was attended by the World Bank (Robert Holzmann), the OECD (Mark Pearson), UNDESA (Sergei Zelenev), IMF, the World Food Programme, the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UKDFID, the Finns, and GTZ among others. The ILO presentation claimed it was now developing "a vision of national social security systems that countries at different levels of development can afford"²⁰. These would, for the poorest countries, ensure access to basic health care, provide a system of family benefits that permit children to attend school, involve a system of self-targeted basic social assistance (cash for work) for the able bodied and a system of basic universal pensions in old age, invalidity and survivorship that in effect support families. The programme would include work on Global Campaign on Social security for All but the now finished Socio-Economic Security Programme does not get a mention.

The World Bank's contribution to the seminar was predictably the most voluminous (95 pages compared to the ILO's 66 pages) reporting work of the labour markets, pensions, social safety nets, social funds, social risk management, disability, and health finance teams in the five bank regions. Of interest was the report that the mission of the social protection sector had recently been adjusted to take more account of both the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation and especially its concern to create decent work and the World Bank's own Development Report which was concerned to secure more equitable outcomes in a globalizing world. So the new mission asserts that it "will assist countries to alleviate poverty and promote equitable and sustainable growth through ... the creation of good jobs through better labour markets regulations ... (and) provide minimum levels of subsistence and help to correct market-based distributive outcomes".

Mark Pearson, Head of the OECD's Social Policy Division (www.oecd.org/els/social), reported²¹ that in terms of pensions there was now a

¹⁹ See Ervik R (2005) "The Battle for Future Pensions: Global Accounting Tools, International Organisations and Pension Reform", *GSP* 5, 1, 19-28.

²⁰ See also Pal K, Behrendt C, Leger F, Cichon M, Hagemeyer K (2005), "Can low income countries afford basic social protection", *Issues in Social Protection Discussion Paper* 13, Geneva, ILO.

²¹ OECD (2006): Aging and Employment Policies: Live Longer, Work Longer
http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,2340,en_2649_34747_36104426_1_1_1_1,00.html

fading of the concern with fiscal sustainability issues and a resurgence of interest in the social aspects of pensions and a questioning of where the private pension push fitted in. The later concern was reflected in a lot of work on guidelines for private pension schemes that extended to a large number of dialogues with non-OECD members including Brazil, China, South Africa and Russia. The surge of interest on reconciling work and family life had generated new work on child-care costs and child well-being. Employment-oriented social policy continued to be the main theme for the population of working age. Integration of migrants was an aspect of this as well as facilitating an extended working life for older people.

The IMF weighed in at only 3 pages but Peter Heller, Deputy Director of Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD), reported on its role in supporting governments shifting from PAYG pensions to mixed systems and notionally defined contributions. Gaspar Fajth's of UNICEF DPP presentation drew attention to the specific entry points where UNICEF's work touched upon social protection; e.g. demobilizing child soldiers with cash allowances, HIV/AIDS and juvenile justice reform (CEE/CIS). UNICEF plans to strengthen conceptual work in social protection and hold an international conference on child aspects of social protection programmes in New York in September 2006. The WHO contribution by David Evans, Director of WHO Health Systems Financing section reported that its work was guided by the May 2005 World Health Assembly resolution that was concerned to ensure universal coverage and sustainable financing such that "everyone has access to appropriate care when they need it without the risk of financial catastrophe or impoverishment".

The UN Commission for Social Development at its 44th Session in February 2006 reviewed the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and concluded by urging "all countries to adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies in order to halve extreme poverty by 2015, as agreed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome". (www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2006/statements/stat06.htm). Within the context of this meeting Anis Dani of the World Bank presented the outcome of the Arusha conference reported in GSP Digest 6.1.

Perhaps more significant in terms of concrete actions was the Livingstone Call For Action agreed at a meeting on Social Protection convened by the African Union (AU) between 20th-23rd March and held in Zambia. The meeting was addressed by the ILO and it was agreed that social pensions and cash transfers are an effective means of tackling poverty and 13 Africa governments agreed to put together national social protection plans to support older people and other vulnerable groups (www.helpage.org/News/latestnews/@27954). The role of the AU is noteworthy here and links to the Buenos Aires Declaration's call for a greater role for regions in global governance (see Global Social Governance Section above). Meanwhile the World Bank²² is taking more interest in social pensions (www.worldbank.org/pensions).

Education

²² Palacios, Robert/ Sluchynsky, Oleksiy (2006): The role of social pensions. DRAFT. Pension Reform Primer
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTPENSIOS/0,,contentMDK:20858419~menuPK:396259~pagePK:64020865~piPK:149114~theSitePK:396253,00.html>

Another three UNESCO celebration weeks were dedicated to education (www.unesco.org). The one on Education of Girls and Women was around the Women's Day (8 March). In a message (www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/gasm371.doc.htm), UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson called for "much greater progress" in the education of girls. Making a similar point the World Bank (www.worldbank.org/education) (staging a high level conference on 16 February) warned "that without action and change, more than six million girls will miss the opportunity to go to school by the year 2015".²³ This aim was likely to be failed "because of lack of adequate financial and political support". Also the ILO in a Gender News Special Issue (www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/gender.home) makes the point that "disparities are still wide in secondary and tertiary education".

Another week (30 January – 5 March) addressed Secondary and Vocational Education, and a third one Higher Education. The UNESCO did not appear too active in enriching the thematic weeks with new publications or actions – except for a rather general four-page dossier Educating for Tomorrow's World (www.unesco.org/education) discussing problems in education and presenting the organisation's strategy to tackle them.

Education International, together with Global Campaign for Education, was more engaged organising a Global Action Week (24 –30 April) on the topic Every child needs a teacher (www.ei-ie.org/globalactionweek/), calling for more funding and greater political leadership to achieve Education for All, and further releasing two new issues of Worlds of Education (all at www.ei-ie.org/). The organisation complains that while there "is no lack of resolutions and commitments on paper", real action was rather limited. As a contribution to this, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) published a report on Teachers and Educational Quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015

(www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/Teachers2006/TeachersReport.pdf). Also the World Bank (www.worldbank.org/education) picked up the teacher topic: a research project entitled Missing in Action: Teacher and Medical Provider Absence in Developing Countries addresses the problem of absenteeism of teachers being "a barrier to improvement of education ...outcomes in developing countries".²⁴

While the World Bank's (IBRD and IDA) role in social policy including education policy is now well understood rather more surprising, though, is the role in the education field of the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) (www.ifc.org/ifcext/che.nsf/Content/Education)! At a IFC organised Forum for International Investors in Private Higher Education (www.ifc.org/ifcext/che.nsf/Content/Ed_Forum_2006_Agenda) in February, IFC representatives took an effort to make palatable to about 100 leading investors from 30 countries their "important leadership role ... to demonstrate new and practical ways that private sector investment can be mobilized" (all presentations at the above website). The specific IFC approach, as presented by Chris McCahan includes, sole participation in private sector ventures, non-acceptance of government guarantees,

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<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:20823692~menuPK:336874~pagePK:64020865~piPK:149114~theSitePK:336868,00.html>

²⁴

<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:20824881~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469382,00.html>

and profit orientation. Among the presenters were representatives from the World Bank Institute (rather calling for a public-private mixture) and the OECD (stressing the necessity of equity of access for all to quality education). More dissenting voices were completely absent. Education International, for example, discusses the implications of GATS, Melbourne, Hong Kong, and Geneva for education, and is critical about all attempts to open the education sector for private investors and run them as “markets” (www.ei-ie.org).

On the occasion of the IMF/ World Bank Spring Meetings (www.worldbank.org/springmeetings) World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz and the United Kingdom’s Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown called for increased international funding for education “so that every child can go to school” (see also www.fasttrackinitiative.org/education/efafti/).

An OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper was authored by Stephen Machin and titled Social Disadvantage and Education. It argues that “while education can be an escalator out of social disadvantage – leading to better job prospects for youths facing greater risks of poverty and reducing the prevalence of income poverty in adult age – educational failure can reinforce it” (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/60/36165298.pdf).

Habitat: Focus on Water Issues

This year’s World Water Day (22 March) (www.worldwaterday.org) was accompanied by all sorts of events, and publications dealing with water. In a statement, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for a more equitable distribution of water (www.worldwaterday.org/wwday/2001/news/msgun.html), and General Assembly President Jan Eliasson pointed to the importance of access to safe water in meeting the MDGs (www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/gasm372.doc.htm). UNESCO discussed different problems connected with water in its online Courier (www.unesco.org/courier). A major global report, the second World Water Development Report Water, a shared responsibility (www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr2/index.shtml) was released. This joint effort of 24 UN agencies was realised by the Water Assessment Programme (www.unesco.org/water/wwap/). Important points are: equitable sharing of water; the decision on water management (“Who has the right to water and its benefits? Who is making water allocation decisions on who is supplied with water – and from where, when and how?”); and cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector on water supply issues.

One week later (16 – 22 March), the 4th World Water Forum (WWF) Local Actions for a Global Challenge (www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx), an initiative of the World Water Council (WWC) (www.worldwatercouncil.org/), was held in Mexico City. A number of international organisations contributed to the event in various ways: e.g. the World Bank was engaged in the organisation of the event, as well as produced publications and statements to be found at www.worldbank.org/water; the OECD (www.oecd.org/worldwaterforum4) issued a special OECD Observer edition on Water (www.oecdobserver.org/news/categoryfront.php/id/1165/Water.html), as well as an analysis of aid flows in the water sector Measuring aid for water – Has the downward trend in aid for water reversed...? (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/4/36365514.pdf); and UN-Habitat launched a report

entitled Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals (www.unhabitat.org/programmes/water/waterReport2006.asp). Parallel, the UNESCO dedicated a thematic week to Water Management (www.unesco.org/water/index.shtml). The WWF resulted in a Ministerial Conference and Declaration (www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/files/decministerial_ing.pdf) reaffirming, the commitment to earlier agreements on water and the MDGs, and supporting the coordinating role of the UN in water issues. It also reaffirmed the need of increased financial resources including ODA, and the primary role of governments "in promoting improved access to safe drinking water". In an appendix to this declaration, some dissenting governments called water access a fundamental human right, and argued for the removal of water privatisation from trade agreements. This reflected more the tone of the parallel civil society forum. In a joint press release, some civil society groups declared the failure of the WWF (www.uusc.org/programs/environment/waterforum.html) criticising the missing recognition of the human right to water, and calling for a UN-hosted process to replace the WWC initiative (see also publications by the World Development Movement www.wdm.org.uk/wwf/index.htm). Both the WWDR and WWF showed an interesting shift in the issue of water privatisation and user charges. (www.worldwaterforum.us/news/060320NYT.pdf) If not completely off the agenda (as wished by civil society groups), voices for privatisation have become quite careful and uncertain. On the other hand, a new pressure group for private water Aquafed (www.aquafed.org/) was founded and attempted to influence the EU in its position at the forum.

Trade and Social Policy

In the field of intellectual property rights the main concerns have remained around bilateral treaties and other non-TRIPS mechanisms promoting similar impacts, such as data exclusivity. OXFAM has produced a new background paper and briefing on the proposed US-Thailand Free Trade agreement. This concludes that the ways new drug patent and marketing rules are being negotiated between the US and Thailand would limit competition and reduce access to affordable medicines in Thailand (www.oxfam.org)

The issue of bilateral treaties exceeding the TRIPS requirements and constraining the ability of developing countries to utilise TRIPS flexibilities has also been part of debates concerning recently proposed resolutions in the World Health Assembly (see health section).

A policy brief on intellectual property, development and human rights is available from the Internet. The brief outlines how human rights can support proposals for a World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) development agenda (www.3dthree.org/en/). The 3dthree website also provides a compiled reference resource on trade and trade-related issues relevant to the work of the Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/download_gcr).

The Doha Development Round negotiations have missed the April deadline. The pluri-lateral negotiations on GATS and services began on the 28th of February. Collective requests will be negotiated and Member's final schedules are expected to be finalised by the end of October 2006. (www.wto.org)

The Doha round has been criticized by developing countries as well as non-governmental organisations, such as Oxfam, which is removing its support from the round. Oxfam claims in a briefing titled A recipe for disaster that without better offers no Doha deal would improve the existing situation (www.oxfam.org). The South Centre has also published an analysis of Doha and of the NAMA (non-agricultural market access) section of the Ministerial Declaration (www.southcentre.org).

While the global WTO negotiations and regional and bilateral free trade agreements have been struggling a rather different trade pact has emerged from Latin America. An alternative proposal for trade agreements has been made by the President of Bolivia, Evo Morales. The People's Trade Agreement was signed by Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela in Havana in the end of April 2006 (www.bilaterals.org/article.php3?id_article=4596). One of the key areas of this trade pact is the supply of medical personnel and ophthalmologic centres and equipment to Bolivia through a specific arrangement for support from Cuba. (http://www.bilaterals.org/article.php3?id_article=4607)

In the field of trade in services the ILO has prepared a report focusing on trade in human labour titled Merchants of labour, which has a special focus on mediating agencies that promote and enhance the mobility of labour to work in other countries (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/merchants.pdf). Public Services International Research Unit and the World Development Movement Report on water, claims that the private sector has failed to invest in water services in developing countries (www.psiru.org/reports/2006-03-W-investment.pdf).

The OECD (www.oecd.org) has produced a new working paper on inter-modal linkages in trade in services. The Paper presents an analysis of two services sectors, IT-services and health services, and on their special and differential treatment under the GATS.

The World Bank has published a book on Poverty and the WTO as well as revising the Doha background documents (www.worldbank.org). The World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) has published a research paper titled Development through globalisation? The Paper explores globalisation and the challenges it brings to latecomers to development in terms of the national policy space for development. (www.wider.unu.edu) The Aid for Trade initiative has been part of trade negotiations and now the South Centre has published a report that contributes to the debate about the institutional arrangements and elements so that it will be beneficial to developing countries. It has also published a paper that makes the case for revitalising UNCTAD. (www.southcentre.org) (see more details in governance section above)

Southern Voices and Actors

More than 50 regional, sub-regional and national NGOs and civil society networks from the Asian region have recently set up the Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA) (<http://groups.google.co.th/group/sapa>). The idea of SAPA was first proposed by regional civil society organizations at the 2005 ASEAN Civil Society Conference. This was followed up by the Asian consultation on SAPA from 3-4 February 2006 in Bangkok. Participants agreed on the need for a mechanism to

enhance the effectiveness of civil society engagement with regional inter-governmental processes. Five regional organizations namely AsiaDHHRA, FOCUS on the Global South, FORUM-ASIA, SEACA and Third World Network serve as a joint convening group to facilitate the process. Among other things, SAPA network members are currently engaged in national and regional campaigns around the election of the new UN Human Rights Council scheduled for 9 May 2006. Network members are lobbying the Governments vying for places in the Council to be accountable to the requirement by the UN General Assembly Resolution that all members must "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights".

Pacific Island Government leaders have called for greater support to the sub-region's development efforts and regional cooperation in the Pacific. The call was made at the conclusion of the Pacific Leaders' United Nations Special Session (PLUS) held in Jakarta on 10 April 2006

(www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18115&Cr=ESCAP&Cr1). Areas highlighted in the Special session for Asia-Pacific cooperation included employment and sustainable development; economic infrastructure, renewable energy; and trade, investment and tourism. The meeting also reported that it was important to think small so as to be relevant to the needs of small Pacific island countries and to preserve their integrity and cultural identity. Genuine partnership as a means for securing win-win outcomes for all was also emphasized.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) launched a new report urging immediate action to "green" the Asia-Pacific's economic growth patterns as the current rate of regional growth is unsustainable (www.unescap.org/esd/index.asp). The State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005 report asserts that rapid economic growth is exerting increasing pressure upon the limited environmental carrying capacity of the region. One of the key findings is that rapid growth is taking place in a region having lower natural resources endowments per capita than other regions in the world. Over 600 million people live without access to safe drinking water and without appropriate sanitation. In 2005, per capita water availability was about 3,400 m³ per annum, while the world average was estimated at 7,600 m³ per annum. Furthermore, in 2005, Asia was home to 71 per cent of the total number of people in the world without access to improved sanitation; 58 per cent of those without access to safe water; 56 per cent of the world's undernourished; and 54 per cent of those living in slums. Asia and the Pacific is also the world's most disaster-prone region. A recent UNESCAP study showed that the Asian and Pacific region accounted for 91 per cent of the world's total deaths due to natural disaster. The average annual economic damage has increased from US\$10.6 billion over the past five decades to US\$29 billion over the past 15 years.

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established in 1998 with a view to strengthening sub-regional cooperation in Central Asia. Currently it involves Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The SPECA countries, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and to some extent Uzbekistan, are reaping rich dividends from recent global trends in energy prices, marked by unprecedented escalation. This trend is expected to continue in the future thus assuring the oil-

exporting countries continued prosperity. However, in order to sustain the resultant economic growth in these countries, it is imperative that the economic situation in the other countries - Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan as well as Uzbekistan – is also uplifted. This could be achieved by spreading the growth impulse in the energy-rich countries to fuel economic growth in the neighbouring countries. A SPECA Economic Forum is scheduled from 25 to 26 June 2006 in Baku, Azerbaijan with the theme *The Energy Dividend: spreading the growth impulse for prosperity and stability in the SPECA region*. The Forum is expected to provide for interaction among major stakeholders - government, academia and business. (www.unescap.org/oes/speca/)

President Hifikepunye Pohamba urged the southern African region's international cooperating partners to lend the region a hand to end hunger, poverty and underdevelopment. He was speaking at the opening of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Consultative Conference 2006, on 26 April. SADC ministers met with its regional and international cooperation partners, civil society representatives, cooperating governments and business partners. SADC's restructuring process brought about the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO), for whose implementation SADC is looking for partnership. SADC has come up with a number of priority projects such as trade and liberalisation and development, infrastructure building for regional integration, sustainable food security, social and human development, HIV/AIDS, and peace and security maintenance, which if dealt with can ensure the development of the region. In addition to these, the region is looking at deepening regional economic integration to the level of a Common Market, which it hopes to achieve through the establishment of a SADC Free Trade area by 2008 and SADC Customs Union by 2010.

African leaders from 18 countries met in Abuja, Nigeria, on 4 May to discuss the battle against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, the continent's top three killers. The summit was organised by the African Union (AU). The meeting was aimed at going "beyond making commitments to evoking bold, urgent and extraordinary action from African heads of states and government towards ensuring that the targets set at this summit towards the prevention and control of the three diseases are met by 2010". Africa is home to about a tenth of the world's population, but accounts for 60 per cent of those suffering from HIV/AIDS. The AU said that in 2005 between 2.8-million and 3.9- million people in the region were infected with HIV, while 2.4-million adults and children died of AIDS. Africa accounted for more than a quarter of all the tuberculosis cases reported in the world, while 90 per cent of the 500-million malaria cases recorded annually occurred in Africa. (www.africa-union.org/root/au/conferences/past/2006/may/summit/summit.htm)

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) is a regional non-governmental organisation (NGO), based in the Namibian capital of Windhoek, which lobbies for press freedom in the 14-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) (www.ipsnews.net/africa/). In conjunction with the 2006 SADC Consultative Conference MISA issued a report on the state of media freedom and freedom of expression in southern Africa 2005. According to the report, MISA had issued 155 alerts in 2005 about media freedom and freedom of expression violations in the 11 SADC countries it covered. "This is a decrease of 8.3 percent over the 169 alerts recorded the previous year in 2004, and a 57 percent increase over the 84 alerts issued

in 1994, when MISA first began monitoring ... violations in the sub-continent," noted the publication. The countries monitored were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Civil society organisations from several Southern countries are insisting on full participation in the negotiations under way on economic partnership agreements (EPA) between the European Union (EU) and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (www.bilaterals.org/). This was the call from participants at the ACP Civil Society Forum held in Brussels on 19 – 21 April. The forum called upon the ACP, a group of 77 developing countries, and the EU to reaffirm that the EPA negotiations would be transparent and recognize its critical implications for long-term development and poverty reduction in ACP. "As a result of heavy dependence on aid, ACP governments have little choice but to give in to the EU's demand that they open up their markets to European goods and services," an NGO network including Caribbean NGO Policy, Development Centre (Barbados), CONGAC (Cameroon), Econews Africa (Kenya) and Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (Fiji) said in a joint statement. "In fact, the overwhelming emphasis on liberalisation in the EPA negotiations proves that these negotiations are about expanding Europe's access to ACP markets, rather than about ACP countries' development," the civil society organisations reported. The end results will be deeper unemployment, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity and social inequality, the statement warns.

In a subsequent and related meeting held at Navrongo from 23 to 27 April, civil society representatives have reported that the EPAs currently negotiated between the ACP and the EU are set to further reduce incomes of farmers and agriculture-related workers by 50-60 per cent. The campaigners are made up of Oxfam (GB), Comic Relief (UK), the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), MAPRONET, the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFA), ORCADE, INTERMON and CPF from Burkina Faso. According to the campaigners, they are not happy with the Heads of States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their "no objection nod" to the extension of CET. It is the campaigners view that the common external tariff (CET), just as the EPAs, "is likely to further undermine agricultural sectors, which already, have suffered from western subsidies and dumping of imported agricultural produce" (www.bilaterals.org/).

E-consultations among representatives of civil society groups are underway (8 – 22 May) on the special theme of the 2006 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM). The theme of the 2006 CFMM, which will take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 12 to 14 September, is Agenda for Growth and Livelihoods. Since 2002, representatives of civil society of Commonwealth countries have made an input to the special theme deliberations of the annual CFMM. Civil society statements to the CFMM provide Ministers with additional perspectives on the issues they discuss during the special theme session. They have also been used in some national contexts to foster and further dialogue between government and civil society on issues related to the CFMM special theme. Additional preparations and events leading up to the 2006 CFMM is a Pan-Commonwealth civil society organizations' meeting in Sri Lanka, in July 2006, a breakfast meeting in September 2006 in Sri Lanka between civil society representatives and Ministers prior to the CFMM, and the civil society presentation during the CFMM special theme session. As in previous years, it is

expected that the concerns of civil society put forward to the CFMM will be submitted to the IMF-World Bank autumn meeting, which will be attended by the Commonwealth Finance Ministers. The IMF-World Bank meeting is scheduled for 19 – 20 September 2006 in Singapore.

A meeting on how to finance highway infrastructure and improve road safety will be held by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) from 8 – 10 May 2006 in Bangkok (www.unescap.org/ttdw/index.asp). The Asian Highway network comprises more than 141,000 kilometres of standardized roadways spanning 32 Asian countries with linkages to Europe. Currently about 22,000 kilometres or 16 per cent of the network do not meet the minimum desirable standards. It is estimated that around US\$25 billion of investment is already committed for its development and upgrading. However, there is still a shortfall of US\$18 billion required to improve the priority sections to the agreed standards. In 2005, at least 440,000 persons were killed and more than two millions were injured in road accidents in this region. The economic cost is estimated to be in the range of one to three per cent relative to the GDP of UNESCAP countries. It is estimated that, by 2020, about two thirds of the world's road deaths (or 610,000) will be in the Asia-Pacific region. The result of the meeting will feed into a ministerial declaration on improving road safety in the Asia Pacific region to be considered by the Ministerial Conference on Transport scheduled for November 2006 in Pusan, Republic of Korea. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, which entered into force on 4 July 2005, stipulates that parties shall meet the classification and design standards described by the agreement and give full consideration to issues of road safety.

Calendar of Upcoming Events 2006

August	
3 – 4	UN: Sub commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, intersessional forum on economic, social and cultural rights (Social Forum), Geneva/Switzerland
13 – 16	World Aids Conference, Toronto/Canada
September	
14 – 15	UN: General Assembly's High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (A/RES/60/227), New York/USA
16 – 20	World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings Singapore
20	UN: Committee on Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat
25 – 26	WTO Public Forum: "What WTO in the XXI century?"
29 – 30	WIDER conference: Advancing Health Equity, Helsinki/Finland
October	
16 – Nov 3	Human Rights Committee, 88 th session, Geneva/Switzerland
30 – Nov 3	UN: Committee on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 5 th session, Geneva/Switzerland