

GSP Digest 10.3

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Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

REDISTRIBUTION

The G8 met in June against a backcloth of failures to meet its 2005 Gleneagles Commitments. The poor performance by Europe, with the exception of the UK, has meant that the G8 as a whole has provided around 60% of the extra \$50bn it promised in 2005. Less than half of the \$25bn pledged to Africa has been provided, although the G8 agreement to provide debt relief has been implemented. Downplaying the Gleneagles commitments in its [communiqué](#) never the less suggests the G8 should be held accountable every two years to its pledges¹. G8 falls short on [development aid](#)² See also G8's Muskoka [Accountability Report](#)³ and the [comments](#) of the G8 project⁴

An [analysis](#) of ODA by the OECD shows that development aid rose by some 30% in real terms between 2004 and 2009, and continued to grow during the crisis, unlike other financial flows to developing countries, which have fallen sharply. Nonetheless, more aid effort is needed. [...] Although most donors will meet the targets they set for 2010, others have postponed or reduced their pledges, so overall targets will not be met⁵. (see also the [Development Cooperation Report 2010](#)⁶. However, there are also more [critical views](#) for the progress made so far⁷.

The G20 also convened in Canada in June. The [declaration](#) does not reveal any new or interesting initiatives in terms of global social redistribution. In particular the communiqué makes no reference to the report prepared for it by the IMF on the possibilities of global taxation and downplays its role in Development Assistance⁸. Naomi Klein was among the critics in her article [Sticking the public with the bill for the bankers' crisis](#)⁹, as was [Eurodad](#); [G20 turn their backs on development commitments](#)¹⁰. Preparations are underway for the first Asian country to host to G20 Summit: South Korea [presents its plans](#) for this years' summit (to take place 11-12 November) where it is to be hoped that the IMF ideas will be discussed.¹¹

However a leaked copy of the [IMF's report to the G20](#) on *A fair and substantial contribution by the financial sector*¹² has been criticised by [campaigners](#) for inadequate analysis of the potential of the financial transactions tax (FTT), dubbed the Robin Hood tax¹³. Instead, the IMF proposes [two different financial sector taxes](#) to cover some of

the costs of the financial and economic crisis. One is the Financial Activities (FAT) tax and the other a Financial Stability Contribution (FSC). What is clear is that any proceeds from these ‘global’ taxes would be used to bail out developed countries who over borrowed and are no longer seen as sources of revenue either for development or for combating the effects of climate change¹⁴. See also [paying for the crisis: IMF staff reject the FTT](#) in favour of a financial activities tax.¹⁵

Never the less other ideas about global taxation appeared from various organisations. Among the contributions to this debate is a report on Innovative Financing to Fund Development to the Leading Group of countries entitled [Globalizing Solidarity: The Case for Financial Levies](#). It discusses the advantages and disadvantages of a financial transaction tax (FTT), a single-currency transaction tax (CTT), and a global currency transaction tax (CTT); and concludes that a global CTT is the most appropriate financing mechanism for global public goods. They term this “Global Solidarity Levy” (GLS) and explain that its proceeds would be paid into a dedicated fund, upholding principles of accountability, representation and transparency¹⁶. See also [comments](#) by Bretton Woods Project.¹⁷

This accords well with a recent idea by Lawrence Gostin Lawrence O. Gostin (O'Neill Institute Faculty Director) who proposes, with regard to health, a [Global Plan for Justice](#) under which states would devote resources to a Global Health Fund based on their ability to pay – for example, 0.25% of Gross National Income (GNI) per annum – in addition to maintaining current development assistance devoted to programs and activities of their choice¹⁸.

Also researchers from the Center of Global Development contribute ideas in [The End of ODA \(II\): The Birth of Hyper-collective Action](#)¹⁹.

An [Informal Event on Innovative Sources of Development Finance](#) took place 3 June 2010 at the UN Headquarters in New York²⁰. The [summary report](#) expresses an “urgent need to take concrete and decisive steps to expand innovative financing in the run up to the MDG Summit in September 2010”²¹. It further summarises:

** Several innovative mechanisms built around public-private partnerships have provided an important supplement to available financial resources for development. Increased participation in these mechanisms would contribute to both redistribution*

and delivery of global public goods, for instance, through air ticket levies, carbon taxes, a tax on arms trade and a currency transaction tax.

** The potential of raising revenue through the currency transaction tax is technically feasible without adversely affecting financial markets. The advantage of the tax/levy approach is that it can generate large, predictable and sustainable finance, while internalizing external costs and activities.*

** Innovative financing has focused mostly on health issues and it should be expanded to other crucial areas, including food security, environment and climate change.*

Interestingly, and possibly connected to another five-year step after 2015 to achieve the MDGs, instead of the usual reports about aid and its effectiveness, many recent contributions have strongly focused on future perspectives, by way of predictions and ideal models of future systems of global redistribution. The World Bank has published a website [Global Economic Prospects](#)²², and the IMF has published a [report](#) on *A Fair and Substantial Contribution by the Financial Sector*²³. The OECD provides a [new simulation tool](#)²⁴ and looks into the future in its [Perspectives on Global Development](#)²⁵. The latter reads quite differently to a recent Oxfam report [21st century aid: Recognising success and tackling failures](#) claims “Twenty-first century aid innovates and catalyses developing country economies, and is given in increasing amounts directly to government budgets to help them support small-holder farmers, build vital infrastructure, and provide essential public services for all, such as health care and education”²⁶. And Eurodad produced its report: [Whither development finance?](#)²⁷

This year’s OECD’s Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) (29-30 June) focused on MDGs marking the 5 more years to go and preparing the upcoming [MDG Meeting](#)²⁸. And various reports have been released describing and measuring MDG progress. Among them is the UN’s [MDGs Report](#)²⁹, the [UNDP’s Path to achieving the MDGs](#)³⁰ and [Delivering on Commitments](#)³¹, and [What Will it Take to Achieve the MDGs](#)³².

REGULATION

The OECD has published its [International Migration Outlook 2010](#), describing migration as a key to long-term economic growth³³. And the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a [Report](#) to the ECOSOC’s Substantive

session of 2010 (28 June – 23 July, New York). It focuses on the economic, social and cultural rights of migrants and lists ways to improve the potential of migration to contribute to development:

First, there are a number of ways to... improve the use of formal channels for remittances... Second, permanent residency status in the destination country (and in some cases temporary residency) is associated with a higher probability of remitting and... Third, the use of “matching funds” schemes is one way to better pool resources for infrastructure-related investment activities, such as the construction of schools. [...] The premise is that migrant remittances are matched with government funding (including development assistance) from countries of destination and origin to undertake such activities.

Similar is International Dialogue on Migration N°12 - [Making Global Labour Mobility A Catalyst for Development](#)³⁴

More concretely about the international migration of health workforce is a joint [WHO and OECD report](#)³⁵. With regard to health personnel, the WHA (see also health section) adopted a global code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel which aims to establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical international recruitment of health personnel. It discourages states from actively recruiting health personnel from developing countries that face critical shortages of health workers, and encourages them to facilitate the “circular migration of health personnel” to maximise skills and knowledge sharing.

In terms of the UN’s Global Compact the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Global Compact announced the [39 lead signers of the CEO Statement of Support](#)³⁶ for the [Women’s Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business](#)³⁷, which were [launched](#) at the UN on 8 March 2010³⁸. Also [Academic Leaders](#) at a UN Forum call on Business to Better Balance Social and Economic Objectives. (*New York, 23 June 2010*) – Educators and administrators from 37 countries, meeting at the second UN Global Forum on Responsible Management Education, have called on business leaders to better balance social and economic objectives and encouraged management education to prepare future leaders for this challenge.³⁹

The International Organisation for Standardisation has released a [final draft](#) standard providing voluntary guidance on social responsibility for companies, governments and other organisations⁴⁰, that provoked [mixed reactions](#).⁴¹

See also the [report](#) towards responsible corporate behaviour in conflict zones⁴²

A new [UNRISD book](#): *Business, Politics and Public Policy: Implications for Inclusive Development* asks whether in today's developing and transitional economies, can we expect organised business interests to support social and other public policies conducive to inclusive development? Does the rise of big business facilitate or undermine this objective? Through conceptual and historical analysis, as well as case studies from Brazil, Chile, India, Mexico, Peru, Russia and South Africa, this collection examines the predominant means by which corporate interests directly and indirectly influence social, labour market and development policy, the reasons for their positions and the scope of their influence.⁴³

RIGHTS

John Ruggie, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and trans-national corporations and other business enterprises, [presented](#)⁴⁴ and submitted his [Report](#) on human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development to the fourteenth session of the Human Rights Council⁴⁵. Critical comments are at [IHRB](#)⁴⁶ and WLRK⁴⁷ law firm.

A further report submitted came for the [Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children](#)⁴⁸, a topic that has also been addressed in an ITUC guidance on [How to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking](#)⁴⁹.

Also with reference to Ruggie's initiatives, the World Resources Institute published a [Roadmap for Integrating Human Rights into the World Bank Group](#), proposing eight goals for integrating human rights more explicitly into World Bank Group policies:

We [...] do not advocate that the WBG should shift its identity from a development to a human rights institution. We argue instead that as a development institution, the goals and values that human rights represent already at the core of the WBG's mission, and that the explicit and systematic integration of human rights into WBG operations could

improve its effectiveness by enhancing the WBG's ability to manage risks and improve development outcomes.⁵⁰

More specifically on children, the [Global Child Labour Conference 2010](#) took place 10-11 May in The Hague⁵¹. Contributing to this topic, the ILO released [Accelerating action against child labour](#)⁵², and presented a *Roadmap for [Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016](#)*⁵³.

Also hosted by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre with the support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs a [panel side event](#) on human rights reporting by business took place during the 14th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council⁵⁴. The event brought together a broad range of panelists to discuss human rights challenges, and peace-building opportunities, that face [business in conflict](#) and post-conflict zones⁵⁵.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women convened for its [46th session](#) in New York (12-30 July)⁵⁶ and an [international seminar](#) on girls' rights and development took place under UNICEF auspices.⁵⁷

Global Social Governance

The UN, World Bank-IMF-WTO, G20, OECD, Global South struggles for the dominance of global social governance continues. In recognition of the [argument](#) that the G20 is now the World's leading governance forum⁵⁸ UNRISD has launched a web-based [Development Forum for G20](#). It argues that the G20, which will play a significant role in shaping the new international financial and trade regime, is potentially one of the key institutions where a more inclusive, democratic and developmental framework for the achievement of social and economic goals can be formulated. The Development Forum for G20 aims to provide a channel through which innovative ideas on development, particularly those from the perspective of non-G20 countries, can be articulated as inputs into G20 discussions⁵⁹.

But meanwhile the UN in various guises struggles to reform and assert itself. The UN's Global Compact sees its 10th anniversary and [a review](#) traces the development of this instrument of global (social) governance⁶⁰. [The UN Global Compact Leaders Summit](#)

(24-25 June) convened under the topic “Building a new era of sustainability”. The process of ensuring system-wide coherence continues when the General Assembly unanimously approved the establishment of a single U.N. entity to promote equality for women⁶¹. Also reported is progress with a [‘Delivering as One’](#) pilot project.⁶²

ECOSOC pursued its [Programme of work](#) for the 2010 substantive session.⁶³ See the [website](#) of substantive session.⁶⁴ In July it organised a panel on [global economic governance](#)⁶⁵, and a panel on [South-South cooperation](#).⁶⁶

Meanwhile a Helsinki lead [High Level symposium](#) prepared the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum.⁶⁷ With the G20 and G8 communiqués from their meetings in Canada failing to mention past promises to meet long-standing aid commitments, in a [statement](#) civil society platform BetterAid urged the UN-Development Cooperation Forum (UN-DCF), to seize the chance to deliver where the G20 and G8 have failed⁶⁸. Whether it did or not can be judged by the [DCF 2010 report](#) of the SG⁶⁹ and the [conclusions](#) of the July DCF.⁷⁰

UNDESA [launched](#)⁷¹ its [World Economic and Social survey 2010](#).⁷² and the ILO debated Recovery and Growth with decent work at its [conference](#)⁷³.

In a follow up to the flawed June 2009 UN World Summit on the Economic Crisis (See GSP Digest 9.3) the [Draft Report](#) by the Ad Hoc open ended working group set to follow up the Summit calls, amongst a whole number of recommendations made to the General Assembly, upon states to redouble their efforts. Some member states stressed the importance “to prevent social sector spending from shrinking and that employment creation, rights at work and social protection deserved particular attention”⁷⁴. And also from the UN is the [first draft of the outcome document](#) for the September MDG Summit which includes the following:

32. We call for urgent efforts to enhance the policy coherence, governance and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems order to foster a supportive and enabling international environment for development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard we stress the pressing need for substantive and comprehensive reform of the international economic and financial system and architecture to better enable it to respond to and prevent financial and economic

*emergencies, effectively promote development and equitably serve the needs of Member States.*⁷⁵

There is little sign of such a reform process being addressed consistently. The shortcomings of limited voting reforms etc to the IMF and World Bank were commented upon in GSP Digest 10.2. Subsequently an [in-depth analysis](#) of the latest round of World Bank reforms shows they delivered significantly less than proclaimed, while IMF governance reforms, slated to conclude in January 2011, are proceeding slowly and promising only minor changes. Despite official claims that developing countries now hold almost half the votes at the World Bank, an April detailed analysis by UK NGO the Bretton Woods Project shows that high-income countries have in fact held on to over 60 per cent of voting power across the World Bank Group. Middle-income countries, including global powers such as India, China and Brazil, are stuck on around one third of the votes. Low-income countries languish at 6 per cent, averaged across the different arms of the World Bank⁷⁶.

The question of the World Bank accountability to rich countries is addressed in a [Eurodad Report](#) which assesses which strategies have been used by civil society advocates to influence Northern governments' positions on the World Bank, and suggests ways to improve accountability and impact.⁷⁷ Of note is the fact that the Bank's *World Development Indicators*, *Global Development Finance*, *Africa Development Indicators*, and *Global Economic Monitor* are now [free, open, and easy to access](#).⁷⁸

Eurodad also argues that the IMF's current mandate review [will not deliver for the poor](#)? The report drawing on recent work by UNICEF also points out that the IMF has retreated from any flirtation with Keynesianism as far as low income countries are concerned⁷⁹. The UNICEF brief, [Prioritising expenditures for a recovery with a human face](#), assesses 86 recent IMF country reports and finds that if the Fund did ever support fiscal stimuli in low income countries in 2008 and 2009, by 2010 and 2011 it is already advising fiscal tightening. The IMF's main rationale behind fiscal tightening appears to be concerns about fiscal and debt sustainability. However, the Fund turns a blind eye on the fact that "curtailing of public expenditure in 2010-2011 will likely incur potentially irreversible long-term human costs."⁸⁰ See also a [paper](#) by Terry McKinley of SOAS.⁸¹

An alternative state lead path of development was addressed in UNCTAD's [symposium](#) held in Geneva in May on Responding to global crises: new development paths.⁸²

International Actors and Social Policy

HEALTH

[The 63rd World Health Assembly](#) took place in Geneva, 17-21 May. Amongst other things, it focused on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) and monitored the achievements of the health-related MDGs. A global strategy and plan for action on Public health, innovation and intellectual property was adopted⁸³. The [resolution on the health-related MDGs](#) expressed concern about the slow progress of health MDGs and member states agreed to strengthen national health systems as well as take into account health equity in all national policies. They also reaffirmed the value of primary health care and renewed their commitment to prevent and eliminate maternal, newborn and child mortality and morbidity.⁸⁴

Similarly, an international meeting on Health in All Policies generated a [statement](#). As part of a global process to strengthen health in all policies:

The Adelaide Statement outlines the need for a new social contract between all sectors to advance human development, sustainability and equity, as well as to improve health outcomes. This requires a new form of governance where there is joined-up leadership with governments, across all sectors and between levels of government. The Statement highlights the contribution of the health sector in resolving complex problems across government.⁸⁵

The issue of the health-related MDGs also featured at the G8 Summit in Canada, in the shape of a [Methodology for Calculating Baselines and commitments of G8 Members' Spending on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health](#)⁸⁶. Nandine Oomman (Center for Global Development) [comments](#) with some disappointment about the status of global health at the summit.⁸⁷

Further connected to the efforts to achieve the health-related MDGs was the second global conference [Women Deliver 2010](#) in Washington, 7-9 June, highlighting the issue

of women's health and development in general and that maternal and reproductive health in particular needs become a global priority⁸⁸. A background paper [Why it's the Right Time: Moving on Reproductive Health Goals by Focusing on Adolescent Girls](#) was prepared by the Center for Global Development.⁸⁹

The [XVIII International AIDS Conference](#) took place in Vienna, 18-23 July; and was accompanied by a huge number of new documents and opinion pieces, particularly with regard to the time left to achieve the MDGs⁹⁰. Also the major AIDS donors have been under scrutiny (for example [PEPFAR](#)⁹¹). UNICEF and the WHO report the [Countdown to 2015](#).⁹² A related [contribution](#) discusses the limitations in estimating donor flows and resource needs for child and maternal health⁹³

The ILO launched the [implementation phase of a new international labour standard](#), as the first human rights instrument to focus on HIV and AIDS in the world of work⁹⁴. It was adopted at the International Labour Conference in June⁹⁵. And the World Bank and USAID launched a debate series on [Emerging Issues in Today's HIV Response](#).⁹⁶

Medecins Sans Frontières published [No Time to Quit: HIV/AIDS Treatment Gap Widening in Africa](#), warning that backtracking by international donors in HIV/AIDS funding risks undermining years of positive achievements.⁹⁷

Mead Over (Center for Global Development) [argues](#) that international donor community cannot afford to continue its business-as-usual AIDS policy. It must focus more on preventing HIV to decrease the number of people living with AIDS and to keep treatment sustainable. [...] he proposes policy options to harmonise the incentives among donors, recipient governments, and AIDS patients to sustain treatment quality while leveraging treatment demand for the prevention of future cases.⁹⁸

Further [discussions](#) to the topic by the Center for Global Development are online.⁹⁹

The Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives Network contributes a new [policy brief](#) on the effects of global health initiatives on health system strengthening¹⁰⁰.

ACTION has released a new report [AID WITHOUT IMPACT. How the World Bank and Development Partners are Failing to Improve Health Through SWAs](#)¹⁰¹. This is [discussed](#) by Mead Over.¹⁰²

At [the Coordination Segment](#) of ECOSOC (6-8 July) the importance of strengthening health care in times of economic crisis was stressed¹⁰³

Health data was release through the WHO's [World Health Statistics 2010](#)¹⁰⁴, and the OECD's [Health Data 2010](#).¹⁰⁵ The World Bank contributed a number of health-system related publications, focusing on [delivery](#)¹⁰⁶ and [financing](#)¹⁰⁷. An [update](#) of the OECD's health activities has been released¹⁰⁸ and the OECD also continues to increase its contributions to health systems, in various health-related [working papers](#).¹⁰⁹

The WTO, WHO and WIPO organised a technical symposium on [Access to Medicines: Pricing and Procurement Practices](#) in Geneva, 16 July.¹¹⁰

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The ILO together with the WHO and many other partner UN agencies continued with its campaign for a [universal global social protection floor](#)¹¹¹ (See GSP Digest 10.2). It has been decided that the ILO conference in 2011 will focus on social security which should boost the case for the establishment by the ILO of a new global standard on social protection. However there is [further evidence](#) that the IMF is pursuing a policy of curing the economic crisis with austerity measures in the countries to which it is lending money.¹¹² This is resulting in a focus on protecting the most vulnerable only in line with IMF mandate and hence a return to targeted means tests.

Critics of the part played by the Robert Holzmann in privatising pensions and advocating a risk management approach to social protection when he was head of the Social Protection section of the World Bank will be pleased to learn of his retirement and his replacement by Arup Banerji who is striking a different note with regard to both pensions and social protection. In a presentation delivered at a [conference](#) preparing for the second European Report on Development, Banerji outlined initial thinking towards a review of the Bank's Social Protection Strategy to take place in late 2011¹¹³. He [argued](#) social protection should consist of Protection (cash transfers etc), Prevention (social security and other insurances), and Promotion (employment strategy).¹¹⁴ A recent bank paper endorses [universal social pensions](#) in Latin America.¹¹⁵

However as always the Bank presents different faces to different audiences and its different sections pursue different agendas. The Bank's Vulnerability Fund set up at the

same time as the UN Chief Executive Board endorsed the global social protection floor is now in business with a large \$50million donation from Russia. According to the May 2010 report of the [Rapid Social Response Programme](#) (RSP), which channels the “Vulnerability Fund” resources, this is funding a series of safety net related projects.¹¹⁶ The Bank [reports](#) of recent increased funding of safety nets to face the crisis.¹¹⁷

And at the same time a recent overview article reminds us of the role of the International Finance Corporation section of the Bank in encouraging the [financialisation of pensions and health care](#) in developing countries.¹¹⁸

In rather sharp contrast in its advocacy of the public sector is the [draft outcome document](#) for the September MDG Summit of the UN

36. We affirm that ensuring universal access to social services and providing a universal social protection floor with wide coverage are essential to consolidate and achieve further development gains. Social protection schemes that address and reduce inequality and social exclusion are an essential condition for inclusive development and achieving the Goals.

*45. To strengthen global public health for all, we are committing to: a) Strengthening the capacity of national health systems to deliver equitable health services and promoting the widest possible access to health services at the point of use, especially to those at risk and the most vulnerable, through public policies that reduce the barriers to uptake of health services.*¹¹⁹

Under the auspices of the UNHCHR an [Expert Meeting](#) on MDGs, Social Protection and Gender took place 1-2 June 2010, in preparation of an Independent Expert report to the GA (October 2010) that is intended to explore the relationship between the MDGs and social protection and how the MDGs framework can best be used to strengthen social protection schemes¹²⁰. Earlier the [Report](#) of the Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme poverty focused on older persons and social protection was submitted to the June HR Council.¹²¹

Another contribution to the poverty debate comes in the form of an UNRISD flagship report [Combating Poverty and Inequality](#) which will be launched in Geneva on September 3rd. It has three main arguments one of which is the importance of “comprehensive social policies that are grounded in universal rights and that are

supportive of structural change, social cohesion and democratic politics”.¹²² Meanwhile preparations for the launch in October of the 20th Anniversary Edition of the Human Development Report (HDR) 2010 are under way and [first background papers](#) are now available online.¹²³ In collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) the HDR office of the UNDP announced its new [multi-dimensional measure of poverty](#) to be used in the report which goes beyond a dollar a day to incorporate education, health assets and outcomes.¹²⁴ See related [working paper](#) by Sabine Alkire and Maria Emma Santos¹²⁵

Notice also a number of recent releases: the OECD [report](#) entitled *Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: How to prevent long-term consequences on a generation*¹²⁶, an ILO [study](#) which shows that paid sick leave pays off in times of crisis¹²⁷ and an ILO [publication](#) on the state of maternity protection in the world.¹²⁸

EDUCATION

UNESCO is involved in the upcoming [high-level meeting](#) on the Millennium-Development Goals in September.¹²⁹ The organisation has launched a [website](#) for information on the MDGs, in particular MDG 2, universal access to primary education.¹³⁰ UNESCO conceives education as the [main tool](#) for also reaching the other MDGs. As the organisation states: “The eight goals set worldwide objectives for a wide range of issues from maternal health to combating HIV and AIDS. Although goal three specifically targets universal primary education, UNESCO argues that without education, none of the MDG targets can be reached.”¹³¹ A comprehensive [paper](#) on the state of education and MDG 2 was prepared.¹³² Also, one preparatory [paper](#) is concerned with MDG 3, the empowerment of women. This goal prominently includes increased access to education for girls (gender parity in education).¹³³ Education international is participating in a [civil society forum](#) which aims to pressure countries for stronger development commitments at the high level meeting of the MDGs.¹³⁴

The [First International Meeting on early childhood care and education](#) will take place in Moscow in September, organised by UNESCO. Participants work towards a ‘Moscow Plan of Action’, and the agenda includes securing access to early education also for disadvantaged groups.¹³⁵ Early education is promoted as a right for individual

development, and ways to implement EFA goal 1 (access to early education and care), in 2015 and beyond, are [discussed](#).¹³⁶ Education international has also launched a [report](#) on the state of early childhood and care worldwide.¹³⁷

In July, the UN general Assembly adopted a [resolution](#) on education in post-conflict and emergency zones.¹³⁸ The resolution reacts to the fact that educational provision is severely threaten in conflicts, and underlines the need to set it as a priority during conflicts and reconstruction and peace-building.

The World Bank continues to work on its [new education sector strategy](#), accompanied by a large campaign and discussion forums. The draft strategy will be published in August 2010, being put online in September and October. After a further revision, it is planned to be adopted in 2011.¹³⁹

The Bank has also published a [framework](#) for the creation of educational systems that cover the labor market and economic needs of individual countries, ranging from early education to labor mobility.¹⁴⁰ The system should support policy-makers in developing countries in analyzing educational needs of the country and in establishing adequate policy responses. The World Bank has also launched a [forum](#) to exchange with thinkers of education and educational reforms.¹⁴¹ One of the upcoming [meetings](#) is dedicated to discuss the thesis of a new and worldwide competition of middle classes for better education and jobs, assumed to threat many individuals and their belief in the value of quality education.¹⁴²

The G8/G20 meeting in Toronto in June is evaluated skeptical by Education International: The organisation [lobbied](#)¹⁴³ for more investment in education, but the meeting [did not fix this as a priority](#) in its final declaration.¹⁴⁴

HABITAT

[Access to clean water](#) is the most violated human right¹⁴⁵. According to the [Global Policy Forum](#) “when food, clothing, shelter and medical care were included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, water and sanitation were excluded. In a historic, albeit non-binding and politically divisive, resolution, the UN General Assembly has cast its vote and rectified this omission. The decree, declaring water and sanitation basic human rights, states all nations must "scale up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible

and affordable water and sanitation for all" - an endeavour that dollar for dollar provides some of the best poverty reduction returns. Forty-one nations abstained from the vote, many suggesting the resolution was rushed and could undermine the ongoing work on water and sanitation underway in the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council".¹⁴⁶

A number of forthcoming events are worth mentioning. In September 2010, leaders from around the world will gather in New York for a special 10th anniversary review summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With just five years left to achieve the Goals, the [current issue of Urban World](#) brings articles that consider the possibility of achieving these.¹⁴⁷ Also in September, the Stockholm Water Institute, will organise its annual [World Water Week](#).¹⁴⁸

The [International Conference](#) on Urbanization and Global Environmental Change: Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainability in an Urbanizing World will be held between 15th and 17th October 2010 in Tempe, Arizona, United States. This will be the first opportunity for a joint meeting and discussion between international scholars and practitioners who work at the interface of urban areas and global environment change. The main goal is to promote a stronger collaboration between academics, political decision-makers, and practitioners, acting at local, regional, and global scales in order to capture the benefits of urbanisation, as well as mitigate and adapt to global environmental and socioeconomic change and its impacts. This event will run closely with the Global Land Project (GLP) Open Science Meeting, to be held October 17-19. GLP is a joint research project for land systems for the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) and the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP). Both conferences will be held back to back with one overlapping day, in which the two programmes will focus on the themes surrounding the urban, land, and climate change interface.¹⁴⁹

FOOD POLICY

Still about [1 billion people](#) are threatened by hunger¹⁵⁰. FAO has started a [campaign](#) including online petitions¹⁵¹. Activities will be intensified around the [World Food Day](#), October 16.¹⁵² The [Committee on World Food Security](#) will meet in mid October. The agenda includes e.g. a review of existing global initiatives for food security, as well as

case studies of how countries manage food security and nutrition.¹⁵³ FAO has also developed [E-learning tools](#) for capacity-building related to food security. These are offered to administrators and members or relevant entities, free of charge.¹⁵⁴

On its last meeting in October 2009, the Committee on World Food Security decided to reform itself for becoming a central coordination place for various intergovernmental and other international initiatives related to food security. A [report](#) to ECOSOC presents the changes, ranging from regional events over the year to new internal working methods and outreach activities.¹⁵⁵ A brief information note summarises the new structure and [activities](#).¹⁵⁶

The World Bank has published a [study](#) that growing price volatility can be observed since the food crisis. While prices in world markets have fallen, national markets do not necessarily correspond to this development. This concerns particularly poor households that cannot protect themselves against prices in flux.¹⁵⁷

Overall, food security has become a [lower priority](#) on international agendas: The high-level task-force on Food Security has not met since January 2010.¹⁵⁸

Trade and Social Policy

Brazil and India [complaints on European Union](#) seizure of generic drugs became formal dispute settlement cases in May 2010¹⁵⁹. Issues regarding access to medicines and seizures have also been dealt with in the [TRIPS Council](#) in June 2010¹⁶⁰, where also negotiations concerning the so called Anti-Counterfeiting Treaty (ACTA) and issues concerning patents on life, were [discussed](#) in a reportedly animated TRIPS Council meeting.¹⁶¹

ACTA has been a concern also in the [review](#) in the South Bulletin, which also provides the views of India, China and Brazil on the matter.¹⁶² Enforcement of intellectual property rights has also become reflected in a [declaration](#) by public-interest groups and academic experts in the Berkeley Declaration which raises a variety of public interest concerns.¹⁶³ In Europe public health concerns were been brought up in an [open letter](#) to the trade Commissioner de Gucht in July 2010.¹⁶⁴

Public health regulations, in particular, regulations concerning [tobacco and alcohol](#) have become a more prominent concern in the context of the work on Technical Barriers to Trade Committee, where Canada's "Cracking down on tobacco marketing aimed at Youth" -act has become a trade policy concern as well as public health-related measures concerning labelling of alcoholic beverages.¹⁶⁵

A joint meeting of WTO, WHO and WIPO in July has sought to put access to medicines under the microscope in the context of an international symposium on access to medicines and pricing and procurement practices. The [meeting](#) included views of the Director-Generals of the respective organisations, whose presentations have been provided alongside others in the WTO website.¹⁶⁶ In another process to evaluate the scope for more flexibilities to accommodate public health needs in the context of TRIPS, a [variety of issues](#) concerning intellectual property rights and TRIPS were taken up.¹⁶⁷

In the policy arena of bilateral agreements the United States is reportedly using for the first time a regional FTA to address a [labour issue](#). According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative: "The Government of Guatemala's apparent failure to effectively enforce its labor laws harms U.S. workers by forcing them to compete against substandard labor practices and tilts the playing field away from American workers and businesses. By holding the Government of Guatemala accountable to its labor commitments under the CAFTA-DR we can help to ensure that U.S. businesses and workers are able to compete on fair terms."¹⁶⁸

On the other hand, the [EU-Canada negotiations](#) on a comprehensive FTA have become a concern of public interest groups and public sector trade unions due to the breadth of the aims of the negotiations, with the potential to extend commitments to government procurement and local services in Canada as well as to introduce more NAFTA type of framework to European Union, including the already contentious expropriation clause¹⁶⁹. Another aspect of concern with respect to this agreement has been the ways in which it may introduce more top-down negotiation practices through [negative listing and extensiveness](#) through clauses that lead to both deepening and broadening of the commitments without explicit recognition and agreement.¹⁷⁰ Canadian and European public services trade unions have been working together on the agreement raising [concerns](#) also with respect to the impacts of data exclusivity provisions on health care

costs and the lack of adequate analysis of environmental, social and labour impacts of the agreement.¹⁷¹ The ambitious scope and time-scale of negotiations has also been recognised by the [European Commission](#)¹⁷². [Critical views](#) have been in part a result of access to leaked negotiation documents, which have been put on the tradejustice movement website.¹⁷³

The South Centre has published a [legal analysis](#) of services and investment in the Cariforum-EC economic partnership agreement and a matrix on contentious EPA issues identifying key problems and recommendations.¹⁷⁴ The Institute for Policy Studies has provided an [analysis](#) on investment rules in trade agreements and suggested top 10 changes to reduce threats to the public interest.¹⁷⁵

UNCTAD has published policy briefs which discuss food security and MDGs. The [policy brief](#) on food security in least developed countries calls for a new approach that puts agriculture back at the centre of the development strategy.¹⁷⁶ The UNCTAD [policy brief](#) on MDGs takes up the need to put inequality back on the policy agenda and argues that the policy approach to MDGs " has been framed in terms of "human deprivation", leaving the development challenge to be fashioned by more conventional development thinking."¹⁷⁷

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