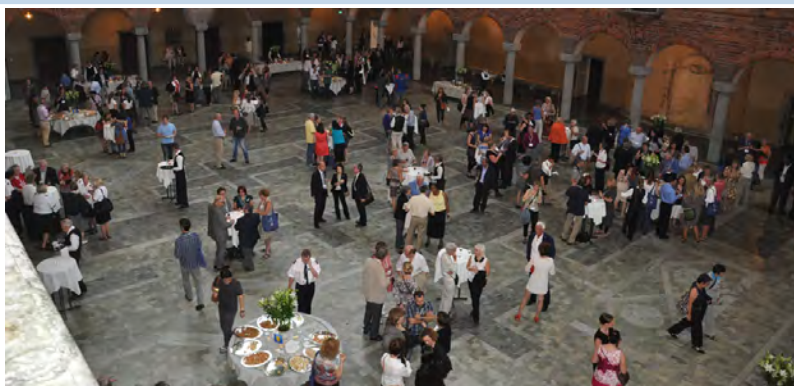




Global Cooperation Digest

International Council on Social Welfare

DIGEST 2015



PREFACE

The [Global Cooperation Newsletter](#) published by the [International Council on Social Welfare \(ICSW\)](#) has been a rich source of information on various aspects of global social policy, social protection and social development. Representing different viewpoints, discussions and dialogues it reflects a commitment on the part of the ICSW to social justice, knowledge-building, participation and empowerment. The promotion of progressive social policies aimed at social inclusion and improving the well-being of people, particularly the living conditions of marginalized people and communities around the globe remains one of our key priorities.

While the Global Cooperation Newsletter has been widely circulated in its original form to thousands of subscribers, including ICSW members and other readers, the ICSW Board made a decision to capture the essence of the monthly newsletters in a digest form so that our readers and supporters could use the published material with greater ease, having at hand a succinct, user-friendly publication.

The work presented in this volume is a summary of the feature articles, observations, comments and other information derived from the 12 issues of the 2015 Global Cooperation Newsletter. The materials represent a rich mix of academic and practice inputs regarding contemporary social policies and practices around the world. The topics are many and include the highlights of intergovernmental negotiations on the road to the SDGs, the activities of the UN and specialized agencies in the social field, the role and activities of civil society organizations, gender and intergenerational issues, the situation of vulnerable groups, including migrants, and finally, a range of issues concerning vulnerability, social protection and the most recent developments in this area, both nationally and internationally. The content in this Digest is organized under nine categories including (i) Global / Regional Cooperation, (ii) Vulnerable Groups and Social Justice, (iii) Social Protection and SPF (iv) Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, (v) ICSW News, (vi) United Nations, (vii) International Meetings, (viii) Observations and Comments, and (ix) Useful Resources and Links. Given the cross-cutting nature of the complex policy issues addressed in the articles, some overlap between the above chapters might be unavoidable.

The editors wish to acknowledge the most helpful contribution of Mr. Rahul Gupta, our research assistant from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India, in compiling this volume.

We hope that this Global Cooperation Digest becomes a useful resource for policy-makers, practitioners and academics interested in global social policies and social development.

Editors



Sergei Zelenev



P.K. Shajahan

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Global / Regional Cooperation

1

The Disparate Partnership and Search for Cooperation in South Asia

by Kalpana Jha

January 2015

The background

The then President of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman, proposed the establishment of SAARC in May 1980, which was supported by Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bhutan in order to improve regional co-operation within South Asia, including economic goals such as the sharing of water resources, river basin management, promoting trade and overall economic development. The proposal was accepted by India and Pakistan on the condition that security-related and bilateral matters outside the proposed framework would be excluded. SAARC was accepted by seven countries with a view to addressing common challenges and improving relations between them. Afghanistan was 8th country to accept SAARC.

SAARC is based on the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of its members. The major focus of SAARC conventions have been human security and democratic governance through trade.

The region has still remained unstable because of internal insecurities and external interventions, inter- and intraregional disputes and a trust deficit among members. This has worsened the situation, such that there is lack of funds, a failure to address natural calamities, etc.

Despite this, there have been significant achievements through this agreement such as:

1. The Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, 2. The SAARC Agriculture Information Centre at Dhaka, 3. The SAARC audio-visual exchange program (SAVE), 4. The Social Charter for the eradication of poverty, population stabilization and human resource development, 5. SACODIL and the Heads of Universities Grant Commissions/ Equivalent Bodies, 6. The establishment of the South Asian University.

South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreements to enhance the volume of intra-regional trade in South Asia have improved vision for co-operation, such that multiple preferential and unilateral trade treaties exist in the region. India has various bilateral agreement with Sri-Lanka, such as the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISLFTA), and a preferential trade agreement with Afghanistan, all of which have been operating well, but these agreements have overpowered regional trade agreements. To overcome this situation it is important to bring all the trade agreements under the ambit of SAFTA, for which the formation of the South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) is important.

The Kathmandu Summit

The theme of the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in November '14 was deeper integration for peace and prosperity through the creation of a free trade area with trade liberalization, investment and the elimination of non-tariff barriers involving traditional market access issues. Some existing issues such as terrorism, climate change, with some fresh agenda items such as the launching of a regional communication satellite, railway services and a SAARC motor-vehicle agreement were the focus of the Summit. It also involved a proposal regarding the free movement of people and a common visa provision within the SAARC region. However,

the strained relationship between India and Pakistan has impacted future prospects for SAARC.

The existing challenges:

The major factor that contributes to non-cooperation between the members of SAARC is the division between the countries geographically as well as economically, as can be noticed in the mistrust generated due to the spiteful history of the separation between India and Pakistan as well as between Pakistan and Bangladesh and the strained political relationship between Sri Lanka and India.

SAARC countries are composed of overlapping identities that blur the existing identity boundaries but strengthen insecurities. India, being the only powerful nation in SAARC, is perceived as a source of insecurity to smaller states, whereas sometimes India views SAARC as a grouping of smaller nations against India. Besides that, the addition of China in SAARC has increased the uncertainty in the existing unequal relations between India and other nations, as equal trade cannot be established in an unequal and bilateral political environment where economic relations are guided by the interplay of culture, politics and the economy.

The conceptualization of the state in SAARC was based upon the contrasting idea where democracy was explained by the regime structure followed by the State. The conceptualization of Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan was based on theological lines, where Pakistan adapted Islamic-based principles and Nepal was the only Hindu Rashtra in world. Minority language challenges led Sri Lanka into eternal conflict, while Bangladesh developed linguistic differences with Pakistan. Different governing rules in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal added to the problem, whereas India incorporated vast diversity.

Differences in the perception of what is the state and what is freedom have created a

deep ideological divisions between the members of SAARC, affecting regional cooperation. Instead of working together to cope with joint challenges, these states have been focusing on designing mechanism to encounter each other. The religious and cultural diversity that could have been a tool for cooperation has played an instrumental role in keeping the rifts fresh. The existence of conflicting ideologies and the functional paradigm of the predominant cooperation pattern have kept the region from developing into a powerful economically integrated block, despite having all the required resources. Therefore, only solving the bilateral issues on a priority basis can provide a breakthrough bringing these nations together to improve regional cooperation in South Asia.

2

AICESIS today: An International Association for Participatory Governance

by Patrick Venturini

March 2015

The changes in public governance and its basic principles have led to increased complexity and difficulties of governance in modern societies; hence a need for intermediaries between governments, decision-makers and citizens. Participatory governance is seen as one such set of institutions where citizens and civil society are able to participate in the formulation of public policies using consultation and negotiation.

There is no single way to include civil society organizations in governance; it's up to each country's internal power relations to define its own model and find appropriate ways. Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and similar institutions provide an institutional solution. The establishment of such structures

— a growing trend in the world — make them factors of modernization and social stability when they work properly.

The development of such institutions all over the world, beyond the multiplicity of issues of common interest, explains the creation of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS), established in Brussels (Belgium). With initially 27 full members in early 2015, AICESIS now includes 74 members from four different continents: Africa, Asia-Eurasia-Middle East, Europe and Latin America-Caribbean.

ESC-SIs: an important tool for the modernization of governance

AICESIS members are advisory bodies composed of social partner organizations, other actors of civil society and sometimes members of government. As autonomous assemblies with national competence, drawing their legitimacy from the constitution, they enjoy a genuine representation of economic and social interests.

From the perspective of public policy, ESC-Sis can identify the needs of the community, define objectives and assess the impact of policies more clearly. In addition they can advise government about the needs, expectations and suggestions of the people, making public decisions more transparent and efficient.

These institutions are primarily spaces for dialogue, their members are rooted in the economic and social life and have knowledge about problems on the ground, and they are the workshop where compromises can be worked out. Their work provides an “indicator of acceptability” that show the population’s perspective on examined public policy proposals. ESC-Sis function as bridges in both directions—between government and civil society.

ESC-SIs promote the participation of

representative organizations and develop their advisory functions, providing renovation, modernization and greater openness to future generations, to whom it is fundamental to transmit the culture of dialogue. Therefore, the advisory function is legitimate in modern society in addition to the executive and legislative functions.

The AICESIS: missions and objectives

The association is acting as a network that has three tasks: (1) promoting dialogue and exchanges of experience among its members, (2) encouraging social and civil dialogue in the world, for example by forming partnerships with international organizations, (3) encouraging the consolidation or creation of ESCs-Sis in states that do not have them, contributing to the development of participatory governance.

In addition, every presidency gives new impetus by proposing a roadmap and the biennial theme for work.

The two-year presidency of AICESIS has been applied on a rotation basis in institutions of Netherlands, Algeria, France, China, Brazil, Hungary, Italy, Algeria and Russia.

AICESIS activities: some spotlights

Food Security: In cooperation with the ESC of Congo and FAO, AICESIS organized an international conference on food security. Dozens of ESC-SIs presented their outlooks on the situation. Actions supported by ESCs-SIs included water control, market development, storage structure development, the processing and storage of agricultural products, price regulation, innovative financing, the promotion of social dialogue between organizations of agricultural producers. Several common constraints were discussed, particularly the deficit in transport infrastructure for agricultural products, poor access to land for women and young people, land grabbing by multinational companies and other issues.

The fight against economic crime and corruption: Corruption is one of key factors for the lack of growth, as it hinders the development of economies and discourages investment, especially foreign investment. The Italian CNEL took up the subject and submitted a report proposing the systematic tracking of all payments made under contracts. The Italian government and Italian Parliament accepted the CNEL proposal and adopted a law entitled "Extraordinary Anti-Mafia Plan" incorporating traceability and confiscating illegally accumulated assets.

The fight against poverty: This subject was organized by the Chinese ESC as leader. The ESC of Benin showed that the issue of poverty was a thread linking studies of self-referrals to actions of socio-economic development. The report on "the ESC contribution to the National Social easing" facilitated interventions in the current period of social crisis. Recommendations made to the Head of State were implemented.

Youth Employment: The CNES of Algeria proposed the working theme for 2011-2013 "New issues and the role that organized civil society can play in promoting the employment and socio-professional integration of young people". The AICESIS report shared the analysis and role of social partners and other civil society organizations in the socio-professional integration mechanisms as middlemen, ombudsmen, coaches or facilitators. It emphasizes that ESC-SIs can be central reference on the ground in their direct involvement in the assessment of public policies for young job-seekers. Among many actions one can underline the practices of some councils supported by networking, mobilization, and the development of microfinance.

The International Summer for Youth: At the initiative of SER (Economic and Social Council) of the Netherlands, AICESIS organizes a university open to all young professionals of ESCs-SIs members or those

involved in social dialogue in their countries in order to promote mutual understanding. Various universities have been organized focusing on issues such as ESCs in globalized world, ESCs and sustainable development, etc.

Action in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): AICESIS periodically awards the Millennium Development Goals of Development prizes. The prizes were awarded by President Lula of Brazil in 2007 in Brasilia to civil-society organizations. Various prizes have been distributed by AICESIS based on various themes.

A strategic focus: the partnership with the ILO: AICESIS has been linked to the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 2012 by a cooperation agreement. The strategic partnership has been legitimized by the highly complementary composition of the two institutions, shared values and common interest.

Continuous Development: The AICESIS-ILO conference has been organized in cooperation with ESCs-SIs to exchange good practices on any given topics such as "the role of ESCs in the implementation of Global Job Pact" or the "status of Global Job Pact in Africa and the role of ESC-SIs".

In 2008-2009, most states responded with fiscal stimulus packages to mitigate the effects of crisis and accelerate the recovery. In countries such as South Africa, Poland, Brazil and South Korea, the ESC-SIs were at the core of the political response with which they have negotiated national agreements on anti-crisis measures, including the provision of part-time employment, job-sharing etc. The consequences of the crisis have varied as well as the professional relationships and the configuration of their ESCs-SIs.

Social protection: the conference and the Seoul Declaration and their consequences

ILO and AICESIS organized jointly with the CDES of the Republic of Korea a conference on the role of ESCs-SIs and social dialogue in the implementation of the social protection floor for all.

The introductory report revealed disparities in the level of the commitment of various ESCs-SIs. Some boards are very active stakeholders in the national effort aimed at building a social protection floor by negotiating agreements or through the defense of social protection against the measures of fiscal consideration.

The document details the four avenues aimed at strengthening the role of intervention of the ESCs-SIs in the area: a) increase skills and invest in knowledge; b) establish close links with marginalized and vulnerable groups; c) focus on clearly identified priorities and allocate the corresponding resources; d) finally, adopt in the public debate a proactive stance for the promotion and defence of social protection.

The Seoul Declaration

ILO Recommendation 202 concerning national floors of social protection is a major breakthrough in the global commitment to social protection, development and the fight against poverty. The participants have adopted the Seoul Declaration on the promotion of national social protection floors by the economic and social councils and similar institutions.

ESCs-SIs try to include the social protection floors in their agendas and prioritize engagement in the field of social protection in line with Recommendation 202, contributing to the development of national dialogues by making time and resources available; actively participate in the definition, implementation and monitoring of social protection floors; actively promote the fundamental principles of Recommendation 202, undertaking proactive advocacy; help shape virtuous alliances for the development of national

strategies for the extension of social security.

AICESIS intends to promote the exchange of information, experiences and best practices between national ESCs-SIs on their contributions and specific roles. ESCs-SIs support the implementation of national social protection floors at the country level and seek to ensure public discussion of any reform of social assistance.

3

Global poverty eradication, post-2015: What Can Regional Organizations Do?

by Nicola Yeates

August 2015

The adoption of new global policy objectives in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a landmark for international development cooperation. Regional integration processes are already a significant and growing feature of the 'new' development landscapes and will likely become more so.

Regional integration generating programs of collective action in support of better social rights and provision

Regionally defined projects of international integration have become an increasingly significant form of collective action to identify and pursue a range of public policy goals. Mostly associated with particular concerns of trade, investment and security, regional associations are increasingly starting to tackle issues of the relationship between trade, labour and social standards, the question of how to maintain fiscal capacity and social solidarity in the face of international competition, and what action and provision is needed to secure the means of social participation for the widest number of people such as universalizing health care, enhancing access to education, and

combating human trafficking

In the EU, many regional organizations have instituted cooperation in the social sector, including cross-border information exchanges and lesson-learning, and measures to facilitate intra-regional labour mobility. The scope of regional social policy in practice goes beyond creating regional labour markets. Organizations such as SADC, CARICOM, ECOWAS, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, SAAR, and ALBA are some examples

Regional policies very often tend to be elaborate declarations of aims and principles rather than binding regulatory or redistributive mechanisms. But still, there has been progress, and their importance should not be underestimated. They create a lot of awareness on a range of common issues and are integral in the on-going construction of democratic and inclusive regional communities.

Strengthening regional action on social development

There are several advantages to strengthening regional social policy. It can help:

1. Amplify the voices of smaller and developing countries in global social and economic policy;
2. Galvanize support for and foster ownership of regionally-defined rules and standards;
3. Pool resources and risks to help scale up social protection, health and education, and better respond to disasters and other calls for humanitarian and development aid;
4. Create platforms for members to discuss key regional priorities for regional action and develop context-specific responses;
5. Harness the economic, fiscal and social benefits of intra-regional trade in support of regional social policy priorities.

Regional organizations comprised of a democratic partnership between state and civil-society actors have a key role to play in post-2015 international development by:

1. Providing regional and global leadership in developing regional context-specific priorities supportive of the new global social development goals
2. Channeling promising approaches to poverty eradication from the regional context into global policy initiatives supported by all development partners
3. Coordinating all development partners nationally and internationally around regional and national poverty eradication
4. Supporting partnership work through, for example, capacity-building, facilitating cross border cooperation - including identifying promising initiatives that can be scaled up regionally into robust programs of action
5. Undertaking regular regional monitoring and reporting on progress made in achieving goals and targets.

Regional associations have an unrealized potential to increase the quantity and quality of social investment for global poverty reduction. Already present in the changing South-South and triangular cooperation landscape and with track records of addressing key issues of social development and policy, they have a vital role to play in a renewed and strengthened global partnership for socially inclusive development cooperation. State, non-state, national and international organizations have a crucial stake in this. Citizen involvement in regional institution-building, regional policy development and regional auditing would form part of multi-stakeholder processes and engagement.

Vulnerable Groups and Social Justice

4

A Patient's Advocate's Journey in Search of Social Justice

by Carlos R. Mellado López

February 2015

The history behind the creation of the Patient's Advocate's Office

Human rights have surged to the forefront of global political debates and discussions after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the UN General Assembly in December 1948. Along with the UDHR, the key legal tools such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were adopted in the 1960's, creating internationally agreed human-rights standards that governments were obliged to respect. The promise made by the international community to address systemic issues such as inequality and discrimination has been combined with the quest for socio-economic development, including improvements in various sectors within the human rights framework. When Puerto Rico adopted the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in 1952, it incorporated all the fundamental rights acknowledged by the UDHR with exception of Article 25, which includes the right to an adequate standard of living for health and well-being as well as the right to security in the event of several contingencies (unemployment, sickness, disability, old age, widowhood). In order to ensure the right to health for every citizen, Act 194 was enacted, known as the Patient's Rights and Responsibilities Act ("Act 194")

Act 194 recognizes certain rights regarding

health services provided to patients, which include access to high quality health-care services; access to services and facilities during an emergency; access to complete and accurate information regarding their health; participation in all health decisions; the right to be treated with respect; the right to choose their health services providers; the right to continue a treatment with a provider during the transition period, even if the provider's contract is cancelled or terminated; the right to present a complaint against the provider; the right to have medical information and medical records strictly confidential.

The Patient's Advocacy Office of Puerto Rico (PAO) was created to ensure compliance with Act 194. The goal of PAO was to provide guidance about patients' rights and the availability of the benefits, and advocate and promote patient's rights so as to increase their confidence in the health system.

The objective is to monitor complaint patterns and corrective action plans; expand the reach of the National Association of Patients to take care of specific needs; increase capacity of the call center; establish a continuous education plan aimed at retraining claim officers; audit the quality of the health services; conduct on-site inspections at all health-service centers in the island and directly examine any violations of the Patient's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

PAO undertakes specific targeted actions, if violations have been identified, using, for instance, field investigations as a self-improvement tool for health -service providers and insurers; systematic monitoring of complaint patterns and corrective action plans; placing at the public's disposal complaint information that can serve as the basis for selecting an insurance company; and training patient organizations

and professionals involved in the health sector about the rules of Patient's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. PAO also offers legal advice to various legal forums to provide assistance and recommendations for public policy regarding the protection of patient's rights.

The recognition of various advocacy offices in Puerto Rico under Act 1 of 2011 benefited PAO, as its jurisdiction extended to Medicare programs and other state health-care providers. The office was renamed the Health Care Ombudsman Office. Under Act 77 of 2013 and another re-organization, PAO could only ensure the rights of patients who were beneficiaries of certain programs; as a result, the position of the Health Care Ombudsman was eliminated. Before the above Act 77 was enacted the PAO received approximately 10,000 complaints a year.

In September 2013, the author presented a legal complaint to the Puerto Rico State Court that included claims that, for instance, (1) Act 77 of 2013 discriminated against patients who were not beneficiaries of any program, and (2) the agency's independence has been threatened by the Legislative Assembly when it removed an officer appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Due to these claims, the court determined that the author should continue working as Patient's Advocate, but it also affirmed that the legislative branch had the power to reorganize state agencies and limit jurisdiction. As a result, more than half of the patients lost the benefit of having the state agency work to ensure their health rights.

The jurisdiction limitation remains the major obstacle to the work of the Patient's Advocate Office. It continues working for the benefit of the population, looking for new ideas and alternatives so as to empower patients. Gradually the Office has become the driving force for equality and the protection of the rights of patients, upholding the rights of the patients to high-quality health care.

Some Lessons Learned

While receiving health-care services, patients of Puerto Rico may face such negative factors as excessively high prices for medications; the denial of referrals to see specialists for economic reasons; the lack of respect for patients on the part of providers; a lack of coverage for expensive medications; and the inability to get some available treatments.

There are some difficulties in the Advocate's work emerging from prevalent approaches to medical practice, including the existing gaps in preventive practices. The author believes that solutions should combine high quality medical outcome and lower costs.

In the author's view, the involvement of the newly elected politicians in health-care services often negatively affects the quality of services. Political interests should not come before the best interests of the citizens. Questions about the high cost of medications, the expense of treatment, and differences in the prices of medications in various countries should be asked.

As a Patient's Advocate the author has been asking questions related to health-care services, and representing many patients in state courts so that citizens themselves can come forward to fight against injustice. He also submits draft bills to the Legislative Assembly and provides his comments and analysis on other bills as well. There are various health-related themes that have been attended to by his office, such as improving mental health care, reviewing food labeling and improving the food produced, lifestyle related determinants and so on.

One of the conclusions is that improving the health system of a country requires that politicians work together in a multidimensional and comprehensive manner, holistically addressing environmental, economic and social aspects of the society.

5

Promoting active aging: A pioneering social-work project in Brazil

by the SESC Team

April 2015

Based in San Paulo, *Serviço Social do Comercio* (Social Service of Commerce) (SESC) is a non-profit private institution created by the Brazilian business community; it has an autonomous and decentralized status, with management promoting and executing activities to provide welfare services for workers in service industry all over Brazil.

The SESC has 35 branches, offering services in fields such as theatre, music, cinema, creative development, sports and leisure. Intergenerational programs cover social tourism, environmental education, and nutrition education for different age groups.

A program called *Social Work with Older Persons* started 50 years ago when only 5% of the population was older than 60 and society did not offer many alternatives for those citizens. The lack of public policies aimed at improving the lives of older people, the cultural and social attitudes towards them, the lack of infrastructure and low retirement income were some factors that led to social invisibility, aggravating the difficulties. The limited social services offered to older people involved mainly nursing homes and care centers supported by the government or by religious congregations.

In that unfavorable context the SESC created an organization called Social Work with Older Persons, in many respects a pioneering body. A team of workers of the institution traveled to US social centers for the elderly to get an idea of the activities developed there. Learning through the visit, the workers started a specific program for old people by

inviting retired commerce workers to the group's meetings and various activities.

Getting a positive response from the public, SESC started other activities, including sports and cultural centers in Sao Paulo and other locations nearby. At first the groups were exclusively male, but slowly and steadily their wives joined the groups. Nowadays in most Third Age centers women are in the majority, illustrating a phenomenon called the "feminization" of old age.

In 60s and 70s SESC promoted the creation of "get together" groups for older people to enable them to deal with social isolation, as well as to respond to a very basic human need -- the feeling of belonging to a certain generation. Institutions also started developing physical activity programs as an indispensable tool for disease prevention and health maintenance, also fostering social integration.

Lectures delivered by gerontology professionals were organized for people who wanted to work with seniors, motivating research and feedback. The training provided to employees as well as participation in national and international congresses led SESC towards acquiring a permanent status of an institution qualified to deal with professional category technical issues. In the 80s, the awareness of the changes in society, new demands by service users, and the adoption of programmes to prevent the negative effects of isolation and the lack of activities in old age led to the development of new innovative projects representing an important point in history of SESC.

After SESC identified the need to update and re-use the skills and experiences of older people, the organization started the development of "Escolas Abertas da Terceira Idade" (Third-Age Open Schools) based on the principle of ongoing education, i.e. getting education throughout their life. This initiative led to the formation of open colleges for older people in many public and private

universities, now available all over Brazil. At present, the SESC organizes regional-, state- and national-level meetings for older people to discuss various themes regarding social, cultural and political subjects and raising the level of awareness in these groups.

The larger presence of older people in public places nowadays is not only the result of demographic changes but also a reflection of their desire to live a fuller life, contributing ideas and addressing problems at the level of the community, the city and the nation. Senior citizens are also mobilizing to defend their rights. They increased their representation in City and State Councils, and in the National Council for Elderly Rights, which has resulted in the acknowledgement by politicians of the rights of the elderly. The institution has also published a magazine named "Mais 60: estudos sobre envelhecimento" (60 plus: Studies on the aging process), which has become a space for research and awareness-raising in the field of gerontology.

This and other publications have highlighted updates on field studies and practices, emphasizing methodologies, statements contributing to the visibility and understanding of old age. Its new graphic dimension and new content have broadened the discourse on old age.

There has been an increase in the population of elderly over the past few years. Nowadays, 11.34% of the population is older than 60, which is the result of the increase in the average life expectancy.

For the past 50 years the SESC has been working for the development of new projects aimed at older people, also starting new studies and research and expanding the scope of analysis and reporting.

SESC activities have been based on the following objectives: promoting a culture of active aging and the practices of autonomy, ethics and participation; and highlighting

identities, cultures and different age-related knowledge. The principles that have been identified are: appreciation of the retirement period, learning new social roles, life-long education, socialization, the development of new skills, the consideration of aging and longevity issues, the development of new life projects, health promotion, and the promotion of intergenerational relationships.

Social work within the older persons program has adapted itself to new demands and social transformations, motivating older persons "to reinvent themselves" and open themselves to new experiences, and improving self-esteem. SESC believes that social action is more effective when it promotes people's autonomy, establishes solidarity and motivates interaction.

6

Social Challenges in Europe in time of refugee crisis

by Miloslav Hettes

September 2015

There have been mixed reactions on the part of European countries to the recent mass refugee movement from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere into Europe. This sudden phenomenon had not been anticipated well before hand. There were many who left refugee camps in Jordan, Turkey or Lebanon with the hope of finding better opportunities in Europe. The seriousness of the issue and the humanitarian dimensions attached to it has become a major cause of concern not only in Europe but throughout the world. In 2014, there were about 60 million refugees and internally displaced people around the world.

Such large-scale migration means significant economic costs for both the countries of origin and the host countries. The cost of

displacement is estimated at 100 billion dollars worldwide annually. But it is not limited to mere economic expense. This has also had ramifications on the mental health of people and affects the social fabric of entire countries. The changes that both the country of origin as well as the host country face are likely to be profound and long-lasting. There is a definite need for exploring all aspects of this issue, and any long-term program undertaken by ICSW Europe needs to incorporate this into its fold.

Demographic trajectories indicate lower fertility rates and longer life expectancies in Europe. The ageing of the population will have a significant impact on social protection systems, especially pensions.

The ICSW Europe has focused on the issues of poverty reduction, supporting the poor, attending to the vulnerable population groups, refugees and the homeless, and also looking at social investments and social entrepreneurship. Migrants, who fall among the most vulnerable groups, therefore need immediate attention.

Migrants might be defined as foreign-born or foreign nationals who have moved into another country. In Europe, given the free movement of people within the Union, internal EU migrants and other third-country immigrants may be a part of this group. A 'migrant worker' is defined by the UN as a person who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. The loose use of the term 'migrant' conflates several issues like immigration, race, ethnicity, etc.

Historically speaking, most Europeans are migrants. But very few European countries have actually ratified the UN Convention on the Protection of Migrants. Socially-oriented states have high unemployment rates, which has led to a decrease in the number of taxpayers. The rich and the poor do not share equal responsibility or accountability. There needs to be more emphasis on preventing

conflicts and wars, which lead to misery, lack of security and, most importantly, migration.

The adoption of ILO Recommendation 202 concerning national floors of social protection by all EU members may be a significant step towards mitigating the problem of migrants' vulnerability, providing social protection to all. This article advocates the need for establishing a guaranteed minimum income by the Member States, which would be half of the median income observed in each country. ICSW Europe has accepted this recommended threshold in Rennes in March 29, 2014.

Targeting schemes prevent people from claiming their rights, thereby jeopardizing solidarity, the principles of a rights-based policy and social cohesion. Universal national floors of social protection should guarantee basic income and essential services to all. Also, the right to free movement within the EU should be maintained. Europeans should not become victims of 'social dumping', and such negative trends should be controlled, especially when non-EU citizens are concerned.

All EU citizens must be able to avail themselves of all social schemes freely and without difficulties imposed by red-tape. Also, even illegal immigrants should have access to social protection on humanitarian grounds.

ICSW Europe is an active member of the Social Platform, fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Like so many other civil society organizations it tries to connect European and national policy-makers with the people on the ground.

Europe has its fair share of problems with the influx of migrants, and the refugee crisis is seen as the highest priority. But in the shadow of all this, a lot of austerity steps have been taken, leading to discrimination in practice, a decrease in social standards and also violations of fundamental rights. Social protection needs to be viewed more as an

investment rather than as an expense by governments.

ICSW Europe supports efforts within the framework of universally accessible social standards, which include:

- Adequate minimum income schemes.
- Adequate minimum wage in all of the EU, set higher than an adequate minimum income.
- Common standards for unemployment benefits set at a level above an adequate minimum income.
- Rights-based and non-discriminatory access to quality, inclusive and affordable social, health, education and lifelong learning services.

ICSW Europe is also trying to make financial instruments more effective and is constantly speaking out against budget cuts in social protection and services.

7

EAPN Ireland: Facing new challenges, finding new solutions

by Robin Hanan

December 2015

Established as an organization aimed at reducing poverty in Europe, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland, as part of the greater EAPN Europe, saw the need for being vocal about key policy decisions and also understood the importance of international networking in order to achieve its goals.

After becoming a member of the European Union, Ireland faced a range of new issues, and the application of new solutions at the ground level might pose some problems. The policy framework applied by Ireland earlier was also not in sync with the framework

applied by the EU, which could prove a major challenge to the process.

Yet, in the light of the poverty issues faced throughout Europe, membership to the EU is quite important for 3 major reasons:

- Free market and fiscal union facilitate what is termed as 'the race to the bottom'. An outflow of investment from the countries with better social and employment protections to the ones with lower standards can easily happen, involving the EU directly in their financial management.
- The Open Method of Coordination has played a very active role in the promotion and monitoring of anti-poverty drives. The Lisbon Agenda (2000-10) and the European 2020 Strategy (2010-2020) bear witness to inter-state cooperation in the EU. EAPN Ireland played a major role in the monitoring of these anti-poverty measures.
- The EU and EEC have funded and quite actively provided ideas and opportunities to anti-poverty activists. Joint cooperation has led to the development of the European Poverty Programs, which focus on localized community-based initiatives to fight poverty. Unfortunately, these programs are standing at a crossroads because of the lack of funds.

There has been a major shift in Ireland's policies, which earlier were focused on the impact of European policy on Ireland but have moved on to becoming an entwined and equal partner in the process.

Today, EAPN Ireland is over 250 members strong. It allows the membership of NGOs whose main agenda is to fight poverty. Any other organizations or individuals who share the organization's aims and wish to be a part of it can obtain associate membership. Both community-level as well as national organizations are part of this endeavor.

Organizations that are part of the organization include the Irish Traveller Movement, the Irish National Organization of the Unemployed, the Irish Association of Older People, Disability Federation Ireland, the National Women's Council, the National Youth Council. The trade union SIPTU is also part of EAPN Ireland.

Furthermore, EAPN Ireland acts as the Secretariat to the Community Platform, which constitutes several organizations working on issues related to poverty and equality. It also liaises with various ministries present in the Irish government and even advocates policy changes.

The Better Europe Alliance was established and is convened by EAPN Ireland, which brings together the major national, social and environmental NGOs to work on economic policy, structural reforms and the promotion of growth and employment as part of the European Semester. It also set up the Irish Minimum Income Network which works to obtain effective social protection for employees at the national level.

All members of EAPN Ireland are put through a well-planned and structured training session, which aims at training, informing, researching and advocating through the process. Training sessions of the organization are usually held at the local and regional levels, barring a few national level trainings. The organization depends heavily on the incorporation and support of local members, who host the session. Typically, around 5 sessions are held every year, thus training around 200 people. These sessions focus largely on capacity-building, policy development and consultation. Training on specific areas of any policy is followed by intense discussions, which are very often witnessed and commented upon by policy-makers of the EU themselves. The change that EAPN Ireland aims to bring about is based on the methods of advocacy and campaigning. In terms of outreach, it

publishes a monthly e-newsletter, the "EAPN Ireland News Flash", bringing the members up-to-date on the activities of the organization as well as information on policies.

EAPN Ireland is currently focusing on the Europe 2020 Strategy, is a major partner in the delivery of anti-poverty targets and is effectively monitoring and influencing the European Platform Against Poverty. It advocates policy changes at both the national as well as the European levels and is also a key lobbyist in the entire process.

It has also been a vehement supporter of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) and the European Minimum Income Campaign. It was through the efforts of EAPN Ireland's campaigns to the Irish Presidency that the Lisbon Treaty was successfully signed and all EU policies had to incorporate social inclusion.

EAPN Ireland is not limited to Ireland. It also is a participant at the annual European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty. The organization applied to become a member of the International Council on Social Welfare in 2015. Further, it is working towards hosting the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development in Dublin in 2018.

Social Protection and SPF

8

The foundation for Universal Protection: Issues, Realities and Horizons for MENA region within Global Coalition

by Driss Guerraoui

May 2015

An international meeting was held from 11-13 November 2014 in Morocco, organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany in partnership with the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, on the theme "The Universal social protection floor (USPF): from idea to practice". It provided an opportunity to shed light on future challenges facing USPF.

I - The challenges facing the universalization of global welfare

The issue of social protection is a fundamental issue that goes beyond divisions involving private vs. public approaches, or insurance vs. assistance, it calls for actions to shape the society into an inclusive integrated and supportive society. It is based on the funded demands of individual citizens covered by managers of social protection systems. Social Protection (SP) facilitates the expression of citizenship. It guarantees education for all, essential health care, basic income security, and protection against occupational discrimination and risks so as to cover basic needs and promote a basic sense of belonging to the national community.

It has also provided social cohesion and solidarity through equitable redistribution mechanisms for sharing gains from growth, without which the stability of social and professional relationships within the firm or society as a whole would not be possible.

It is a political imperative written in the constitutions of many countries as well as in international treaties and conventions. However, there is no ideal model for social protection, as every country has its own model depending upon its own history and traditions.

II - Some realities of social protection in the world:

In terms of quantitative coverage, according to the latest report of the ILO for 2014-2015, only 27% of the world's population has access to comprehensive social-security systems, while 73% receive only partial coverage or are not covered at all. Only 2.3% of GDP is spent on SP expenditures for women and men in order to ensure income security during the working age.

Regarding protection against the risk of unemployment, only 28% of workers worldwide have access to benefits under applicable national legislation. This global average masks regional inequalities: 80% of workers in Europe benefit from such protection, as against 38% in Latin America, 21% in Middle East, 17% in the Asia-Pacific region and 8% in Africa. For unemployed workers in the world only 12% can receive indemnities against unemployment, which varies from 64% in Western Europe, over 7% in the Asia-Pacific region and 5% in Latin America and less than 3% in the Middle East and Africa.

Regarding protection in the event of work accidents and diseases, 33.9% of the global workforce benefits from social protection. Only 87 countries have such non-contributory benefits, such as disability pensions; the same applies to maternity protection, where less than 40% of women who are working are covered under a scheme based on legislation and 48% if one takes into account voluntary insurance. Only 42% of the working age population can benefit from pension schemes.

More than 90% of the population living in low-income countries enjoy no health coverage. Globally there is a need for 10.3 million health-care workers to ensure the quality of health services.

Social protection in low- and middle-income countries remains an urban phenomenon and is concentrated in the industrial centers of such countries. Half of the population of these countries does not benefit from any protection schemes.

Social protection in those countries is mainly for private and public sector employees, whereas those in the informal sector, such as students, craft workers, farmers, etc., do not have any social protection system of their own.

Social protection is also selective and does not cover the family members of the beneficiaries in many countries. Furthermore there are multiple cracks in the system, such as inadequate management, under-equipment, multiple difficulties regarding access and the lack of the necessary human resources in the system.

The three major challenges faced in providing social protection are as follows: 1) an increase in the total population, especially in Southern countries, and the growth in the number of older people due to ageing, who face insecurity, poverty and exclusion and coexist with the massive arrival in the labour market of new workers, who are actually unemployed; 2) the emergence of new forms of pandemics and social health risks relating to the frequency and unpredictability of natural disasters and to practices with regard to production and consumption that result in systemic malfunctions; 3) the development of a new generation of poverty and unemployment stemming from economic and social models that are not only non-inclusive but generate social and spatial inequalities.

According to the approaches taken by the ILO and the UN, social protection should be seen

as a fundamental human right, reinforcing already existing norms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Right. This realization has led to the creation of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, which actively promotes universal social protection schemes.

III - Horizons for MENA: What role can the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors play?

The Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors — a movement bringing together 90 non-governmental organizations and trade unions — strives to develop a common platform to serve as a framework for post-2015 development agenda.

It is a representation of civil society aimed at strengthening advocacy for the implementation of ILO Recommendation 202 adopted in June 2012.

As underscored in the December 2013 and February 2014 issues of ICSW *Global Cooperation Newsletter*, that ILO recommendation is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, which cover a number of guarantees regarding basic social rights, especially health care, maternity care meeting the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality, as well as the right to food, education and health for children, unemployment benefits and the right to retirement income for older persons.

To achieve universalization of these guarantees by 2030 is possible by linking national universal social protection floors to economic growth, social equity and sustainable human development. Given this issue, the meeting at Rabat was important in the context of the advocacy promoted by the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors in the MENA region.

According to the ILO, total expenditures on social protection in 2014-2015 in MENA

region is estimated at an average of 9.5% of GDP in 2009. Country's expenditure in 2011 reached 13.21% of GDP in Egypt, 12.11% in Jordan, 11.44% in Kuwait, 10.40% in Tunisia, 9.73% in Algeria, 6.57% in Morocco (2010 figure), 6.55% in Libya and 4.87% in Mauritania. Lebanon, Qatar, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman are the countries that spend the least on social protection, given that they devoted only 1.12%, 1.74%, 1.91%, 3.80% and 3.64% respectively of their GDP on social protection in 2011. In Iraq, despite the effects of the war, the country was able to record expenditures for social protection amounting to 11.65% of GDP in 2010.

There exist other reasons for the low levels of social protection in MENA region, which has, as a result, remained a source of insecurity and instability that feeds the feelings of injustice and assaulted human dignity felt by entire groups in Arab societies, especially youth and women.

These realities delay the process of the generalization of social protection floors in the MENA region. In order to address this situation, the Rabat meeting recommended strengthening the advocacy and awareness-building activities of the Global Coalition and suggested that ICSW should redouble efforts to open new opportunities for actions to bring social inclusion and stability to the MENA region.

Understanding the trade-offs, it is important to create an internationally financed "Global Fund for Social Protection", which could be a part of the post- 2015 agenda concerning the sustainable development goals; the fund could be used as a basis for schemes to finance the extension of social protection.

The mechanism could be based operationally on the 20/20 Initiative put forward by UNDP. The creation of such a fund would depend on the political will of the rich countries to engage with the UN system so as to make social protection floor available for all.

9

The World Bank Group and ILO join forces in launching Universal Social Protection Initiative

July 2015

On the 30th of June, 2015, The World Bank Group, in a joint statement with the ILO, explicitly endorsed universal social protection as a primary development priority. The joint statement was issued by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and ILO Director General Guy Rider.

A joint mission and plan of action: Universal social protection to ensure that no one is left behind

It was stated that the World Bank Group and the ILO share a vision of social protection for all, a world where anyone who needs social protection can access it at any time.

The new development agenda that is being defined by the world community, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides an unparalleled opportunity for our two institutions to join forces to make universal social protection a reality, for everyone, everywhere.

Universal coverage and access to social protection are central to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity, which are the World Bank Group's twin goals by 2030. Universal social protection coverage is at the core of the ILO's mandate, guided by its standards, including the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, No. 202, adopted by 185 states in 2012.

For the World Bank Group and the ILO, universal social protection refers to the

integrated set of policies designed to ensure income security and support to all people across the life cycle – paying particular attention to the poor and the vulnerable. Anyone who needs social protection should be able to access it.

Universal social protection includes: adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons. This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public-works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security.

Universal social protection is a goal that we, the World Bank Group and the ILO, strive to help countries deliver. Social protection systems that are well-designed and implemented can powerfully shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and contribute to building social peace. They are an essential part of National Development Strategies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development with equitable social outcomes.

We are proud to endorse the consensus that has emerged in the early 21st century that social protection is a primary development tool and priority.

Since the 2000s, universality has re-entered the development agenda. First it was education: universal primary education became a Millennium Development Goal in 2000. In 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing universal health coverage. Now it is time for universal social protection. The African Union, ASEAN, the European Commission, G20, OECD and the United Nations have all endorsed universal social protection.

Now, it is time to join forces to make it happen.

Universal Social Protection in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Beginning in 2016, the world will begin the pursuit of an ambitious new development agenda under the auspices of the United Nations: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Social protection systems, including social protection floors, figure prominently among the SDGs:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable

Social protection policies also feature in goals to achieve gender equality and to reduce income inequality.

Our joint vision reinforces this universal aspiration, to be applicable to all countries regardless of income level. Now is the time to ensure that the international community has the means to make this vision a reality.

A joint programme of action to increase the number of countries adopting Universal Social Protection

Our shared objective is to increase the number of countries that provide universal social protection, supporting countries to design and implement universal and sustainable social protection systems. There are many paths towards universal social protection. It belongs to each country to choose its own, and to opt for the means and methods that best suit its circumstances.

Annex: A Shared Mission for Universal

Social Protection: *Concept Note* (excerpts)

Well-designed and implemented social protection systems can powerfully shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and contribute to building social peace. They are an essential part of National Development Strategies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development with equitable social outcomes.

Why support universal social protection?

There is considerable rigorous scientific evidence that well-designed and implemented social protection systems can be the foundation for sustained social and economic development – for individuals, communities, nations and societies.

- Such development prevents and reduces poverty, promotes social inclusion and dignity of vulnerable populations;
- It contributes to economic growth: raises incomes, increases consumption, savings and investment at the household level, and raises domestic demand at the macro level;
- It promotes human development: cash transfers facilitate access to nutrition and education, thus resulting in better health outcomes, higher school enrolment rates, reduced school drop-out rates, and a decline in child labor;
- It increases productivity and employability by enhancing human capital and productive assets;
- It protects individuals and families against the losses due to shocks, whether they be pandemics, natural disasters, or economic downturns;
- It builds political stability and social peace, reducing inequalities, social tensions and

violent conflict; social protection ensures greater social cohesion and participation;

- It is a human right that everyone, as a member of society, should enjoy, including children, mothers, persons with disabilities, workers, older persons, migrants, indigenous peoples and minorities.

Universal Social Protection Coverage Today

Today, nearly 30 low- and middle-income countries have universal or nearly universal social protection programs. Over 100 others are scaling-up social protection and fast-tracking expansion of benefits to new population groups. Universal social protection is most commonly achieved for old-age pensions.

Universal social protection for children is also a reality in some countries. Furthermore, universality of protection has been endorsed by international statements by the African Union, ASEAN, the European Commission, G20, OECD and the United Nations.

Paths to universal social protection

There are many paths towards universal social protection. Both the ILO and the World Bank fully recognize:

- national ownership of development processes towards universalism;
- the choice of countries to aim for gradual and progressive realization or immediate universal coverage;
- the heterogeneity in the design and implementation of universal schemes.

Countries have a wide set of options to achieve universal social protection coverage. Generally, universality is achieved by combining contributory and non-contributory schemes. For instance, the People's Republic of China has achieved nearly universal pensions by complementing social insurance with social pensions in rural areas. Other countries like Bolivia provide tax-financed

universal benefits to all older persons. Some countries choose gradual and progressive realization and others opt for immediate universal coverage.

Financing social protection

Countries have used many options to finance universal social protection coverage, such as:

- Re-allocating public expenditures;
- Increasing tax revenues, including revenue generated from taxation of natural resources;
- Using the reductions of debt or debt servicing;
- Expanding social security coverage and contributory revenues.

The variety of universal social protection programs needs to be sustainable and equitable, taking into account the contributory capacity of different population groups. Better enforcement of tax and contribution obligations ensures that a broader and sufficiently progressive revenue base can accelerate progress towards universal social protection coverage. Enforcement of social security revenue collection may result in higher tax collections, particularly in countries with young demographic pyramids. Higher tax revenues can in turn support the promotion of statutory programs. For the poor and those unable to contribute, governments have to identify sustainable sources of fiscal revenue.

The Vision: Universal social protection to ensure that no one is left behind

The World Bank and the ILO share a vision of a world where anyone who needs social protection can access it at any time.

The vision states that both institutions recognize that universal social protection is a goal that we strive to help countries deliver. Achieving universality would facilitate the delivery of the World Bank's corporate goals of reducing poverty and increasing shared

prosperity and the ILO's mandate of promoting decent work and social protection for all. This shared mission would drive the development agenda to ensure lasting peace, prosperity and progress.

The Objective: Increase the number of countries adopting Universal Social Protection

The ILO and the World Bank's shared objective is: "To increase the number of countries that can provide universal social protection, supporting countries in their efforts to design and implement universal and sustainable social protection systems."

The objective recognizes the aspirational elements of the ILO and the World Bank's shared vision, and that the means of achieving the vision is through either the progressive or immediate realization of social protection, as well as through ensuring that there is no retrogression on progress achieved.

The objective recognizes that if countries develop comprehensive systems providing universal protection across the life cycle, and there is sufficient evidence that social protection systems are affordable, efficient, effective and equitable, then more countries will adopt these systems as part of their national development strategies. It also recognizes that there are large synergies and advantages if the ILO and World Bank collectively support the development of universal social protection systems in countries, with a focus on sustainable domestic financing.

Time bound Actions

The World Bank and the ILO declare that they will work together to achieve this shared vision until the Sustainable Development Goals are realized.

In the short term, the ILO and the World Bank will:

1- **Launch the initiative** (June 30) with a high-level statement calling the attention of world leaders to the importance of universal social protection policies, as well as financing mechanisms. This statement will also articulate the shared vision of the two organizations, and outline tangible activities to advance universal social protection both in the lead-up to and following adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

2- **Document country experiences on universal social protection coverage:** Succinct case studies presenting how countries achieved universal social protection coverage, and extracting good practices relevant for other countries.

3- **Financing universal social protection:** Analyze the financing implications of universal social protection together with the generation of evidence about ways this can be innovatively resourced and other topics important to generate political will, such as the investment case and socio-economic benefits of providing universal social protection.

4- **Monitoring framework for universal social protection in the post-2015 agenda:** as part of the ongoing collaboration on social protection statistics (meeting of experts scheduled for October 2015).

5- **Global conference on universal social protection for inclusive and sustainable growth:** High-level public event (2016), presenting the country case-studies, the joint framework for monitoring progress, and launching a Global Observatory for Universal Social Protection for public monitoring and reporting on agreed targets.

In the medium term (1-15 years), the World Bank and the ILO will use their individual and collective resources and influence to support countries in their move towards providing universal coverage. This will include joint

support to countries in their efforts to harmonize social protection policies, programs and administration systems, expanding fiscal space for universal social protection, addressing bottlenecks and adequately integrating universal social protection into their national development strategies.

(The full text of the *Concept Note* is available at http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS_378991/lang--en/index.htm)

10

What Kind of International Support for Social Protection Floors?

By Barry Herman

November 2015

The proposal for the establishment of a new global fund for social protection was made in 2012 by the two then Special Rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Council, Olivier de Schutter and Magdalena Sepúlveda. In their view, while “the costs of providing basic social protection may be affordable when estimated globally, for many countries the domestic costs still may be beyond their capacity, even if they were to devote their maximum available resources to that objective”. In that light a special, solidarity-based financing mechanism guaranteeing the support of the international community to countries that may be in need of such support to introduce or complete national social protections floors should be created. This brief article represents a personal reflection on the proposal to create such a fund.

The proposal received a sympathetic hearing among some international organization staff, for instance at the ILO, the UNHCHR and the FAO, and was advocated by the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors at the

International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015. However, it does not appear that the fund proposal, as such, has attracted any interest from potential donors, at least not for the time being. While that may not be surprising in the current international economic and political environment, the author thinks that the aims of such a solidarity-based financing mechanism are worthy and should be realized.

While de Schutter and Sepúlveda proposed the creation of a single entity that they called the Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP), they were actually proposing to cluster a set of activities together that might be able to fit under one roof, or not. The authors' real concern was properly on increasing the social protection of those in need, not on creating a new international bureaucracy. And none is needed.

The proposal would boost international support to least developed countries (LDCs). Undoubtedly, the LDCs are not the only countries requiring assistance to raise their social protection floors to an acceptable standard that accorded with their governments' human rights obligations. They are, however, a well specified country grouping to which the international community already provides special international trade and financial benefits owing to their poverty and vulnerability. The focus on them is understandable, but the proposal should offer international support to any country in need.

De Schutter and Sepúlveda sought to increase two kinds of international support for social protection services. The first would supplement the financing that an LDC could mobilize domestically for social protection under normal (or average) circumstances. The second would provide special international financing to meet additional social protection obligations created by

extreme natural or economic shocks. This note argues against the first and for the second.

Assistance to social protection floors in "normal" times

Funding social protection is a basic obligation of governments everywhere. ILO Recommendation No. 202 calling for social protection floors says that they include "essential" health care and "basic" income security for children, older persons and those in the active population unable to earn "sufficient" income, in each case subject to national definitions. That may be as precise as it is politically possible to be in an internationally negotiated definition of social protection floors.

However, it is doubtful that prospective donors would simply accept national definitions of need. One fear might be that recipient countries would set the target for their minimum need too high so as to take advantage of the donors' generosity. On the other hand, de Schutter and Sepúlveda also said that the international support to individual LDCs should be phased out over time, including specifying a date when the support would end. That means that whatever the level of social protection provided, there would be a political constituency that would press to continue at least that level of protection once the international support ended. That might be an incentive to set the floor too low.

In the end, the recipient country and its donors would have to agree on the targeted content of the social protection floor. It would also have to be offered to all persons in the country, regardless of gender or ethnic identity or location. Furthermore, the recipient should have to open its accounts on social protection programs to donor scrutiny, as well as its tax revenue and fiscal expenditure accounts, since the international

support would only cover what was needed beyond the “maximum available resources” that could be mobilized by the government and that would be made available for social protection. Those accounts should anyway be open to public scrutiny in the receiving country, as transparency is a necessary condition for the government’s accountability, although that is often not the case. In short, international financial assistance specifically to cover a financing gap in the full set of social protection services requires substantial international inspection and inevitably high conditionality.

The proposal is also quite complicated because much of social protection is provided as insurance, paid for by some combination of tax revenue and payments by beneficiaries as insurance premiums and/or as co-pays for the services. It could be that the international support scheme would only apply to the poorest people in the poorest countries, in which case one may assume that both the premiums and co-pays would be zero. That would simplify the estimation of the need for international support, but also might excessively limit the number of people covered.

For example, unemployment insurance is one type of social insurance in a social protection floor. The poorest of the poor are more likely than not to be working in the informal or subsistence economy and not be covered by formal unemployment insurance. And yet, unemployment is likely to push many non-poor people into the ranks of the poor. So, should an international subvention be made available to a national unemployment scheme so that a larger percentage of a worker’s wages would be paid during spells of unemployment? Or a scheme that would extend the number of weeks of unemployment that would be covered? Are these decisions that foreign governments or multilateral institutions should make?

In the best of circumstances, the international community would have a tough job deciding how much of which types of social protection services and when and for how long to financially supplement services and in which countries. Similarly, recipient countries would have to decide how much international scrutiny they would wish to invite of their domestic social, tax and overall budgetary expenditure programs in order to qualify for the international support.

That does not mean that campaigns for an internationally supported social protection floor are wrong-headed, only that the transfer of international funds specifically to cover overall gaps in social protection floors is unworkable. Additional technical assistance to help countries design or improve their systems of social protection is fully warranted. And to be sure, there are already a number of funds that address specific pieces of a social protection floor, such as aspects of essential health care, including combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. However, such funds are not the solution. They encourage governments to distort domestic policy priorities in order to capture the money offered for specific services on what are global—but not necessarily each country’s—priorities (see United Nations, World Economic and Social Survey, 2012).

A preferable solution is to assist all aid-receiving countries to qualify for general budget support, convincing donors that it is time to switch more of their assistance to this form of support, and then increasing the funding enough to help countries meet their social protection obligations.

Assistance to social protection floors in difficult times

The second type of activity that de Schutter and Sepúlveda envisaged for the GFSP would be to help countries deal with temporary surges in need. Their main proposal was

reinsurance; that is, since much of domestic social protection is operated as insurance programs, those programs could, in turn, insure themselves against unexpected surges in demand for their services through international reinsurance schemes.

The reinsurance schemes could be specified for individual social protection programs, such as a surge in health-care expenses needed to fight an Ebola epidemic or to rebuild housing devastated by a hurricane. National health insurance or flood insurance programs could be reinsured against sudden higher obligations owing to some such unfortunate event. Such schemes can even be self-financing as long as the insured events happen in only a limited number of insured countries at the same time.

In a similar spirit, the authors refer to “catastrophe bonds”, in which the government raises funds by issuing bonds whose interest and/or principal are waived if a named catastrophe occurs (for which reason, the interest rate on the bonds is usually higher than normal). The World Bank is already supporting governments that want to issue “CAT bonds”, even issuing its own in 2014 to reinsure the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility for 16 countries.

It is possible to design additional reinsurance schemes or issue additional catastrophe bonds for national insurance programs and subsidize them when the market does not want to assume the risk at reasonable premiums or interest rates. There is already considerable international expertise on such matters that could be mobilized for an additional effort. That would reduce the need to draw on additional budget revenues in emergencies or issue more government debt or sell more foreign exchange reserves.

However, there is a broader financial strategy that would give the government more flexibility in using the additional funds

whatever specific emergency it faced. Such a strategy was implicitly followed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1960s and 1970s through its Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF). It provided semi-automatic and quickly disbursed foreign exchange loans to developing countries that were impacted by economic “shocks”. Two kinds of triggers opened access to the CFF. One was loss of export revenue caused by the collapse of export commodity prices (or domestic crises like plant disease or hurricanes). The other was surges in cereal import costs. Those funds could be disbursed in weeks following a quick assessment of the losses incurred and a decision on the share that IMF was willing to cover.

The CFF was meant to address temporary needs arising from volatility. The analytical difficulty was in knowing whether a country had a temporary shortage or a structural challenge, as from a secular decline in its export prices. The latter would require an economic adjustment, e.g., switching production from export crops with declining price trends to ones with rising prices. However, the demise of the CFF as a distinct policy tool was not caused by the analytical challenge but an ideological one, namely, the market fundamentalism and shrunken economic role of the state that arrived in the 80s with Reagan in the US and Thatcher in the UK.

The IMF today has a variety of lending facilities, but none that operates like the original CFF. However, with a new global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, perhaps the political winds can once again change. IMF has the capacity to manage a renewed CFF (subsidizing interest payable on poor country drawings), and countries would have no need to negotiate an adjustment program under the terms for drawing from it.

One reason to suspect that it might be time

to try to resurrect a CFF is that general finance as part of the international response to crises has become more common. Thus, the Paris Club, consisting of developed country government creditors, has adopted a practice of jointly offering unilateral postponement of debt servicing owed to them following natural and man-made catastrophes

(<http://www.clubdeparis.org/en/communications/page/exceptional-treatments-in-case-of-crisis>). The IMF has also created a program of special support for poor countries experiencing shocks, which provides grants to cover debt servicing owed to the IMF (Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust). It has been used by countries fighting Ebola. And on November 19 the Paris Club announced in its debt restructuring for Grenada a first-ever "hurricane clause".

The governments benefiting from such measures are not constrained in how they use the funds freed by debt relief. An obvious priority would be to help finance their crisis-related social protection needs. The principle thus seems internationally agreed. A reformed and enlarged CFF would be a way to further implement it.

11

European seminar "Migrants and social protection floors"

by Joaquin Eguren

June 2015

The ICSW Europe Seminar "Migrants and Social Protection Floors. Facilities and obstacles to access to different welfare state services in time of crisis" took place on April 23, 2015, at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid, Spain. It was jointly organized by the University Institute of Migration Studies (IUEM) of that university,

the CEBS (Spanish Committee for Social Welfare - ICSW Spain) and the European Committee for Social Welfare (ICSW Europe), which provided the financial support.

The meeting was attended by members of ICSW Europe as well as by experts on migration from the following countries: Austria, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Slovakia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain.

The seminar reflected the priorities of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors concerning the Social Protection Floors initiative, which is widely regarded as one of the foundations for inclusive, equitable and sustainable post-2015 development.

The plight of migrants has direct relevance to the social protection discourse, as migrant workers represent an important and often vulnerable population group. There is a growing number of EU citizens whose move to another country has been facilitated by the existing freedom of movement within the European Union. More recently, the economic crisis became an additional factor for the cross-border movements of people.

According to ILO Recommendation No. 202 all residents should have basic social security coverage. Despite this general provision, social rights are often denied to migrants because of the unstable socio-economic situation and the existence of exclusionary practices at the national level. This is particularly serious in the case of such ethnic groups as the Roma. Access to immigrant rights by nationals of third countries outside the European Union has often been hampered by cultural and administrative barriers. The case of illegal immigrants is a special category owing to the difficulties of both a humanitarian and a legal nature that they often encounter in the host countries.

The seminar considered in depth how ILO Recommendation 202 applies to migrants in the eleven countries under consideration. According to Eurostat data, in 2010 about 32 million foreign-born people were living in 27 member states of the European Union (EU-27), representing 6.5% of the total population. In recent years, immigration has been the major driver of population change in most European member states. In fact, between 2004 and 2008, each year from 3 to 4 million immigrants have settled in the EU-27. In sum, 12 million immigrants came from within EU-27 to live in a country other than the country of their birth, and 20 million came there from third countries outside the EU-27.

The seminar in Madrid focused on discussing in what way the ILO recommendations regarding national floors of social protection were applicable to the migrant population in 11 European countries. Taking as a basis for discussion the national expert reports, prepared using a similar research methodology (agreed in advance), the participants considered the following cross-sectoral themes as they applied to migrants:

1. Access by migrants to goods and services constituting essential health care, including maternal care.
2. Basic income security for children set at a national level; access to nutrition, education and any other essential goods and services.
3. Basic income security for people of working age who are unable to get sufficient income owing to sickness, unemployment, maternity or disability.
4. Basic income security for older persons.

In this vein, the first conclusion of the

seminar was that one can talk about the existence of a basic outline of a harmonized European policy on minimum social protection for legal immigrants. Whether it is satisfactory and sufficient is an open question. While access by migrants to health care, basic income and basic income security exists at almost the same level as available to citizens of European countries, the situation is very different for the undocumented (illegal) immigrants. The specifics differ: there are countries, such as Austria, Portugal and Italy, where access to minimum services for migrants and citizens are similar, but in others, such as Denmark and Spain, it is not.

Legal migrants are usually considered in the programs of public health services of the 11 European countries mentioned above. However, in the case of so-called undocumented migrants, only some health-care services are provided by the public health system, such as emergency care (in countries such as Austria, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Spain). But in Germany, Denmark and Spain primary care or specialized care is provided to these population groups not by public health-care systems but by NGOs.

The budget cuts made recently by several EU governments has affected health care for the undocumented migrants in severe ways, along with emergency care, as well as OB/GYN and maternity-related services. For example, in the case of Spain, undocumented migrants lost the right to receive primary health care. In Italy essential health care that covers emergency treatment is guaranteed to all immigrants, including undocumented migrants. The Portuguese law grants foreign citizens the right to access health centers and hospitals in the National Health Service, whatever their nationality, their legal or economic status.

According to the German Law on Assistance to Asylum Seekers who belong to the undocumented category, they are entitled to receive health care in Germany in the event of acute illness and pain, as well as maternal care. But generally medical care for undocumented migrants in Germany is severely restricted by administrative procedures precluding access to subsidized care, which is subject to the German Law on Residence, which requires all public institutions, except institutions of education, to notify the competent immigration authorities and police when they obtain information about any of these people without a valid residence.

In Norway and Sweden, undocumented immigrants and refugees are entitled to emergency health services. Pregnant women can get free hospital service to give birth. Children of undocumented families have free access to the National Health Service. In the case of Sweden, there is a recognized right to maternal care, abortion and contraception. The people using those services have to provide some payment but costs are reduced; some financial support is provided for special medical needs. The children of migrants have access to health and dental care services under the same conditions as Swedish children.

The second message of the seminar was that the economic crisis has not only affected the European Mediterranean countries but has also had a wider impact. However, the situation varies from one country to another. Despite negative economic conditions, some states have decided not to restrict the social rights of undocumented immigrants in a significant way. To a certain extent, the Spanish decision made by the current government administration to apply restrictive measures to migrants, especially the undocumented migrants, was an exception rather than the

rule.

Thirdly, it is very obvious that the migrant population of the EU has been affected most seriously by the economic crisis. This group has especially suffered from rising unemployment, which has resulted in creating precarious situations in the workplace, leading also to sharp declines in their income and socio-economic benefits. On the other hand, generally speaking, public policies aimed at the integration of migrants have suffered serious budgetary adjustments downwards, also causing much public debate and questioning regarding their purpose, effectiveness and management.

Finally, the participants confirmed the need for studies at the European level to determine the level of the application of the minimum social protection. For that reason, ICSW Europe has begun a process of developing a research project to be submitted to the various European authorities with calls for funding.

Post-2015 and the SDGs

12

The post-2015 World-Implications for Social Development

October 2015

The Club de Madrid is one of the most unusual international networks. An independent non- profit organization comprised exclusively of former Heads of States and Heads of Government, the Club provides an opportunity for eminent former leaders to stay actively involved in the global development discourse. Made up of over 100 former democratically elected leaders, the organization issues invitations to join only to other democratically-elected statesmen after they have left their top positions. The aim of the Club is to make the expertise and experience of its members available to current leaders. It has become clear that members have the neutrality and convening power to be welcome in dialogues and debates about current problems in many parts of the world.

For the past ten years the Club has been working on a Shared Societies Project to promote policy approaches that generate safe and prosperous shared communities—a clearly

difficult but most important task.

Dr Clem McCartney, consultant to the Club and coordinator of the Shared Societies Project, was invited to share his perspective on the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to put the above-mentioned Project of the Club de Madrid in the spotlight.

The Post-2015 World – Implications for Social Development

By Clem McCartney

The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are with us at last.

Even if we have not been getting ready for them, they are here now, and their potential contribution to social progress is too important for us to continue to disregard them. Things will never be the same again.

They provide the opportunity to create sustainable, peaceful and prosperous communities that provide the basic needs of all of the population. It will mean profound changes for all those working in social policy, development planning, economics, health, education, employment policy and politics. They are intended to go to a new level beyond the Millennium Development Goals. They are not just a set of targets that we should aim for, such as reducing poverty and ensuring access to basic services including health, education, clean water etc. They are that and more. The drafters have described them as a holistic integrated set of goals, linking the three pillars of economic, social and environmental development, and

they create a framework that, if taken to its logical conclusion, should transform society at the local through to the global levels, so that we can overcome the causes of poor services and poor access to services and the lack of social development in many areas. At the same time their name suggests that they are intended to ensure that we protect the planet and that our development model is sustainable. It's a tall order. How do we react?

It will require new holistic approaches, more interdisciplinary teams, new planning models and new monitoring systems. And there will be many other challenges that have barely been foreseen.

The involvement of the Club de Madrid

The Club de Madrid has been considering those challenges for some time. It is the largest network of former Heads of State and Government (currently more than one hundred) elected through a democratic process. The members offer support to current leaders as they confront today's global, regional and national challenges. They identify specific issues that they feel need urgent attention, and as such, they have been concerned about climate change, gender equality and other themes of the post-2015 Agenda. Much of the engagement with the new Agenda has centered on the issue of social inclusion, which the Members have argued is the foundation on which the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved. A major initiative of the Club is the Shared Societies Project, designed to draw attention to the challenges of inter-group divisions and the importance of building social inclusion and positive inter-group relations. Like the drafters of the Sustainable Development Agenda, the Project has argued for an integrated transformative approach, and they have put social inclusion or building Shared Societies at the heart of that discussion, because Shared Societies

provide the conditions for achieving the Goals, and at the same time progress towards the Goals will advance a Shared Society in a benign or virtuous cycle.

Members of the Club de Madrid took part in the Rio+20 Conference, where they presented the Global Shared Societies Agenda, which had been developed with partners and representatives of intergovernmental organizations. It was intended as a template to show what a more inclusive, fair and equitable system of global economic governance would look like; to make the case that it would be in the interests of all; and that it could be created, if there is the political will.

Since then, the Members have followed the post-2015 process, making visits to the UN in New York, taking part in official meetings and organizing side events, as well as privately exchanging views with key Permanent Representatives to the UN and relevant members of the UN Secretariat. They have also prepared a number of short documents commenting on progress and offering encouragement to the Member States.

The Members are now ready to co-operate with political leaders, social welfare practitioners and inter-governmental bodies in tackling the challenges of implementation, monitoring and the review of progress.

Planning, financing, implementation, monitoring and review

Parallel to the drafting of the Sustainable Development Goals, attention has also been given to the creation of systems to finance, plan, and implement new development initiatives, and to monitor and review the Goals, and particular attention has been directed to identifying Indicators that will be able to demonstrate progress - or otherwise - towards the achievement of the Goals.

Less attention has been given to the implications of this new Agenda for the way that the policy-making and practice communities are structured and organized. The Agenda is creating a new paradigm in which the current domains of social, economic, environmental and security policy are interlinked and mutually supportive.

How will policy-making and institutional structures need to change to be able to meet the new realities and apply a more holistic approach to the development process? Will they be able to take advantage of the momentum that the SDGs have initiated? Even if some of the details of the Goals have disappointed some people, they have established a new discourse around development on which policy makers, planners and practitioners can build in order to respond to and meet the needs of the poorest and most disadvantaged in sustainable ways.

Many of the people helped by the Millennium Development Goals are still marginal, they are still in poverty, and the quality of the services has not been adequate. And some have not been touched by the MDGs at all. That is partly because the MDGs were developed as a set of discrete targets that were not integrated with each other or with an overall vision of future development. It is now apparent that progress in one area is dependent on progress in the others, and failure to take account of any of the three interdependent dimensions of the SDGs will lead to limited, if any progress, in overall development. What will this mean in practice?

This will require a fundamental rethinking of development and giving greater emphasis to the social dimension and to the promotion of socially sustainable development. In Rio, Governments re-emphasized the need to place people and the planet at the centre of sustainable development. A strong social

foundation is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of social and economic development and environmental protection. Therefore, eradicating poverty, tackling social exclusion and inequality, promoting full employment and decent work, social protection and social inclusion should be at the core of economic and environmental policies in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable development with social justice. Not only is social development necessary for sustainable development, but, with the right policies in place, social processes that transform behaviour can be drivers of change in the economic and environmental spheres. That provides a unique opportunity to revisit and reposition social development.

Such a perspective reflects the thinking in the publication "The Economics of Shared Societies", which is based on the report of a working group of experts convened by the Club de Madrid. Another working group has recently been established to look at the implications of the relationship between social inclusion and Shared Societies and environmental sustainability. The rhetoric that the three pillars have to be integrated is fine and helpful, but we need to understand what that means and how it can be translated into practice.

Two critical dimensions are a more people-oriented, inclusive approach and an interdisciplinary orientation.

A Shared Society as a Driver of Development

There is increased interest in the inter-relationship between the key critical factors in achieving development. Traditionally, it has been argued that economic development is fundamental to progress in other aspects of development. While not denying the importance of the economic dimension, the Shared Societies Project has argued that social inclusion, participation and

empowerment is also fundamental to establishing the key enabling conditions that facilitate the achievement of societal goals.

A Shared Society is one where every resident feels at home and is able to play a full part in the society. Empowerment enhances the potential for participation and public engagement. A shared and empowered society is more sustainable, both in the sense that it is likely to be more stable and prosperous but also because it is more likely to be environmentally sensitive as its members are aware of the impact of their actions on their local environment and resist efforts to exploit the environment for short-term gain. Of course, that depends on the community being aware of the impact of its actions and willing to act responsibly. But public involvement adds extra levels of checks and balances, and in a Shared Society, where everyone is encouraged to engage and take responsibility, it is easier to raise awareness of important issues.

An inter-disciplinary approach

It follows that future policy, regardless of its immediate focus, will need to consider its multi-faceted dimensions and effects. Economists will have to think more clearly about, and factor in, the social and environmental aspects of their work, and equally, social scientists and environmentalists will also have to take a cross-disciplinary approach. Progress in one area will be essential if progress is to be made in the others.

What will be the implications of this for each discipline? It will require a deeper understanding of each discipline on the part of all those involved in planning and implementing policy. Are practitioners equipped to audit their policies for their potential social, economic and environmental consequences?

This multi-disciplinary approach will demand a new approach in training. Are colleges and universities prepared for those changes?

We will also have to reframe what constitutes success in our policies and practices. For example, it will not be sufficient to have reached social inclusion targets, if the costs are high in economic and environmental terms, or if we create economic growth that the planet cannot sustain or which does not provide decent work for all. Do we have the necessary criteria and indicators for measuring the multi-faceted impacts of policies?

Carpe Diem

These are changes that social planners and social welfare practitioners should welcome. We know that the needs of individuals and communities need to be considered in their wider context, but in the past social workers have had little opportunity to make an input into the wider development agenda. In the past such policy arenas have tended to function in isolation from each other. The Sustainable Development Goals provide the framework in which that can change, but it will require a clear sense of direction.

Are social welfare institutions, personnel and their professional organizations ready and capable to respond to the need for new integrated cooperative approaches? How will they cooperate or even merge? If that happens, will one discipline become dominant, negating the concept of a holistic approach? Are practitioners ready to function as a multidisciplinary team of equals?

Conceptually, are we clear about the nature of the holistic relationship between the economic, social, and political? Does it reflect the reality of the situation on the ground and the experience of development planning? Will it require more rigorous theoretical underpinning that can illuminate the nature

of the development process? What are the resulting implications for future priorities?

These are among the key questions that we have to consider, but not only consider. We will have to respond to them in our practice.

13

A Universal Call to Action to Transform our World beyond 2015

January 2015

The long-awaited and much anticipated *Synthesis Report of the UN Secretary-General*, released in December 2014, states that the world is “at a historic crossroads, and the directions we take will determine whether we will succeed or fail on our promises. With our globalized economy and sophisticated technology, we can decide to end the age-old ills of extreme poverty and hunger. Or we can continue to degrade our planet and allow intolerable inequalities to sow bitterness and despair. Our ambition is to achieve sustainable development for all”.

According to the report, the year 2015 offers a unique opportunity for global leaders and people to end poverty, transform the world to better meet human needs and the necessities of economic transformation, while protecting our environment, ensuring peace and realizing human rights. Member States requested the Secretary-General to synthesize the full range of inputs available on the post-2015 development agenda and to present a synthesis report before the end of 2014, as an input to the intergovernmental negotiations. Drawing from the experience of two decades of development practice and from the inputs gathered through an open and inclusive process, the report charts a road map to the achievement of dignity in the next 15 years.

The report proposes one universal and transformative agenda for sustainable development, underpinned by rights, and with people and the planet at the center. An integrated set of six essential elements is provided to help frame and reinforce the sustainable development agenda and ensure that the ambition and vision expressed by Member States is communicated and delivered at the country level: (a) dignity: to end poverty and fight inequality; (b) people: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children; (c) prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy; (d) planet: to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children; (e) justice: to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; and (f) partnership: to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.

The report also underscores that an integrated sustainable development agenda requires an equally synergistic framework of means for its implementation, including financing, technology and investments in sustainable development capacities. In addition, the report calls for embracing a culture of shared responsibility in order to ensure that promises made become actions delivered. To that end, the report proposes a framework to be able to monitor and review implementation, based on enhanced statistical capacities and tapping into the potential of new and non-traditional data sources, and a United Nations system “fit for purpose” to address the challenges of the new agenda. Achieving dignity in the next 15 years is possible if we collectively mobilize the political will and the necessary resources to strengthen the multilateral system and our nations.

For more details please go to:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&Lang=E

14

Monitoring and follow-up to the post-2015 Agenda: discussions in New York

May 2015

The core theme “Essential elements of an effective and inclusive follow-up mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda” was chosen for the informal discussions on 28 May 2015 in New York between the representatives of the Permanent Missions to the UN member states and some international NGOs. The meeting was co-sponsored by the International Movement ATD Fourth World and the Baha’i International Community. The diplomats and the representatives of several civil-society organizations came to discuss what could be done to set up and strengthen robust monitoring mechanisms at the national and global levels that would ensure that the substantial resources being mobilized in support of the emerging Sustainable Development Goals are used with maximum effectiveness. The participants considered the outcomes of the discussions important, not only for the post-2015 agenda but also in immediate terms, in the context of the preparatory process for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2015. The ICSW Executive Director was invited to participate in the deliberations.

The discussion reflected several cross-cutting themes. Most participants agreed that establishing an *effective follow-up mechanism* for the SDG Agenda is critical for its credibility. *Capacity development* in a wide range of areas will be integral to the success of the Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. *High-quality disaggregated data* are an essential input for smart and transparent decision-making. Greater *transparency* could be achieved by publishing timely, comprehensive and

forward-looking information on development activities in a common, open electronic format, as appropriate.

It was underscored that mechanisms for monitoring progress entail a large variety and diversity of institutions and other bodies set up at the national and regional levels. The full engagement of local authorities is indispensable in the review of national strategies and policies to support progress towards the goals, consistent with national priorities. On the other hand, international solidarity and support for national efforts are vital for building or expanding capacities at the national level.

The positive role of peer-review mechanisms was also mentioned by several participants, both diplomats and NGO representatives. In particular, peer learning was singled out as a factor in strengthening regional collaboration. The important role of UN regional commissions in creating or improving platforms for peer-review mechanisms was also highlighted.

The key question recognized by the participants, but left without a convincing answer, was whether the ambitious set of policy goals and daunting challenges of the 21st century, which were well presented by the stakeholders in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda, are commensurate with the improved but still pretty conventional toolbox at hand planned to be used in mobilizing the means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

15

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development launched

September 2015

"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"—an outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda — was made public in its final version in mid-August 2015. ICSW Global Cooperation Newsletter has sought, in previous editions (see January, April and June issues of 2015), to inform our readers about the preparation process of this document of vital international significance and the progress made. The full text of the document is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E We published the Preamble and a few abstracts from the Declaration of the Agenda.

Preamble

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to

heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what the Goals did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

People

We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet

We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity

We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling

lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership

We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

The inter-linkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized. If we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.

Declaration

We, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives, meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015 as the Organization celebrates its seventieth anniversary, have decided today on new global Sustainable Development Goals.

On behalf of the peoples we serve, we have adopted a historic decision on a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets. We commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation

of this Agenda by 2030. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

We are committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner. We will also build upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seek to address their unfinished business.

We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. We resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities...

As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first...

We reaffirm that every State has, and shall freely exercise, full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity. We will implement the Agenda for the full benefit of all, for today's generation and for future generations. In doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to international law and emphasize that the Agenda is to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law...

We reaffirm the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international instruments relating to human rights and international law. We emphasize the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status....

All of us will work to implement the Agenda within our own countries and at the regional and global levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. We will respect national policy space for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, in particular for developing States, while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments.

We acknowledge also the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. Regional and sub-regional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level...

We are committed to ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including by eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. All people must enjoy a basic standard of living, including through social protection systems.

The full text of the document is available at

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E

16

Shaping the post 2015 Agenda: Six essential elements for delivering on the sustainable development goals

April 2015

The following six essential elements would help frame and reinforce the universal, integrated and transformative nature of a sustainable development agenda and ensure that the ambition expressed by Member States in the report of the Open Working Group translates, communicates and is delivered at the country level.

Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities

Eradicating poverty by 2030 is the overarching objective of the sustainable development agenda. We live in a world of plenty and at a time of enormous scientific promise. And yet, for hundreds and hundreds of millions of people across the globe, this is also an age of gnawing deprivation. The defining challenge of our time is to close the gap between our determination to ensure a life of dignity for all, and the reality of persisting poverty and deepening inequality.

While we have made important progress in recent years, addressing gender inequality and realizing women's empowerment and rights remain a key challenge in all regions of the world. It should by now be recognized that no society can reach its full potential if whole segments of that society, especially young people, are excluded from participating in, contributing to and benefiting from development. Other dimensions of inequality persist and have, in some cases, worsened. Income inequality specifically is one of the most visible aspects of a broader and more complex

issue, one that entails inequality of opportunity. This is a universal challenge that the whole world must address. The agenda must accommodate the voices of women and the views of youth and minorities, seek the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, remove obstacles to full participation by persons with disabilities, older persons, adolescents and youth and empower the poor. It must not exclude migrants, refugees, displaced persons or persons affected by conflict and foreign occupation.

People: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children

Millions of people, especially women and children, have been left behind in the wake of the unfinished work of the Millennium Development Goals. We must ensure that women and also youth and children have access to the full range of health services. We must ensure zero tolerance of violence against or exploitation of women and girls. Women and girls must have equal access to financial services and the right to own land and other assets. All children and adolescents have a right to education and must have a safe environment in which to learn. Human development also means respect for human rights.

The agenda must address universal health-care coverage, access and affordability; end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and malnutrition; ensure the availability of essential medicines; realize women's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; ensure immunization coverage; eradicate malaria and realize the vision of a future free of AIDS and tuberculosis; reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases, including mental illness, and of nervous system injuries and road accidents; and promote healthy behaviors, including those related to water,

sanitation and hygiene.

Today, more than ever, the realities of 1.8 billion young people and adolescents represent a dynamic, informed and globally connected engine for change. Integrating their needs, their rights to choice and their voices in the new agenda will be a key factor for success. It is essential that young people receive relevant skills and quality education and lifelong learning, from early childhood development to post-primary schooling, including life-skills and vocational education and training, as well as science, sports and culture. Teachers must be given the means to deliver learning and knowledge in response to a safe global workplace, driven by technology.

Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy

Economic growth should lead to shared prosperity. The strength of an economy must be measured by the degree to which it meets the needs of people, and by how sustainably and equitably it does so. We need inclusive growth, built on decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods and rising real incomes for all, measured in ways that go beyond GDP and account for human well-being, sustainability and equity. Ensuring that all people, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, the aged and migrants, have decent employment, social protection and access to financial services will be a hallmark of our economic success.

Innovation and investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, cities and human settlements, industrialization, small- and medium-sized enterprises, energy and technology can both generate employment and remedy negative environmental trends. An enabled, properly regulated, responsible and profitable private sector is critical for employment, living wages, growth and revenues for public programmes.

ICSW News

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On the road to the Joint World Conference in Seoul

January 2015

Modalities of the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development entitled "Promoting the Dignity and Worth of People" scheduled in Seoul in June 2016 were discussed at length by the partners – the representatives of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in Vancouver, Canada, at the end of January 2015.

The agenda of the meeting included the progress reports submitted by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and the International Program Committee (IPC); it also included a discussion on the implementation of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, adopted by the three organizations in 2012, including the existing priorities and organizational developments.

The participants of the meeting discussed better geographical distribution and gender balance among the invited speakers as well as financial issues, including the structure of the proposed registration fees. The proposed budget was based on an assumption of high attendance i.e. approximately one-third of domestic attendees might take part in the conference. Discussion on the need to develop a local and international promotional strategy for the Conference also took place.

The call for abstracts will be made one year ahead of the conference, in recognition of the importance of the participation of academics in the deliberations of the Joint World

Conference.

The meeting of the Global Agenda Coordination Group, which also formed part of the Vancouver meeting focused on the implementation of the Global Agenda, including the specifics of the preparation of the next report on the implementation to be presented in Seoul in 2016.

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ICSW speaks out on the issue of rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world

February 2015

Statement made at the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development, 4-13 February 2015, New York

Priority theme: Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world. (excerpts)

Our organization is deeply concerned by the visible weakening in social cohesion in some countries and regions and by the adverse situation of vulnerable social groups and numerous individuals facing inequality, insecurities and multiple deprivations. Deeply entrenched inequalities within and among nations represent enormous challenges for development and for all of us, diminishing the productive potential of people and harming human prospects in a profound way.

The voices of people with disabilities, frail older persons, women who are excluded, indigenous communities and other social groups who face discrimination and marginalization for various reasons deserve to

be heard, and their concerns must be addressed. We strongly support the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on inequalities in the post-2015 development framework. We would like to draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that support for a stand-alone goal on inequalities was reflected in the outcome declaration of the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, convened in July 2014 by the International Council on Social Welfare together with our partners, the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers.

Strengthening social protection is not only one of the best ways to reduce insecurity and deprivation in the world, but also an effective means to reinvigorate the development agenda and come up with new solutions to a range of old and new social ills. Addressing the issues of inequality and poverty reduction in a comprehensive manner and linking human rights and social security obligations facilitates a cross-cutting approach, moving towards mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations system. Our organization consistently and fully supports the recommendation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) concerning national floors of social protection (Recommendation No. 202), which was unanimously adopted by ILO members in 2012.

The International Council on Social Welfare has been a strong supporter of the social protection floors initiative of the United Nations since 2009. We have made the promotion of social protection floors the cornerstone of our global strategy. The International Council is a founding member of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, a group of more than 80 non-governmental and international trade-union organizations that plays an increasingly important role in shaping the debate, raising awareness and achieving national consensus

on strategies on social protection floors. On the strength of its global political acceptance and legitimacy, the concept of social protection floors should be included in all future national and global development strategies.

.. We would like to draw the attention of the Commission to the statement and report delivered, on 24 October 2014, to the General Assembly by the new Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. The Special Rapporteur urged Governments to embrace the social protection floors initiative, which seeks to ensure basic income security and access to essential social services for all. The Rapporteur placed particular emphasis on the relevance of the initiative to the post-2015 development agenda and presented the implementation of the right to social protection through the adoption by all States of social protection floors as “by far the most promising human rights-inspired approach to the global elimination of extreme poverty”.

The year 2015 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. The lessons of the Summit and its impact should be carefully studied, if we wish to enhance the effectiveness of social policy formulation for the post-2015 era. The Summit was instrumental in charting new paths to improving the human condition and putting human beings at the centre of development. The three interrelated core issues of the Summit (poverty eradication, employment promotion and social integration, supported by an enabling environment based on a framework of equity and equality), along with its 10 commitments, exemplify a still valid, inclusive and holistic vision of social development. The norms set out in the outcome documents of the Summit reflected values and principles of key United Nations documents, such as the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as a set of agreements achieved at several prior international conferences and summits.

One of the lessons learned in the past 20 years, and clearly applicable in the ongoing elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, is the need to retain and enhance a comprehensive vision of development as advocated at the Summit, without reducing it exclusively to an economic perspective.

Despite its undeniable importance, economic growth is a means to development, not an end in itself. The economic perspective is just one of the perspectives and should be seen in conjunction with political, environmental, ethical and spiritual considerations, while human dignity and equality should never be overlooked. In both economic and social terms, as clearly affirmed in the Copenhagen Declaration, the most productive policies and investments have been those that empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. As proven by the experience of many countries, economic growth and human development reinforce each other. The majority of the most efficient and successful economies are still operated for and by the world's most equal, socially secure and inclusive societies.

Social policy can achieve better outcomes when it is conceived and implemented as part of broader national development strategies. While economic tools may be essential for addressing some underlying causes of such social ills as persistent poverty or long-term structural unemployment, a reduction in vulnerability and insecurity, particularly given the new threats associated with climate change and environmental degradation, can occur much faster when economic, social and environmental policies are conceived and implemented in an integrated manner. Moreover, intergenerational equity and the strengthening of economic and social ties

between generations are important considerations that should not be overlooked in the emerging social agenda of a rapidly ageing world.

Using the opportunity to engage in the process of "rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world", as proposed by the Commission for Social Development, we call for the elaboration and adoption of a new United Nations social policy instrument, one that would strengthen the impact of ILO Recommendation No. 202, providing tangible content to the human right to social security and the right to an adequate standard of living. A comprehensive international instrument on social protection floors, open to ratification by Member States, would enhance the political impact and weight of the concept of social protection floors, provide visibly joint ownership of the concept by the entire United Nations system and ensure its genuine mainstreaming in national and international social policy debates. While such an instrument could take the form of a convention or an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it would be of pivotal importance that the instrument be legally binding and that it exercise direct impact on national law. It is hardly possible to overestimate the importance of such an instrument for the 75 per cent of the global population who still lack adequate social security and the 35 per cent among them who still live in abject poverty.

The elaboration and adoption of a pertinent Economic and Social Council resolution would be a logical first step on the road to the new international instrument on social protection floors and a concrete first result of the process of rethinking social development.

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ICSW speaks out at the UN on gender and ageing nexus of development

March 2015

ICSW Statement to the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 9-20 March 2015, New York (excerpts)

The International Council on Social Welfare, one of the oldest non-governmental organizations with a global reach, promotes social development, social welfare and social justice worldwide. Promotion of gender equality for girls and women of all ages is one of our priorities. Given that older women remain particularly disadvantaged and excluded in many societies, we believe that the international community should not overlook such an important aspect as the social protection of older women when undertaking the review of Beijing Platform of Action, and even more when the post-2015 development framework is discussed. Twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action the international community still has to address the specific needs of older women in society and address the existing gaps. The adoption of a life-course approach in development strategies, together with well conceived anti-poverty measures and other social protection schemes, helps to promote gender equality and social inclusion. The International Council on Social Welfare considers it crucial to address the following policy concerns in future deliberations at the international level:

Population Ageing: The world-wide demographic revolution in longevity continues into the 21st century against a backdrop of lower birth rates in many countries, with the projection that by 2050

the number of the world's citizens 15 years and younger will equal those age 60 years and older for the first time in history. Developing countries are experiencing a demographic transition even more dramatically than the developed countries, which tend to have developed social protection schemes available for the old and disabled. Today, two in three people age 60 years and above live in developing countries and by 2050, almost 4 in 5 will live in the developing world. How to protect the vulnerable in a rapidly ageing world is a crucial question for policymakers.

Gender Disparities: Gender differences and disparities remain marked for older adults in all countries of the world. Starting from birth, females in many societies have less status, less access to education, less choice in marriage and childbearing, and less access to paid work and employment in the formal economy compared to men. They are less likely to inherit property, more likely to be widowed, and more apt to be disadvantaged by harmful traditional practices. Women are more likely than men to be unpaid caregivers of children and grandchildren, spouses and other relatives, and in turn less likely to be able to count on their spouses for care in old age. Women in older age are more likely than men to experience both absolute and relative poverty, and social exclusion. The social exclusion of women in society is related to a multitude of factors including marital, health and employment status.

Growing Inequality and persisting income insecurity: Growing inequality within and between nations plagues societies in a number of ways. For older people in both developed and developing countries, increasing levels of poverty and income inequality, declining health and pervasive discrimination based on age serve as barriers to the full enjoyment of their human rights. Older women are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social insecurity.

Due to changing family structures, older people's lives become less socially secure. They are being housed and cared for less frequently by younger family members than before. Due to gendered income discrimination patterns throughout their lives, women accumulate less individual wealth and individual rights to income security transfers (such as pension entitlements) and hence remain much more vulnerable in old age. As a result, older women face multiple disadvantages related to both gender and age.

Gender Differences in employment and poverty: The impact of gender differences and inequalities in education and employment opportunities increases through every stage of an individual's life, accumulating and hitting hardest in old age, and as a result women are more likely to be poor in old age in both developed and developing countries. Older women and poverty are connected for many structural reasons and are also affected in different ways related to marital status, age in life-course, race, ethnicity, linguistic background, ability, sexual orientation, citizenship, caste and class. Women who live alone are more likely to be in poverty than women who are married or live with extended families. Women are also more likely than men to have gaps in their employment histories due to child birth and child care as well as caregiving for older relatives and for spouses as they age. This translates into disadvantages in retirement income that can be exacerbated by the death of a (male) spouse and loss of the retirement income in his name.

Women are paid low wages for "women's work", and by and large they are expected to do for free such work as caring for and teaching children, nursing the sick, preparing food, cleaning, and serving others. Women in developing countries who migrate to other countries to work in the informal economy,

for example, as domestic workers, can find themselves without access to pensions or work as they age. No society so far has found a fair means to compensate women for their reproductive work that is of pivotal importance for the continued existence of any society.

Gendered Social Protection Schemes:

While many older adults in both developed and developing countries remain in the paid workforce, eventually the demands of the jobs they perform may exceed their ability to perform the tasks needed. In developed countries social security and pension schemes, along with savings, replace earned income for many older workers, and in both developed and developing countries families may provide needed economic support for older members. While women are entering the labour force in greater numbers and staying longer over their life-course, gender differences still persist in labour force participation, the distribution of paid and unpaid work between genders, employment conditions and earnings. Especially in developing countries, women more often than men work in poorly paid jobs that lack social protection and are often found in the informal sector. In developing countries informal employment makes up over half of total non-agricultural employment. Informal employment usually means that there are no or only low pension entitlements unless there are non-contributory systems of significant reach.

Gender and Family Caregiving: The unpaid work burden can negatively affect older women in both developed and developing countries. While the majority of caregiving is provided by women to family members, the long-term care system both mitigates the burden on women family caregivers and also provides needed in-home care to care-dependent older adults who live alone. Women are also more likely than men to be unpaid caregivers of children and

grandchildren, spouses and other relatives, and are in turn less likely to be able to count on their spouses for care in old age.

There are increasing numbers of skipped generation households with older people and dependent children as a result of HIV and AIDS and the rural to urban migration of working-age adults. In countries where HIV and AIDS has decimated the working-age population, grandparents are left with no adult children to care for them in old age, and instead are providing caregiving to orphaned grandchildren and other dependent relatives. The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on older women in Africa includes greater care responsibilities, the violation of housing and property rights, increased exposure to violence, and increased vulnerability to poverty.

In some parts of the world older women are the targets of community vengeance through accusations of practicing witchcraft, and disadvantaged by inheritance laws that prevent them from remaining in their homes if divorced or widowed. The cumulative effects of such practices are poverty and social exclusion.

There is increasing recognition of the fact that the implementation of nationally defined social protection floors may be regarded as an important tool in the fight against the poverty and inequality of all people, including older women. The social protection floors are essential for preventing the marginalization of older women in society and securing their rights. A rights-based approach aimed at protecting women, men and children from risks and vulnerabilities helps to sustain their well-being throughout the lifecycle, guaranteeing access to health care and other basic services, as well as at least a basic level of income security.

We strongly agree that “no one should be left behind” and urge the Commission to

consider the following recommendations:

The “data revolution” advocated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations should be extended to detailed poverty data (including localized data gathering) and disaggregation by age and gender for all Member States of the United Nations;

Anti-poverty measures for older women should begin with girls and continue throughout the life course, ensuring adequate nutrition and health care including reproductive health and violence prevention, education, the elimination of discrimination in access to employment opportunities, social protection schemes across the life-course, and a fair recognition for unpaid work including caregiving;

Governments should consistently work to reduce inequality in income, and improve opportunities for girls and women of all ages;

The Social Protection Floors initiative should be embraced by all countries, adapted to specific national circumstances and consistently implemented at the national level.

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New President of ICSW Elected

December 2015

In December 2015, in accordance with its Constitution and the by-laws that determine the electoral cycle, the International Council on Social Welfare organized the election of a new President to succeed the incumbent President Michael Cichon, whose term of office expires next year. The President is the highest-ranking official in the organization, responsible for strategic thinking and policy direction. According to the results of the vote, Eva Holmberg-Herrström of Sweden was elected President.

The President-elect is well known to the ICSW network: since the year 2000 she has occupied various positions nationally and internationally. In 2007, Ms. Holmberg-Herrström was elected President of ICSW-Sweden, and the year after was elected Regional President of ICSW-Europe, staying in that position for the next four years. Since 2012 and up to the present, she has been serving as a member of the ICSW Management Committee. She will also represent ICSW in the Global Steering Committee for the upcoming 2016 Joint World Conference in Seoul, as she did previously in the context of the 2014 Joint World Conference in Melbourne.

Ms. Holmberg-Herrström was instrumental in organizing the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development in Stockholm in 2012, serving as a focal point and Coordinator of the Conference. Apart from that, she was closely involved in the organization of two world thematic conferences on children in institutions, co-sponsored by Stockholm University and UNICEF and convened in 1999 and 2003. The new President is well familiar with the NGO world — for several years she worked for the Swedish office of “Save the Children”, as a chair of the local chapter in Trelleborg and member of the national board of the organization. Her professional carrier has been strongly linked to education; she taught social work at Stockholm and Gävle Universities. A lawyer by education, she also worked as a Student Councillor and international project manager.

United Nations

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Rights of persons with disabilities must be fully included in the new development framework – UN experts

February 2015

“One billion people – 15 per cent of the world’s population – are persons with disabilities, and their rights cannot be ignored,” a group of United Nations human-rights experts warned the international community at the end of February 2015. Their call was made when the second session of the International Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda came to a close in New York.

“The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the SDGs is fundamental, if we are to achieve sustainable development that is genuinely rights-based. This commitment must also be reflected in the Financing for Development Outcome Document,” said the new UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas Aguilar. In her view whereas people with disabilities were invisible in the MDGs, some promising advances were seen in ensuring that the new development framework is sustainable, inclusive and accessible.

The expert noted that, “as we enter the critical final stages of negotiations on the new SDGs, it is imperative that we maintain the important achievements already attained and that the global community fulfils its promise to guarantee human rights and development for all on an equal basis, including for persons with disabilities.”

A key issue for many people with disabilities

is food security. Worldwide, an estimated 805 million people are chronically undernourished. Since many persons with disabilities live in absolute poverty, these two large populations overlap to a considerable extent, making food security of the utmost importance.

The new UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, called on Member States to give particular attention to the situation of older persons with disabilities in the current negotiations. “Although disability should not be associated with ageing, it is frequent in old age and thus requires resources to ensure access to various services, including education, health-care and social protection and poverty reduction programmes”, she pointed out. In her view, an age-sensitive approach should be incorporated in the new development framework so as to enable all persons with disabilities, including older persons, to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The scope of the post-2015 development goals and the Financing for Development Outcome Document provides a unique opportunity to ensure that persons with disabilities are not just more visible, but are also active participants in the global agenda. This is “an opportunity that should not be missed,” the three experts concluded.

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Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development

July 2015

Broad support for policies and actions that will generate resources in support of the implementation of a new sustainable development agenda emerged from the United Nations third International Conference on Financing for Development convened on 13-16 July in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Conference resulted in the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a comprehensive framework to guide policies that will mobilize financial resources, as well as the launch of new initiatives to finance the achievement of the proposed sustainable development goals, including on social welfare, access to clean energy and greater cooperation on tax issues. The conference in Addis Ababa was the first of three milestones in the year 2015. It will be followed by the Summit on Sustainable Development in New York in September, where countries will adopt a new sustainable development agenda, and the Paris Climate Conference in December.

The framework provided by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda includes more than 100 concrete measures that will, if implemented, result in policies that will enable and direct financial investments by the public and private sectors to meet an array of challenges. Areas of sharp focus include a commitment to direct financial resources to social protection, infrastructure, technology, assistance to the poorest countries, cooperation on tax issues and the need to address illicit financial flows that take resources away from development. Notably, in the Action Agenda, countries committed themselves to pursuing the equal rights and opportunities of women and girls in the economy.

Taxation matters, including those related

to corporate profit-shifting were among the most hotly debated issues during the negotiations preceding the event as well as at the Conference proper. Developing countries and many advocacy groups were pushing for the establishment of an intergovernmental UN body on tax matters, aimed, among other things, at increasing transparency and tackling tax avoidance by transnational companies. These proposals happened to be controversial and even temporarily stalled the negotiations. The final outcome document, to the disappointment of many, rejected the proposal for a new global body. As a result, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will continue in its pre-eminent role in setting global standards on tax matters.

One of the key messages that emerged from the outcome document was that a global framework for financing sustainable development is dependent on domestic mobilization of financial resources through taxation as well as private investment, and not so much through foreign aid.

Some achievements of the Conference on Financing for Development went beyond the agreed negotiated outcome. Six multi-stakeholder roundtables and almost 200 side events resulted in the announcement of new initiatives aimed at implementing the sustainable development agenda. These include:

1. Tax: Three major initiatives were launched in Addis: Tax Inspectors Without Borders (UNDP and OECD); the Addis Tax Initiative (18 developed countries to double official development assistance for tax capacity) and a joint World Bank/IMF initiative. In addition, building on successful networks in Latin America and Africa, a regional network of Asian tax administrators will be convened by UNESCAP.

2. Development banks: Existing national,

regional and multilateral development banks took action, with vows to provide hundreds of billions of dollars in resources over the course of the next several years, in particular for infrastructure and small and medium enterprise financing. These come on top of commitments made by developing and developed countries to set up new development banks

3. Social needs: New financing partnerships were launched to tackle health and nutrition issues, including a \$12 billion Global Financing Facility for women's and children's health; a \$2.5 billion fund by the Gates Foundation and the Islamic Development Bank; and UNITLIFE, an innovative financing mechanism aimed at channelling a portion of the royalties from extractive activities towards nutrition interventions in Africa. In the lead-up to Addis, the G-7 announced its commitment to lift 500 million people out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

4. Environmental concerns: The Sustainable Energy for All initiative launched a report by its Committee on Scaling Up Finance for Sustainable Energy Investments, which identifies the potential for catalysing \$120 billion of incremental annual investment in sustainable energy by 2020. Initiatives to increase access to renewable energy were also announced.

On 27 July the UN General Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the Addis Ababa conference. For the full agreement, see http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.227/L.1

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Debates on ageing and human rights in New York reveal a diplomatic stalemate

August 2015

The sixth working session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 14 to 16 July 2015. As in preceding sessions of the Working Group, which took place in 2011-2014, representatives of Member States, international organizations and civil society organizations came to present views and continue discussions on demographic ageing and its various dimensions and ramifications. The Member States were invited to contribute to the work of the Working Group by presenting "concrete proposals, practical measures, best practices and lessons learned that will contribute to promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of older persons".

During both the general debate and the interactive exchange of views that took place afterwards, delegations emphasized how important it was for the United Nations to continue to address issues related to the protection of the human rights of older persons. When a core point of contention, the feasibility of a new legal instrument to protect the rights of older persons was discussed, previously articulated positions of country groups were basically reiterated. However, during the general debate and particularly during several panel discussions organized as part of the session, many prominent panellists took a much bolder approach, speaking in favour of a new legal instrument in the form of a convention, for instance. It remains to be seen whether this diplomatic stalemate will be overcome in the near future.

As in previous years, delegations from the

European Union and other developed countries (e.g. Australia, Canada) stressed that greater protection of the human rights of older persons could be achieved through the better and more efficient implementation of existing instruments and mechanisms, including the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

Conversely, other delegations, particularly from Latin America, strongly supported by the organizations of civil society and distinguished invited experts, emphasized that the goal of greater protection could only be reached through a specific international legal instrument encompassing all of the human rights of older persons.

In spite of those differences, there continued to be important positions common to all participants, namely, that:

- (a) As a result of the increase in the life expectancy and the ageing of the world population, older persons are key actors in our societies from the economic, social and political points of view. That requires a change of paradigm: older persons should not be considered passive subjects who only receive assistance from the State, but should rather be addressed as active participants in the life of society who should be able to fully exercise their human rights and be treated with dignity and respect;
- (b) The existing mechanisms designed to guarantee the full exercise of the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of older people have flaws, either because there are deficiencies in terms of their implementation, as some States maintain, or because there is a normative gap at the international level that must be filled through the adoption of a universal, legally binding instrument to address issues such as ill treatment, exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination and the satisfaction of the basic needs of older persons. That is why the mandate of the

Working Group is of special relevance and validity, as it is the only intergovernmental mechanism within the framework of the United Nations established to discuss how best to increase the protection of the human rights of older people.

The mandate of the Working Group, itself a political issue, was reaffirmed. Recalling once again that the mandate has been entrusted to the Working Group by the General Assembly, under GA resolution 65/182, several participants stressed that the Working Group should dedicate itself to strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons by examining the current international framework of human rights and determining the possible deficiencies of that framework with regard to the situation of older persons and the best way to improve such deficiencies. That improvement could be achieved through the study, where applicable, of the viability of new instruments and measures. At the same time, part of the above mandate is also what the General Assembly decided earlier, namely, that the Working Group should "consider proposals for an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, based on the holistic approach in the work carried out in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination, as well as gender equality and the empowerment of women". In addition, the request was addressed to the Working Group to "present to the Assembly, at the earliest possible date, a proposal containing, inter alia, the main elements that should be included in an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, which are not currently addressed sufficiently by existing mechanisms and therefore require further international protection".

The fact that different approaches to the

feasibility of such a new instrument have been prevalent among the delegations resulted in disagreements on GA resolution 67/139, which was adopted not by consensus but by a recorded vote. However, as noted by the Chair in his summary, that fact “does not mean that it has less value than resolutions adopted by consensus.. Therefore, beyond any doubt, the provisions of resolution 67/139 are part and parcel of the mandate of the Working Group”. One could say that this important procedural interpretation provided a helping hand and a boost to the supporters of the new international instrument.

Highlighting some of the achievements during the six sessions that the Group has held since 2011, the delegates agreed that it was important to revisit key aspects of the situation of the human rights of older persons worldwide, also taking note of developments in regional multilateral processes on the elaboration of legal instruments. In that regard, they were informed of two crucial developments: the adoption in June 2015 of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons and the forthcoming adoption by the African Union of a protocol on the rights of older persons.

As noted with appreciation this Working Group was the origin of several important initiatives. For example, as a result of the discussions, the Human Rights Council established a special mechanism on the topic, and for the second year in a row the delegates have had the opportunity to interact with the Independent Expert, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, whose participation was highly appreciated. Given that the mandate of the Independent Expert is complementary to the mandate of the Working Group, it was noted that there is no superposition or duplication. During the current session several delegations reiterated concrete proposals to address

the gaps in implementation, information and monitoring that the Working Group had identified during previous sessions. Among those proposals the following could be mentioned: (a) That treaty bodies should incorporate in their respective mandates the issue of the human rights of older persons, which would entail seeking information from States for inclusion in their periodic reviews in order to facilitate specific recommendations in the concluding observations of the treaty bodies and the highlighting of issues related to ageing in their general observations; (b) That the special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council consider issues related to the human rights of older people in their mandates; (c) That Member States make the best use of the universal periodic review to address issues related to ageing; (d) That funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies systematically include targets and indicators relating to older people; (e) That Member States include language relating to the rights of older persons in resolutions and documents of the relevant intergovernmental bodies; (f) That the rights of older persons be highlighted in the post-2015 development agenda. In that respect, participants in the Working Group had the opportunity to exchange views on the importance of designing adequate indicators that are methodologically sound, relevant, measurable, timely, accessible and easy to interpret. The indicators should encompass all population groups and be age-sensitive and be based on disaggregated data, and identify the indicators that are more suited to measure specifics relating to older persons; (g) That a comprehensive compilation of all applicable legal instruments be made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Summing up the debate and drawing attention to the above, very concrete

proposals, the Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Mateo Estrémé (Argentina), made a powerful push for the elaboration of the new legal instrument such as a convention, recommending that the Working Group forward proposals for action by the General Assembly and other relevant bodies. He eloquently articulated his position as follows: "I hope that delegations will be open to considering those issues when we negotiate the specific resolution on ageing at the seventieth session of the Assembly. Last year, in my closing remarks, I invited the Working Group to work in two parallel tracks: one, to continue identifying the gaps of implementation, and two, to start working on the elements of a new international legal instrument. This year we have received a number of proposals containing concrete elements for an international legal instrument for the protection of the human rights of older persons. Those contributions and others that we might receive in the upcoming months could constitute the basis for our future work on a possible legal instrument. I am fully aware that there are countries that would not like to talk about a convention, and I use the word "convention" deliberately because I am convinced that we should get used to saying it in this Working Group without misgivings. At the same time, I am also aware that an increasing number of delegations and a unanimous and clear voice coming from civil society are requesting us to undertake the task of elaborating a convention. Can we continue turning a deaf ear to those calls? Can we ignore that part of our mandate? My response to both questions is no. A clear no, simple and without ambiguities. That is why I invite you all to start working on the text of a legal instrument. We can debate whether this is the most fitting format in which to perform the negotiations, or if we should establish a special committee, an ad hoc working group or some other format. We can debate the

modalities of such negotiations. We can debate the timing of the negotiations and the inputs that could be used as a basis for our future work. What we cannot do is continue saying that the United Nations is not the place to negotiate a specific convention on the rights of older persons. The Organization has negotiated all of the human rights multilateral legal instruments that are currently in force. The approach we used to build this impressive human rights structure was progressive, but from the beginning the ultimate goal was to guarantee that the protection and promotion of human rights is for all human beings, without any kind of distinctions. This, in my view, is the next natural step in the long path that began with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. I invite you to undertake this collective effort in favour of the more than one billion older persons of today and the more than six billion older persons of tomorrow. This cause should unite us and not divide us. We did it in the past; we can do it again now.

Before concluding, I would like to refer to the role of civil society and its participation in the proceedings of the Working Group. You have conveyed a clear message to us. I would like to assure you that we have heard your positions and that we have taken note of your request to start the process of negotiating a convention. We will continue to interact with, receive suggestions from and seek advice from non-governmental organizations working with older persons. I would like to reiterate my suggestion that representatives of the civil society of our countries and regions be included in our national delegations. In my opinion, the Working Group has clearly determined that multiple instances of violations of the human rights of older persons exist everywhere. Such violations should not be accepted or tolerated. We must now decide on how to translate that

commitment into a more adequate framework for international protection.”

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Millennium Development Goals in their complexity: the final UN report

August 2015

Development Goals has produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. The final MDG-2015 report submitted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs documents the 15-year effort to achieve these aspirational goals, highlighting the many successes across the globe, but also acknowledging the remaining gaps.

One of the key conclusions of the report is that by putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs have reshaped decision-making in developed and developing countries alike. The framework of eight goals was accompanied by practical steps at the national level, helping to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, make inroads against hunger, enable more girls to attend school than ever before and protect our planet. The joint effort of all stakeholders generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanized public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals.

The present report presents data collected by UN agencies and other partners that summarize the MDGs-related achievements. First and foremost, *extreme poverty* has declined significantly over the last two decades. In 1990, nearly half of the population in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day; that proportion dropped to 14 per cent in 2015. Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015.

Some other achievements are equally impressive.

For example, the *primary school net enrolment rate* in the developing regions has reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000. The number of out-of-school children of primary school-age worldwide has fallen by almost half to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000. Many *more girls are now in school* compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target of eliminating gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. *Women now make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside the agricultural sector*, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.

The *global under-five mortality rate* has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015. Despite population growth in the developing regions, the number of deaths of children under five has declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to almost 6 million in 2015 globally. Since 1990, the *maternal mortality ratio* has declined by 45 per cent worldwide, and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000. In South Asia, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 64 per cent between 1990 and 2013, and in sub-Saharan Africa it fell by 49 per cent. More than 71 per cent of births were assisted by skilled health personnel globally in 2014, an increase from 59 per cent in 1990.

New *HIV infections* fell by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million. By June 2014, 13.6 million people living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) globally, an immense increase from just 800,000 in 2003. ART averted 7.6 million deaths from AIDS between 1995 and 2013. Over 6.2 million malaria deaths have been averted between 2000 and 2015, primarily

deaths of children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37 per cent and the mortality rate by 58 per cent.

Ozone-depleting substances have been virtually eliminated since 1990, and the ozone layer is expected to recover by the middle of this century. Terrestrial and marine protected areas in many regions have increased substantially since 1990. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the coverage of terrestrial protected areas rose from 8.8 per cent to 23.4 per cent between 1990 and 2014.

In 2015, 91 per cent of the global population is using *improved drinking water* sources, compared to 76 per cent in 1990. Of the 2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water since 1990, 1.9 billion gained access to piped drinking water on premises. Over half of the global population (58 per cent) now enjoys this higher level of service.

Official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2014, reaching \$135.2 billion. In 2014, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom continued to exceed the United Nations official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. In 2014, 79 per cent of the imports from developing to developed countries were admitted duty-free, up from 65 per cent in 2000. The proportion of external debt service to export revenue in developing countries fell from 12 per cent in 2000 to 3 per cent in 2013. As of 2015, 95 per cent of the world's population is covered by a mobile-cellular signal. The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions has grown almost tenfold in the last 15 years, from 738 million in 2000 to over 7 billion in 2015. Internet penetration has grown from just

over 6 per cent of the world's population in 2000 to 43 per cent in 2015. As a result, 3.2 billion people are linked to a global network of content and applications.

Despite many successes, says the report, the plight of the poorest and most vulnerable people cannot be overlooked. Millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. Targeted efforts will be needed to reach the most vulnerable people.

Gender inequality persists. Women continue to face discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making. Women are also more likely to live in poverty than men. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ratio of women to men in poor households increased from 108 women for every 100 men in 1997 to 117 women for every 100 men in 2012, despite declining poverty rates for the whole region. Women remain at a disadvantage in the labour market. Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to only half of working-age women. Women earn 24 per cent less than men globally. In 85 per cent of the 92 countries with data on unemployment rates broken down by the level of education for the years 2012–2013, women with advanced education have higher rates of unemployment than men with similar levels of education. Despite continuous progress, today the world still has far to go towards equal gender representation in private and public decision-making.

Big gaps exist between the poorest and richest households. Between rural and urban areas in the developing regions, children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are more than twice as likely to be stunted as those from the wealthiest 20 per cent. Children in the poorest households are four times as likely to be out of school as those

in the richest households. Under-five mortality rates are almost twice as high for children in the poorest households as for children in the richest. In rural areas, only 56 per cent of births are attended by skilled health personnel, compared with 87 per cent in urban areas. About 16 per cent of the rural population do not use improved drinking water sources, compared to 4 per cent of the urban population. About 50 per cent of people living in rural areas lack improved sanitation facilities, compared to only 18 per cent of people in urban areas.

Climate change and environmental degradation undermine the progress achieved, and poor people suffer the most. Global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by over 50 per cent since 1990. Addressing the unabated rise in greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting likely impacts on climate change, such as altered ecosystems, weather extremes and risks to society, remains an urgent, critical challenge for the global community. An estimated 5.2 million hectares of forest were lost in 2010, an area about the size of Costa Rica. Overexploitation of marine fish stocks led to declines in the percentage of stocks within safe biological limits, down from 90 per cent in 1974 to 71 per cent in 2011. Species are declining overall in numbers and distribution. This means that they are increasingly threatened with extinction. Water scarcity affects 40 per cent of people in the world and is projected to increase. Poor people's livelihoods are more directly tied to natural resources, and as they often live in the most vulnerable areas, they suffer the most from environmental degradation.

Conflicts remain the biggest threat to human development. By the end of 2014, conflicts had forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes—the highest level recorded since the Second World War. If these people were a nation, they would make up the twenty-fourth largest country in the

world. Every day, 42,000 people on average are forcibly displaced and compelled to seek protection as a result of conflicts, almost four times the 2010 number of 11,000. Children accounted for half of the global refugee population under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2014. In countries affected by conflict, the proportion of out-of-school children increased from 30 per cent in 1999 to 36 per cent in 2012. Fragile and conflict-affected countries typically have the highest poverty rates.

Millions of poor people still live in poverty and hunger, without access to basic services. Despite enormous progress, even today, about 800 million people still live in extreme poverty and suffer from hunger. Over 160 million children under age of five have inadequate height for their age owing to insufficient food. Currently, 57 million children of primary school age are not in school. Almost half of global workers are still working in vulnerable conditions, rarely enjoying the benefits associated with decent work. About 16,000 children die each day before celebrating their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable causes. The maternal mortality ratio in the developing regions is 14 times higher than in the developed regions. Just half of pregnant women in the developing regions receive the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits. Only an estimated 36 per cent of the 31.5 million people living with HIV in the developing regions were receiving ART in 2013. In 2015, one in three people (2.4 billion) still use unimproved sanitation facilities, including 946 million people who still practise open defecation. Today, over 880 million people are estimated to be living in slum-like conditions in the developing world's cities. With global action, these numbers can be turned around.

The global community stands at a historic crossroads in 2015, concludes the UN report.

As the MDGs are approaching their deadline, the world has the opportunity to build on their successes and momentum, while also embracing new ambitions for the future we want. A bold new agenda is emerging to transform the world to better meet human needs and the requirements of economic transformation, while protecting the environment, ensuring peace and realizing human rights. At the core of this agenda is sustainable development, which must become a living reality for every person on the planet.

For more information please go to:
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20%28July%201%29.pdf

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World population projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050

July 2015

World population projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050

The current world population of 7.3 billion is expected to reach 8.5 billion by 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to a new UN DESA report, "World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision", launched on 29 July 2015 in New York.

Most of the projected increase in the world's population can be attributed to a short list of high-fertility countries, mainly in Africa, or countries with already large populations. During 2015-2050, half of the world's population growth is expected to be concentrated in nine countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America (USA),

Indonesia and Uganda, listed according to the size of their contribution to the total growth.

Shifts in the current population rankings

China and India remain the two largest countries in the world in terms of population, each with more than 1 billion people, representing 19 and 18 % of the world's population, respectively. But by 2022, the population of India is expected to surpass that of China.

Currently, among the ten largest countries in the world, one is in Africa (Nigeria), five are in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan), two are in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico), one is in North America (USA), and one is in Europe (Russian Federation). Of these, Nigeria's population, currently the seventh largest in the world, is growing the most rapidly. Consequently, the population of Nigeria is projected to surpass that of the United States by about 2050, at which point it would become the third largest country in the world. By 2050, six countries are expected to exceed 300 million: China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the USA.

Growing population in Africa

With the highest rate of population growth, Africa is expected to account for more than half of the world's population growth between 2015 and 2050.

During this period, the populations of 28 African countries are projected to more than double, and by 2100, ten African countries are projected to have increased by at least a factor of five: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

While there is always some degree of uncertainty surrounding any projection, the

large number of young people in Africa, who will reach adulthood in the coming years and start having children of their own, ensures that the region will play a central role in shaping the size and distribution of the world's population over the coming decades.

Slower world population growth due to lower fertility rates

Future population growth is highly dependent on the path that future fertility will take, as relatively small changes in fertility behaviour, when projected over decades, can generate large differences in total population. In recent years, fertility has declined in virtually all areas of the world, even in Africa, where fertility levels remain the highest of any major area.

Ageing population growing rapidly

The slowdown in population growth, due to the overall reduction in fertility, causes the proportion of older persons to increase over time. Globally, the number of persons aged 60 or above is expected to more than double by 2050 and more than triple by 2100.

A significant ageing of the population in the next several decades is projected for most regions of the world, starting with Europe, where 34 % of the population is projected to be over 60 years old by 2050. In Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia, the population will be transformed from having 11% to 12% of people over 60 years old today to more than 25% by 2050. Africa has the youngest age distribution of any major area, but it is also projected to age rapidly, with the population aged 60 years or over rising from 5% today to 9% by 2050.

Higher life expectancy and the contribution of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Life expectancy at birth has increased significantly in the least developed countries in recent years. The six-year average gain in life expectancy among the poorest countries, from 56 years in 2000-2005 to 62 years in 2010-2015, is roughly double the increase recorded for the rest of the world. While significant differences in life expectancy across major areas and income groups are projected to continue, they are expected to diminish significantly by 2045-2050.

Progress in reducing under-five mortality, one of the MDG targets, has been very significant and wide-reaching in recent years. Between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015, under-five mortality fell by more than 30% in 86 countries, of which 13 countries saw a decline of more than 50%. In the same time period, the rate decreased by more than 20% in 156 countries.

Populations in many parts of the world are still young, creating an opportunity for countries to capture a demographic dividend

Populations in many regions are still young. In Africa, children under age 15 account for 41% of the population in 2015 and young persons aged 15 to 24 account for a further 19%. Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, which have seen greater declines in fertility, have smaller percentages of children (26% and 24%, respectively) and similar percentages of youth (17% and 16%, respectively). In total, these three regions are home to 1.7 billion children and 1.1 billion young persons in 2015.

These children and young people are future workers and parents who can help to build a brighter future for their countries. Providing them with health care, education and employment opportunities, particularly in the poorest countries and groups, will be a critical focus of the new sustainable development agenda.

For more information please go to:
http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf

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UN adopts landmark resolution on principles for sovereign debt restructuring

October 2015

On 10 September 2015, in a pivotal decision and by a large vote, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled 'Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes' (resolution 69/319). The resolution contains nine key principles that should be respected when a country undertakes the restructuring of sovereign debt. There were 136 votes in favor, six against and 41 abstentions in the vote on the resolution, split largely along developed vs. developing country lines. The NGO community vigorously supported the resolution, seeing it as a way towards better prevention and resolution of sovereign debt crises. In a joint letter to the EU Ambassadors sent before the vote, NGO representatives stated that "we are particularly concerned by the ability of vulture funds to sabotage debt restructuring processes through aggressive litigation. The lack of an effective debt restructuring framework is increasing the burden and costs of debt restructuring to the public because of bailout loans being used to pay off private creditors".

While the resolution is non-binding, it is widely seen, given its political weight, as a significant step forward in supporting countries that have to restructure their debt and face creditors. In particular the resolution specifies that "a sovereign State

has the right . . . to design its macroeconomic policy, including restructuring its sovereign debt, which should not be frustrated or impeded by any abusive measures." The resolution further states that "good faith by both the sovereign debtor and all its creditors would entail their engagement in constructive sovereign debt restructuring workout negotiations and other stages of the process with the aim of a prompt and durable re-establishment of debt sustainability and debt servicing, as well as achieving the support of a critical mass of creditors through a constructive dialogue regarding the restructuring terms." The principles of transparency, impartiality, equitable treatment, sovereign immunity, legitimacy, sustainability, and majority restructuring are also listed as essential elements in the debt restructuring process.

For more details, please go to:

http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a69L84_en.pdf

International Meetings

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Interagency cooperation on social protection: SPIAC-B meeting in New York

March 2015

The 6th meeting of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) took place on 3 February 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York. Co-chaired by the ILO and the World Bank, it was attended by 53 participants representing 28 international organizations, bilateral development agencies, social partners and civil society organizations. The agenda included the following key items: (1) Social Protection (SP) targets in the Sustainable Development Goals: measuring and monitoring progress; (2) Cost of the implementation of the SP outcomes and methods for financing; (3) Supporting the achievement of the SP targets: tools and country operations.

The general discussion revealed a strong appreciation that SPIAC-B members had come a long way towards building a rapport in a higher spirit of cooperation. The implementation of the Post 2015 sustainable

development agenda represents an important opportunity to enhance policy coherence and improve cooperation and coordination of social protection actions at the global, regional and national levels. A clear mandate expressed in target 1.31 has been given to the international community on the extension of the coverage of social protection systems, including social protection floors. It was agreed that, as the leading global issues-based coalition on social protection, the SPIAC-B is well positioned to provide support in the framing, monitoring and implementation of these aspects of the

new agenda. The UN system, including international financial institutions (IFIs), should be ready to act together in delivering on the SDGs from their onset.

In implementing target 1.3, it would be important to focus on broad and systemic social protection programmes that effectively deliver “access to adequate and predictable cash benefits in case of need and access to health services” rather than short-term social protection projects delivering cash transfers for a limited group and over a limited time period (a “safety nets” approach).

The issue of global indicators was discussed at length. As stressed by many participants, possible global indicators to frame the protection target should address both coverage and adequacy of social protection systems and floors. The SP coverage indicator should measure effective coverage (i.e. the number of persons receiving a benefit/service) disaggregated by sex, with breakdowns by children, unemployed, old age, people with disabilities, pregnant women/newborns, work injury victims, the poor and vulnerable and other relevant factors to the extent possible. The indicator operates at the system level, i.e. how many persons receive benefits and are covered in case of need across all programmes and schemes, including social assistance and social insurance. The SP adequacy indicator would measure the social protection transfers as a percentage of income or the poverty line and capture the impact of social protection on poverty reduction.

While administrative government-supplied data on social protection schemes remains the primary information source for the coverage indicator, household survey data is fundamental to measuring adequacy and to calibrate the overall global assessment of

coverage performance. It was agreed that global data-bases containing relevant data to monitor the SP target should be enhanced.

A limited set of global indicators could be complemented by a much more refined dashboard of national indicators, including also impact, efficiency and quality social protection indicators at the country level. Participants felt that it was of utmost importance to strengthen national statistical capacities for the measurement of progress towards the SDGs at the country level and to feed global data sets. It was agreed that the SPIAC-B secretariat would provide updates on proposals for global social protection indicators.

SPIAC-B members strongly called for a systematic change in the language used in various documents on SP, emphasizing that social protection spending is an “investment” rather than a “cost”. It was noted that “affordability” is often in the eye of the beholder and is determined politically, depending upon prevalent perceptions. All in all, political commitment drives the creation of fiscal space.

A proposal to establish a Social Protection Floors Fund/Facility to support social protection capacity-building and start-up in the least developed countries was controversial. Supporting it, some members proposed further discussion, but others disagreed, expressing concerns regarding a proliferation of vertically-siloed funds and calling for more integrated approaches.

Broadening “fiscal space” was also addressed. While there is a variety of ways to create fiscal space, ranging from the reprioritization of resources, increasing tax-collection efficiency, using reserves, re-negotiating debt, reducing subsidies, fighting illicit financial flows, to raising taxes, and so on, there is strong competition with other

sectors over the funds generated through any of these measures. At least within the domestic social portfolio, integrated approaches should be developed to enhance synergies and complementarities.

In the discussion on removing subsidies, the importance of carefully managing the transition by putting adequate compensatory measures in place (e.g. through an increase in the minimum wage, cash transfers, public transport costs, etc.) before removing the subsidy was emphasized. The present low level of fuel prices presents an important window of opportunity for governments to enhance fiscal space and gradually convert subsidies into social protection transfers.

A holistic approach to social protection financing should be considered, taking into consideration a financing mix that includes contributory and non-contributory programmes. For contributory schemes, the importance of ensuring compliance and reducing tax evasion so as to relieve pressure on the Social Protection budget was stressed.

The mobilization of private-sector funding, including from corporations, foundations and the non-profit sector should be considered as part of the arsenal of social protection resource mobilization strategies. In the discussion on the role of the private sector, it is important to also consider the supply side (the role of the private sector as service providers) and not only think about the demand side.

The discussions of financing should be linked to measures to reduce fragmentation and improve efficiency and quality, while minimizing leakages and errors. A systems perspective should be adopted, including adequate identification systems, benefit payments and eligibility control mechanisms. The proper administration of social

protection schemes is a real investment and can produce substantive gains in the short and long run. It was suggested by the members that the organization of a high-level conference/event on financing for social protection should be on the agenda of intergovernmental deliberations, as it could provide evidence and present concrete solutions to support the implementation of social protection SDG target 1.3.

It was stressed that development cooperation in supporting the implementation of social protection outcomes should always be guided by national priorities and constraints. International tools and approaches should be flexible and adaptable to national circumstances. Regional bodies also play an important catalytic role in translating global policies and agreements into agenda provisions that resonate with national aspirations. These bodies should be informed and supported accordingly.

There are multiple social protection entry-points at the country level, since programmes can be spread across various government ministries, including agriculture, family, social affairs, social development, employment or others. It was agreed that SPIAC-B members therefore need to act as connectors for each other to enable a coordinated approach. The participants briefed each other on the current SP-related activities of their respective organizations. The importance of taking back evidence from country work to global debates and the UN system (Commission for Social Development and other fora) was also underscored.

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Asian African Summit 2015 convened in Indonesia

April 2015

Representatives from 100 Asian and African countries gathered in Indonesia for the Asian-African Summit 2015 to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Asian-African conference known as Bandung Conference.

Welcome speeches were given by leaders of Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Egypt and other representatives of African and Asian countries. Indonesian president Joko Widodo called for Asian and African countries to work towards developing prosperity and forging partnerships based on equality. The conference highlighted cooperation among countries and stressing that the goals must be materialized through cooperation. In order to push the development agenda in the South, the participation of Asian-African countries in the world's multilateral system is necessary.

The representatives committed to revitalizing their partnership; achieving sustainable development was deemed crucial. Discussions covered advancing cooperation in a wide range of fields from combating terrorism to the promotion of tourism, investment and transportation.

April 24 has been declared Asian-African Day to celebrate solidarity, cooperation and partnership aimed at promoting world peace and prosperity. Three key documents approved during the summit were: the Bandung Message to Strengthen South-South Cooperation, the Declaration on Reinvigorating the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership and the Declaration on Palestine.

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Conference of young parliamentarians speaks up on major challenges facing youth worldwide

May 2015

The alienation and radicalization of young people, as well as a quest for more effective policies to solve a range of youth-related problems, became some of the key issues under discussion in Tokyo on 27-28 May at a major international conference of young parliamentarians convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Japanese Parliament.

The Conference made a series of recommendations aimed at addressing some of the biggest challenges facing the world's 3.5 billion youth population. These include unemployment, discrimination and conflict. During the conference deliberations, the young parliamentarians affirmed their belief that, despite disillusionment, apathy, political disengagement and unrest, the world's youth aspired to live in democratic, peaceful and prosperous societies, and their inclusion in decision-making was critical.

The Conference underlined the need for a comprehensive rights-based framework for action against radicalization, such as guaranteed free education, including anti-violence and conflict-management programs, laws to criminalize hate-speech, and the involvement of young people in all decisions relating to counter-terrorism. It also called for policies to curb the alienation of youth, including the creation of targeted opportunities to contribute to campaigns, programs and projects at the community level.

On another key area of concern – youth unemployment – the Conference

recommended wide-ranging new action, including quotas to strengthen the equality of opportunities in the job market. It called for education to be better adapted to the needs of the job market, youth empowerment initiatives in business, better access to loans for young entrepreneurs, and action to ensure that the rights of young migrant workers and first-time workers are respected.

The young MPs stressed the need for adolescent-friendly health policies, for supporting youth access to sports and arts, for combating hate messages in the media and on social media. The Conference emphasized the need to include young people in UN peace-building missions, cut military budgets and invest in young people's participation in peace-building so as to ensure that they are a key part of the solutions to conflicts and are not seen as perpetrators.

On climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Conference called on the IPU and the UN to work resolutely to bring a parliamentary dimension to global efforts to build risk-resilient societies. It recommended that this should be done through means such as the Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction, agreed in Japan earlier this year, and the global pact on climate change.

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Interagency collaboration on social protection: heated discussions, some practical outcomes and a quest for new vigor

by Sergei Zelenev

November 2015

The SPIAC-B, or the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board, held its seventh meeting in New York on 24 November 2015. The participants covered a broad range of political and technical issues. This meeting was co-chaired by senior representatives from the ILO and the World Bank. ICSW is a member of the Board and has been an active participant since the beginning.

The participants agreed that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 and the preparatory process leading to the Agenda acted in favour of the social protection discourse, putting it on both the national as well as the international map. The discussions also brought to light the positive role of the social protection programs in eradicating poverty and also in the areas of health care, the empowerment of women, decent work and inclusive growth. The Social Protection Floor Initiative endorsed by the United Nations was especially lauded at the meeting as an important tool for providing universal coverage.

The participants evaluated ongoing programs conceived by various agencies with regards to the 2030 Agenda and also explored ways to enhance intergovernmental collaboration in the long run. Addressing the Board, the Executive Director of the ICSW advocated for a high-level political 'push' at the international level to uphold social protection

as a stand-alone issue. The adoption of a dedicated UN resolution on social protection, which would reinforce ILO Recommendation No. 202, could become proof of the commitment of the international community to this important policy goal.

This proposal was met with a positive response by the participants. The role of the civil-society organizations in this regard is crucial. The representative of the International Trade Union Confederation suggested that the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors should be more closely involved in the Board work, especially with regards to the ongoing work of both the ILO as well as the World Bank on social protection assessment.

The participants also brought to the fore their plans and strategies on supporting the implementation of the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development convened at Addis Ababa. The focus was on creating fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including the social protection floors.

The issues of capacity-building and knowledge-sharing were also discussed at the meeting. The development of the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) Tools, designed to create specific machinery that could help governments to develop efficient social protection systems, including by analyzing current gaps and providing cost estimates, received much attention. The tools are still under development, given the complexities in implementing them in different contexts and countries.

Overall, strengthening social protection capacity received much attention. The European Union Social Protection Systems Programme (EU-SPS), co-financed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Government of Finland, was launched at the meeting. Assisting the low- and middle-income

countries in building sustainable and inclusive social protection systems was the thrust of the new programme which was discussed. This will be implemented from 2015-2018 and will be carried out in collaboration with national and regional social protection authorities, think-tanks and expert institutions in ten countries (Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, Vietnam and Zambia).

Observations and Comments

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Strengthening results management: The UK Approach to Delivering Impact in Development Cooperation

June 2015

The assessment of the effectiveness of foreign-provided assistance in the context of national development efforts is a task that is far from trivial. We present here the findings of the UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI), released in mid-June 2015, regarding activities and approaches to delivery impact of the key British institution responsible for international assistance — the UK Department For International Development (DFID).

United Kingdom aid, at its best, makes a real and positive difference to the lives and livelihoods of poor people around the world. Ensuring the best possible performance across a large and multifaceted aid programme is, however, a complex management challenge. This report reviews ICAI's 43 reports over four years and looks at how well DFID ensures positive, long-term, transformative change across its work.

Strengthening results management has been a key priority for DFID in recent years. The department has recognised the importance of demonstrating its results to Parliament and the public and has worked to ensure that value for money and accountability are built into its business processes. This focus has become known as

the results agenda.

We found that the results agenda has helped to bring greater discipline in the measurement of results and greater accountability for the delivery of UK aid. These achievements have, however, involved some important trade-offs. Some of DFID's tools and processes seem to favour results over their quality.

DFID's programmes have an average programme length of just three years. Transformational impact will, however, often be possible only over several programme cycles, and this should be recognised explicitly in programme design. This is particularly the case in conflict-affected and fragile states.

Development programmes rarely achieve results in isolation. Coherence across programming is a key condition for maximising impact. DFID is still relatively weak at managing complex portfolios at the country or sector level, where impact on the ground needs to be aligned better with institutional progress and top-down policy change. We see this as an important area for improvement, in order to achieve mutually reinforcing results.

In order to maximise and make sustainable the impact which DFID aims to achieve, it also needs to ensure high-quality engagement with the intended beneficiaries and manage risk more proactively and transparently.

Graham Ward, ICAI Chief Commissioner, said: "The results agenda has certainly pushed DFID and its partners to focus more consistently and rigorously on the delivery of results. We are concerned, however, that the emphasis is on short-term, measurable results, over the more complex challenge of achieving long-term, transformative impact.

We are in favour of rigorous approaches to results management and clear lines of accountability, but we believe that more can be done with DFID's tools and processes to incentivise the right priorities and behaviours."

Lead Commissioner Diana Good said, "At our encouragement, DFID has increased its interaction and we welcome that approach. But this needs to be enhanced throughout the programme process. Even when working with central governments on policies and institutions, DFID should keep a clear line of sight to the intended beneficiaries. DFID and its government counterparts are a means to the end of serving the poor and should not presume to know their best interests and needs. Integrating the poor and their community structures into programming and wider governance systems is vital."

ICAI has made seven recommendations to strengthen its results management processes:

Recommendation 1: At the departmental level, DFID should develop a Results Framework that better reflects the range of impacts that it seeks to achieve, capturing not just the breadth of its engagement but also its transformative impact, including successes in institution-building and policy influence. To do so, it will need to look beyond quantitative indicators towards other ways of capturing the impact of UK aid.

Recommendation 2: At the country portfolio level, DFID's Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic should pay more attention to longer-term change processes, both looking backwards to understand the trajectory of achievements and forward towards potential long-term paths out of poverty and fragility. Its operational plans should contain stronger links between the analysis and programming choices, with more emphasis on how different

programmes and sectors interact to produce wider impact.

Recommendation 3: At the programme level, DFID's business cases should be more explicit about the route towards long-term impact, including policy and institutional change, setting out the building blocks and pathways required to achieve transformative impact over time. This includes looking beyond the life of the programme to the follow-up actions required and exploring how to work with other programmes and initiatives to achieve mutually reinforcing results.

Recommendation 4: Annual reviews should include an assessment of the assumptions and risks set out in the logframe and theory of change. DFID should work to tighten feedback and learning loops, to enable real-time adjustment of programmes.

Recommendation 5: DFID should engage with intended beneficiaries throughout the programme cycle, in design, delivery and monitoring. DFID should anchor its interventions in sustainable community structures that are integrated into wider governance systems.

Recommendation 6: In its ongoing review of its risk management processes, DFID should explore how to achieve an explicit and balanced risk profile in its country programmes, including high-risk programming with the potential for transformative impact. High-risk interventions should be identified as such from the outset, with the rationale for action clearly stated, and then be subject to appropriate risk management arrangements.

Recommendation 7: In its procurement processes, DFID should carefully consider both the merits of transferring outcome risk

to implementers, particularly in high-risk environments, and the likely impact on its objectives, its supplier base and its overall costs. It should work towards clear guidance on what forms of results-based contracting to use in which circumstances, so as to avoid needless rigidity in programming and unhelpful incentives that do not enhance actual impact.

For details please go to:

<http://icaei.independent.gov.uk/2015/06/11/>

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Voting behaviour and the influence of social protection in South Africa

by Leila Patel, Kim Baldry & Marianne S. Ulriksen

September 2015

Social protection, particularly the provision of cash transfers, has expanded in many countries across the Global South. In South Africa, close to one third of the population benefits from a cash-transfer programme (called social grants). There is often an assumption that the receipt of grants affects people's electoral choice – even that grants can buy votes. However, there is little research on whether social protection, as widespread as it has become, actually plays a role in people's voting behaviour.

Consequently, the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) and the Department of Politics, both situated at the University of Johannesburg, did a survey study to investigate citizens' views on social protection policies and to study whether receiving a government grant affects their voting behaviour. The survey sought to assess people's knowledge of their rights, their views on social grants and their intended voting behaviour in the upcoming national election. The survey was conducted

at three research sites (two urban and one rural) in South Africa and included 1,204 respondents. In the following, we briefly describe South Africa's social protection system and report on some of the findings from the study.

Social cash transfers in South Africa

Today, South Africa has a progressive Constitution that guarantees civil, political and socio-economic rights. The Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution, affords citizens the right to a minimum status and standard of living, including the right to education, health care, social assistance and housing. Those rights are envisaged to be realised progressively, so that priority is given to meeting the needs of the least-advantaged persons. Thus, South Africa has a rights-based approach to social protection, and the expansion of non-contributory assistance for the poor and vulnerable groups in the form of social grants is an important tool in poverty reduction.

While the Constitution protects the individual's right to social security and specifically to social assistance, if a person is unable to support themselves and their dependents, that right is subject to limitations, such as the availability of resources and the gradual realisation of the right. That means that the types of grants, the nature of the benefit and/or the level of the benefit could change, as long as the provision of social protection continues to be realised. In other words, a political party could make changes to the current social grant system.

The cash transfer programme in South Africa has its roots going back to the 1920s and 1930s, when means-tested grants were introduced for the elderly, for people with disabilities and for children. During most of the apartheid era, social grants were racially

differentiated, such that whites received grants at higher values than did other groups. When democracy was introduced, the value of the grants was equalised across racial groups. However, the grants for children were in practice implemented in unfair ways, and the Child Support Grant (CSG) was introduced in order to reach the most vulnerable children. Currently, more than 16 million of the over 51 million South Africans benefit from social grants. The grant with by far the most extensive reach is the CSG, received by over 11 million grant recipients (the CSG is given to the adult caregiver of the child). Social grants are state-funded, and spending on them is estimated to amount to 3.1% of GDP. Given that there are over 25 million registered voters, a significant number of South African voters are beneficiaries of social grants.

Of the 1204 South African citizens over the age of 18 who completed the survey, 38 percent reported that they received a social grant, most commonly the Child Support Grant (25 percent). Eighty-one percent indicated that they intended to vote in the next election, and just under two thirds of the respondents said that they intended to vote for the ruling ANC.

Although the respondents viewed social grants positively and were aware of their socio-economic rights, they were less confident about the long-term continuation of the social grant system. The findings suggest a relationship between citizens' knowledge of their rights, their views on social grants and their intended voting behaviour. However, the results do not imply that social grant receipt is the main factor determining citizens' electoral choice, as we will discuss in the following.

Social protection and voting behaviour

In considering the possible relationship

between receiving social grants and voting behaviour, the survey data was analysed in various ways. Initial analyses indicated that, whereas there was no statistical difference between grant recipients and non-recipients in their electoral choice (what party they would vote for), grant recipients were more likely than non-recipients to vote for a party that 'provides grants for households like theirs' (65 percent and 56 percent respectively).

Further analyses that compare many possible reasons for voting behaviour indicated that, although grant receipt had some influence in how people vote, it was not a driving factor. Instead, not surprisingly, a range of factors determined voting behaviour (i.e. the likelihood of voting for the ruling party). Given South Africa's racially segregated past, it was not surprising that race was a strong factor in predicting voting behaviour, as were the issues of whether respondents felt close to one political party (party loyalty) and had voted for that party before.

Following from this survey, the Centre for Social Development in Africa embarked on a civic education pilot project titled 'Championing Democracy', which was conducted in the communities where this research was undertaken. The Civic Education Programme was conceptualised as a way of 'giving back' to the communities that participated in the study and simultaneously addressed citizens' concern that social grants may not continue, should another political party come to power. The purpose of the Championing Democracy program was, among other things, to educate citizens about South Africa's constitutional democracy and specifically on the right to social protection.

Citizens have a core role to play in a democratic society and are able to influence social policies. Consequently their

knowledge and views on social protection matters for the future directions of social development. Research aimed at further understanding the relationship between people's knowledge of their rights, their views on social protection and their intended voting behaviour is an important pursuit in itself and could inform civic and voter education initiatives.

This article is based on the report: Patel, L, Y Sadie, V Graham, A Delany & K Baldry (2014). Voting Behaviour and the Influence of Social Protection: A study of voting behaviour in three poor areas in South Africa. Centre for Social Development in Africa & University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

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The value of care and domestic work: why the gender gap matters

by Eloïse Leboutte and Ignacio Socias
*International Federation of Family Development
International Organizations Department*

October 2015

Women typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. On account of gendered social norms that view unpaid care work as a female prerogative, women across different regions, socio-economic classes and cultures spend an important part of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles. That is in addition to their paid activities, thus creating the double burden of work for women.

How society and policy-makers address issues concerning care has important implications for the achievement of gender equality. They can either expand the capabilities and choices of women and men,

or confine women to traditional roles associated with femininity and motherhood. The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men represents an infringement of women's rights and also is a brake on their economic empowerment.

The authors argue that gender inequality in unpaid care work is the missing link that influences gender gaps in labor outcomes. The gender gap in unpaid care work has significant implications for women's ability to actively take part in the labor market and for the type/quality of employment opportunities available to them.

Time is a limited resource that is divided between labor and leisure, productive and reproductive activities, paid and unpaid work. Every minute more that a woman spends on unpaid care work represents one minute less that she could be potentially spending on market-related activities or investing in her educational and vocational skills. In countries where women spend a large amount of time on unpaid care and there is a large gender gap in the time spent in that way, the gender gap in hourly wages is also higher.

Unpaid care work entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that go unrecognized, imposing a systemic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle. Caregiving is a complex activity that requires, among other physical and emotional skills, empathy, patience, dedication and effort. The result for those who do it is frequently exhaustion and, at times, even illness.

Globally, an increase in girls' education and women's paid work means a decrease in the supply of unpaid work. Women bear greater responsibility for unpaid care than men. Prevailing gender norms mean that women and girls undertake the bulk of unpaid care work, such as looking after and educating

children, looking after older family members, caring for the sick, preparing food, cleaning, and collecting water and fuel.

The socially prescribed and entrenched gender roles that designate women and girls as care providers can undermine their rights, limit their opportunities, capabilities and choices, and so impede their empowerment. Prevailing gender norms mean that, across all societies, women and girls undertake the bulk of unpaid care work, such as looking after and educating children, looking after older family members, caring for the sick, preparing food, cleaning, and collecting water and fuel. That unequal burden of unpaid care undermines women and girls' rights (to decent work, to education, to health, to rest and leisure), limits their opportunities and, therefore, impedes their economic empowerment. It hinders women from seeking employment and income, which in turn holds them back economically.

The role of fathers

While there is a growing body of evidence about the role of fathers in children's lives, there are also knowledge gaps, and the quality of the evidence varies.

Most fathers aspire to share caregiving equally with their spouse/partner, but are often unable to bring that desire to reality. Fathers need time to develop parenting skills, but they don't have or take that time. The fact that men don't bear children is obviously an unchangeable biological fact. The fact that men don't rear children is not. People are not born with the gene that teaches them all they need to know to be effective parents – neither women nor men. From the first days and weeks after childbirth, many (we hope most) women have the opportunity to spend time with their children, which facilitates both bonding with their new-born and developing competencies as new parents. In contrast, few men are

provided with an opportunity to spend significant time with their young children. Tasks that have traditionally been thought of as 'women's work' (e.g. cooking and cleaning) continue to be primarily performed by women. In the countries surveyed, 82% of women prepare meals on an average day, while only 44% of men do. Also, the average time spent by women on cooking is four times the time spent by men.

As the reasons for unpaid work inequalities are multi-layered, there need to be distinct policy interventions to effectively remedy their negative impacts on different groups of women. Work- family reconciliation policies have to be tailored accordingly.

From "shadow" to formal

Activities that contribute to the well-being of families and individuals at home, such as care services and housework services, have an important job-creation potential. Home-care services form part of "white jobs", together with health-care services and residential care activities, while housework services are at the border of this category. Demand for care and household services is expected to increase, owing to an important trend -- population ageing in all Member States, combined with the expected decline in the number of potential careers within the family circle. In policy debates in many Member States, personal and household services are often mentioned as a possible answer to the following issues:

Accessible and affordable care services are an important precondition for increasing female participation in the labour market. The creation of job opportunities for the relatively low-skilled workers, in particular as far as housework services are concerned, comes at a low cost for public finance by encouraging the provision of housework services in the formal economy rather than in the shadow economy. Job creation is also a

factor in considering the cost of various options for long-term care. Improvement in the quality of care, thanks to a work-force having the right skills and benefiting from good working conditions, subject to quality controls on the service providers.

Personal and health services offer significant opportunities for raising employment levels, allowing the work-life balance to be improved, productivity to be increased and undeclared work to be brought into the official labor market.

One of the “solutions” for better reconciliation of work with family responsibilities involves more paid employment in caring, but the conditions of work and employment in these jobs often leave much to be desired. Undervaluation of paid care work goes hand-in-hand with a lack of recognition of unpaid care work, which is seen as natural and not requiring skills.

Family members have always been the mainstay for providing care to aging and other relatives or friends who need assistance with everyday living. Yet family caregiving today is more complex, costly, stressful, and demanding than at any time in human history.

A cause of the fertility rebound

The mass entry of women into the labor force is one of the major social changes observed in most OECD countries in recent decades. At the same time, the link between female employment and fertility has changed. Whereas in the early 1980s fertility was highest in countries with the lowest female employment rates, the reverse is true today. The Scandinavian countries – all with a high level of economic development – are a good illustration of this new situation, with female employment rates (in the 25-54 age group) of above 80% and high fertility. The countries of southern and eastern Europe, on the other hand, illustrate the opposite

situation, with low female employment rates and low fertility. These are countries with income levels below the OECD average. So the reversal of the relationship between GDP per capita and fertility probably reflects a switch from negative to positive in the link between female employment and fertility.

At the relatively early stages of economic development, GDP growth opens up women’s access to educational attainment. Women are encouraged to stay longer in the educational system in order to become more qualified and increase their earning potential. Because they spend more time in education, many young men and women wait longer before forming a couple and having children. Moreover, the increase in women’s earning potential produces an increase in the opportunity cost of having children, as time spent at home represents an implicit wage loss. Women therefore prefer to invest more time in paid work than in caring for children, so their fertility decreases. That decrease may be accentuated if parents tend to invest more heavily in their children’s education, in which case the family size is limited for financial reasons. However, if the woman works, her additional income provides greater economic security and makes an additional child more affordable, especially if government family-support policies are also in place. Moreover, the development of policies to help parents reconcile work and family life may itself be favored by strong economic growth. Norms and attitudes towards childbearing, the family and gender roles are also evolving alongside this process of economic and institutional change.

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A landmark Paris accords on climate change: a comment

by Sergei Zelenev

December 2015

After two weeks of complicated and exhausting talks at the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, 195 nations agreed on 12 December to the largest climate deal ever, aimed at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. In and of itself, the Paris Conference signified a positive outcome to long-term multilateral efforts to address the risks of climate change, bringing together many stakeholders, but most importantly, governments, international organizations and civil society organizations. Given the relentless pace of global warming caused by carbon-dioxide emissions and its dire consequences, including melting ice caps, rising sea levels, unusual weather events -- be they record rainfalls or heavy storms, devastating heat waves and droughts -- and many other negative impacts on the environment, already present or highly probable in the immediate future, the outcome of the Conference goes far beyond its indisputable diplomatic significance. In fact, this collective effort embodies credible pledges by Parties to the Agreement to include nature in any environment-oriented future action, including the recognition of the role of tropical forests in curbing emissions. The recognized need to move forward with clean-energy technologies produced by the signatories serves as a guidance for all nations to embrace required modifications in their policies in an attempt to limit the global temperature rise to a level well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to adapt to climate-change impacts already unfolding. However, the poverty dimension was also highlighted

by the drafters of the text: in the words of the Agreement, it "...aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty ..."

There are both optimists and sceptics among the commentators in the wake of the Conference. A key feature of the Paris accord, namely, an enhanced attention to scientific evidence during essentially diplomatic discussions, was highly praised. Such attention to the accumulated scientific evidence was an important breakthrough, and being an undercurrent during the discussions, was also taken into account when other dimensions, such as financial and administrative dimensions, of the Agreement were discussed. In this sense high-level political commitments to increase the joint ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and to foster climate resilience was clearly a reflection of the growing awareness and concerns of the international community regarding the plight of future generations, an attempt to broaden time horizons beyond the immediate preoccupations and policy priorities. Many influential policy makers around the world became open to the warnings made by leading scientists about irreparable damage to the Earth, our common home, in the absence of the required urgent action to reduce the risks of global warming.

The pledge of the developed-country Parties to provide financial resources to assist developing-country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation is combined with the core principle of collective responsibility embodied in the Agreement, meaning that all signatories have to do their share to achieve a common good, including the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases among the developing countries. The important issues of mutual trust and transparency were also not overlooked in that

context. The Agreement requires regular and transparent reporting of the carbon reductions by every country within the framework of “nationally determined contributions”. Building upon “enhanced transparency” and “built-in flexibility” the Agreement stipulates that “the purpose of the framework for transparency of action is to provide a clear understanding of climate change action” in the light of the objectives of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, “including clarity and tracking of progress towards achieving individual nationally determined contributions.., adaptation actions.., including good practices, priorities, needs and gaps, to inform the global stocktaking..”

The sceptics among the commentators often point out the voluntary nature of the agreements and the lack of a mechanism for their enforcement. Some others are saying that the negotiations resulted in a deal that falls far short of staving off the worst effects of climate change, but at the same time gave all of us something the world surely needs—a sense of hope that tangible results could be achieved through a long over-due change in policies. In any case, the climate deal is seen by many as a correct road that leads to forward-looking policies to decarbonize the economy at the lowest cost.

The hardest part of the deal - the delivery of results - begins now, and the stakes are very high. The behaviour of national governments will be the ultimate testament of their commitment to the agreed goals. Much would depend on their ability to create proper incentives for businesses, particularly those operating in energy and heavy-industry sectors, using various tools such as taxes, special allowances or credits aimed at cutting emissions, facilitating green investment and promoting clean-energy technologies. Some of those measures have been already tried but the results are mixed and much more needs to be done. In many countries, coal still remains a predominant fuel in electricity

generation, exacerbating the pollution levels. Globally, renewable energy sources still account for about 10 per cent of total energy supply, with most of that coming from hydroelectric power. But after the Paris agreements, carbon impacts and harmful emissions can no longer be ignored when the private sector prepares business plans. At the same time, the realities of today’s global energy markets are not particularly favourable to pollution-reducing efforts: the declining price of crude oil and natural gas, in the absence of international agreement on a carbon tax or other similar arrangements, actually facilitates the use of fossil fuels at a time when the environmental costs of burning such fuels are rising.

While the negative consequences of climate change do not respect national boundaries, making inhabitants of both developed and developing countries suffer, for people living in poor countries the costs of environmental degradation are often much higher, and climate-resilient development is more difficult to achieve. When poverty is rampant, forcing people to survive from one day to another, the lofty goals of “green growth” and sustainable development pale in comparison with the immediate needs of those people. It is widely admitted that efforts aimed at poverty eradication are closely linked with mitigation and adaptation policies. In this sense, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement should be seen as mutually complimentary and reinforcing global programs.

For more details on the Paris Agreement:
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