

REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER – SOUTH ASIA
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Meeting of Arab Network of ICSW

With a view to involve Arab countries in the ICSW network and to strengthen civil society in the Middle East, ICSW organised the first meeting of an Arab network of ICSW in Casablanca, Morocco during May 2011. The focus of the two day meeting was fostering social protection in the Arab Region by building a civil society network to strengthen the position of social welfare and development in the Arab countries. The meeting was initiated by Mr Driss Guerraoui, ICSW Regional President Middle East and North Africa

Supervisory and Advisory Board Meeting of ICSW

The ICSW Supervisory and Advisory Board meeting of ICSW was held on 27th and 28th May at Casablanca, Morocco. In addition to the global officers the Board consists of all regional presidents. The main purpose of the board meeting was to work through the results of the external evaluation of the whole ICSW operation as it relates to the global programme. This was the first step in developing the next strategic plan and strengthening the leadership and activities of ICSW. The evaluation was conducted by WestWood Spice an Australian consultancy specialising in the not for profit sector.



Denys Correll Executive Director, Christian Rollet President, Charles Abbey Vice President



Regional Presidents Amacodou Diouf Central and West Africa, AS Shenoy South Asia, Eva Holmberg-Herrström Europe, Braema Mathiapparanam South East Asia and the Pacific.

Need For Social Protection and Social Justice to Workers

Throughout the world, quality of life and the standard of living is going down with rising unemployment. More than 200 million people are unemployed world-wide, including nearly 80 million young women and men eager to secure jobs. About 1.5 billion or half the world labour force is in vulnerable employment. Of these, about 1.2 billion employed persons are surviving on less than US\$ 2 per day.

Global productive investment as a percentage of GDP, the source of job creation has stagnated. Global wage growth is cut in half reducing productivity. The income gap between the top 10% and the bottom 90% is widening. The gap is most visible in developing countries especially in South Asian countries.

ILO in its 100th session of the Tripartite International Labour conference (June 2011) and the G20 meeting to be held soon will have to address challenges facing social justice and sustainable development. Every country has the challenge to provide a sound social protection floor to 80% of the world population who lack social security. In addition each country needs to protect the fundamental right to work with freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Empowering Asia's Women

South Asia is home to the highest percentage of women in vulnerable employment, 84.5% in 2009 compared with global average of 52.9%. The vulnerability is exacerbated by the high and rising informalisation of the work force.

A recent publication of ILO and Asian Development Bank "Women and Labour Markets in Asia: rebalancing for gender equality" presents a strong case for effective policy intervention in this important segment of the labour market. Two reasons are given for addressing gender inequality - the untapped economic potential and the effect on meeting development goals. Another issue is the income differential that persists between the genders. The strong link between informal employment and poverty suggests the need for urgent policy intervention to break the vicious circle. One of the interventions suggested by the ILO and Asian Development Bank is better designed public employment programmes that are sensitive to gender.

The study provides evidence that India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been successful in bringing in unskilled agricultural workers to their public works program as private wages for women are lower in the farm sector.

India and all Asian countries can make economic and social progress by quickly initiating a process that will empower women in the workforce.

Social Protection Programmes in India

The Indian Government has introduced many social protection programme initiatives in the areas of education, health, shelter, sanitation, drinking water, child nutrition, maternal care, public distribution system, employment security and pension schemes. Some of these are

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) initiated to enhance the livelihood security of people of rural areas by guarantying 100 days of wage employment in a year to a rural household.
2. Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) provides subsidised food grains to disadvantaged people by transporting, storing and distributing food grains from surplus states to non-surplus states.
3. Housing scheme- Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) provides financial assistance of Rs.45000/- on the plains and Rs.48000/- in hilly terrain for construction of dwelling units.
4. Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a safe motherhood intervention scheme under NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) intended to reduce maternal and neo-natal mortality.
5. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) Scheme addresses issues like reduction of infant and maternal mortality, prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, health nutrition, sanitation and safe drinking water etc.
6. Right to Education Act under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), education for all give statutory rights to education for all covering about 194 million children.
7. Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) provides financial assistance to families below the poverty line by creating income generating assets through bank credits and subsidies.
8. Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) is an employment oriented urban poverty alleviation scheme.
9. Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) which generates self-employment through micro enterprises.
10. Indira Gandhi National Old age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) provides people above the age of 65 years and who are below poverty line, a pension of Rs.200/- per month from Central Government and similar pension from State Governments.
11. Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) provides a pension of Rs.200/- for widows aged 45 to 64 years in below poverty line households.

12. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) assists below poverty line persons aged 18 to 64 suffering from severe or multiple disabilities with a pension of Rs.200/- per month.
13. Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) is a health insurance scheme based on a cashless smart card. Insurance cover of up to Rs.30,000/- is provided to families below the poverty line. The scheme covers all pre-existing diseases, hospitalisation expenses and transport costs.
14. Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY) provides for death and disability cover to rural landless households amounting to Rs.30,000/- for natural death, Rs.75,000 for accidental death and Rs.37,000/- in case of partial permanent disability.

International Conference

The next International World Conference of ICSW on Social Work and Social Development will be held on 8-12 July at Stockholm Sweden. The theme of the conference is *Social Work Social Development 2012 –Action and Impact*. Three areas selected for detailed discussion in the conference are:

1. Human rights and social equality
2. Environmental change and sustainable social development
3. Global social transformation and social action

The conference is jointly organised by the International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Council on Social Welfare and International Federation of Social Workers

For more details on submission of papers and registration visit website:
<http://www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org>
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