



**GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER**  
**August 2012**

**In this issue**

***UN continues its work on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons***

***Social protection in European Union development cooperation***

***International Days at the United Nations***

***Useful resources and links***

***Words of gratitude to Denys Correll***

**In focus: The UN continues its work on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons**



The third session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Ageing was convened at UN Headquarters in New York from 21 to 24 August 2012. The mandate for the meeting was provided by the UN General Assembly in December 2010 in its resolution 65/182, which established an Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons by considering the existing human rights framework, as well as by identifying possible gaps and ways and means of addressing those gaps. Consideration of the feasibility of some new dedicated legal instruments aimed at strengthening the rights of older persons (for example, the elaboration of the Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, or other pertinent measures), was identified as another important objective of the OEWG.

All Member States of the UN were invited to participate in the work of the recent session of the Open-ended Group, as were civil society organizations. Compared to the previous two sessions, the meeting in August 2012 saw much more active participation on the part of Asian and African countries, along with a well-coordinated position effectively presented by the Latin American group. ICSW participated in the deliberations of the OEWG, voicing support for the refinement of its methods of work and the renewal of its mandate. Presenting the views of its members, the ICSW statement underscored the fact that the quest for the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons is not something abstract, but is instead very down-to earth and has practical significance for ICSW activities at the local level. In the words of the statement:

"The results of the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing have demonstrated that wide-spread age discrimination, neglect and violence against older women and men, as well as the absence of meaningful social protection, have remained an unfortunate reality in many countries, rich and poor alike, but particularly so in low-income developing countries. The mainstreaming of older persons' concerns in policies and programmes at the national level remains generally the exception rather than the rule. It is not a secret that knowledge of the Madrid Plan at the national level is often quite minimal, and many commitments of the Madrid Plan have remained only on paper. The fact that the Madrid Plan is not a binding international document does not help its implementation either. It is obvious that we need a more powerful dedicated international instrument to trigger decisive national action to improve the treatment of older persons in many societies".

The full text of the ICSW statement is available on <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/thirdsession.shtml>

The participants in the meeting had before them several new important submissions, including the analytical outcome paper produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding normative standards in international human rights law in relation to older persons. This comprehensive and very recent document released in August 2012 just before the meeting contains the following conclusion:

"The shared experiences of older persons globally as a diverse, but nevertheless minimally definable and increasingly large group in society, alone gives rise to consideration of the necessity of tailored approaches to rights protection. The non-implementation of the existing standards, themselves widely viewed as inadequate to the situation of older persons, and the systemic and global non-realization of the rights of older people everyday strengthen this argument" (p. 34).

The full text of the document is available at <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/thirdsession.shtml>

While the work done at the third session was a direct continuation of the discourse of the two previous sessions and sought to build on the relevant conclusions, the third session of the OEWG also expanded the frontiers of the discussions into new areas pertaining to the rights of older persons. Despite the divergence in views regarding the need for a new legal instrument, the participants in the meeting largely agreed on the continuation of the discussions. The decision on the renewal of the mandate of the Open-ended Group will be made by the UN General Assembly in December 2012.

### **Social protection in European Union development cooperation**

The European Commission has just released a working document ("Communication") which outlines how EU development assistance can strengthen social protection in partner countries. Apart from addressing general themes (why social protection is important, what is social protection and how it supports inclusive development), the paper provides specific proposals for more effective development cooperation in the social area.

While there is great variety in the social protection systems across the European Union, the Communication states that in principle all EU Member States are

"committed to providing universal access to social protection against the major life-cycle risks, in line with the guarantee contained in Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union".

The situation in the developing countries is different owing to the much higher levels of informality in their economies, as well as the low income tax base, relatively low budget allocations for social protection and highly segmented social insurance systems whereby only a small minority in the

formal sector gets benefits. The level of social spending in the two groups of countries is very different—on average, developing countries spend around a quarter of what is spent on social protection in the developed economies. As a result, only about 20% of the world's working-age population has access to comprehensive social protection systems. In low-income countries the situation regarding the provision of social protection is even worse, owing to the relative lack of resources as well as the weakness of public institutions.

Spelling out the future direction of EU development cooperation in support of social protection in partner countries, the Communication states that

“the EU seeks to include social protection in its policy dialogues with partner countries on their national development strategies and should further promote and assist the development of context-specific social protection systems that are efficient, equitable and sustainable”.

The European Commission supports nationally-owned social protection policies, including social protection floors, and draws attention to a renewed political commitment to social protection by the international community, demonstrated by the adoption of the 2012 International Labour Conference recommendation on social protection floors.

Social protection in the developing economies is discussed in relation to both middle-income and low-income countries. The need for revenue reform and widening of the tax-base is highlighted, along with measures aimed at capacity-building for strong institutions and support for job creation and employment.

The need to involve civil society and the private sector in social protection implementation activities is also emphasized. The Communication underscores that “civil society and the social partners should be empowered and encouraged to partner with the state in developing and implementing social protection systems”. Gender-related concerns should be addressed in social protection policy and programme design in order to ensure that men and women benefit equally:

“social protection systems must address women's life-cycle risks and the burden of care that they bear, as well as the impediments to women's access to work” .

The document concludes with a discussion of development cooperation programming and modalities. It points out that social protection could be selected as one of the sectors for cooperation in individual country or regional programmes. It could also feature as a dimension in other sector programmes, such as employment, health, education, food security, agriculture, private sector development and so on. Social protection schemes may also be supported through thematic programmes, complementing geographical programmes.

For the further details

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/social-protection/documents/com\\_2012\\_446\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/social-protection/documents/com_2012_446_en.pdf)

### **International Days celebrated at the United Nations**

Several International Days observed by the United Nations were celebrated in August at United Nations Headquarters and around the world.

The **International Day of the World's Indigenous People** (9 August) was first proclaimed by the General Assembly in December 1994. The focus of this year's International Day was "Indigenous Media, Empowering Indigenous Voices". The theme sought to highlight the importance of indigenous media in challenging stereotypes, forging indigenous peoples' identities, communicating with the outside world, and influencing the social and political agenda. The message of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People can be found at <http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/2012/sgmessage.shtml>

The UN **International Youth Day** is held annually on August 12 to celebrate the achievements of the world's youth and to encourage their participation in enhancing society. It also seeks to promote ways to engage youth in becoming more actively involved in making positive contributions

to their communities. The theme of International Youth Day 2012 is "Building a Better World: Partnering with Youth" — a global call to action to develop and engage in partnerships with and for youth. The message of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Youth Day 2012 can be found at <http://www.un.org/en/events/youthday/2012/sq.shtml>

**World Humanitarian Day** (19 August) is an occasion to recognize those who face danger and adversity in order to help others. Every day humanitarian aid workers help millions of people around the world, regardless of who they are and where they are. World Humanitarian Day is a global celebration of people helping people. This year's campaign "[I Was Here](#)" is about making your mark by doing something good, somewhere, for someone else.

The message from the Secretary-General on the occasion of the World Humanitarian Day can be found at: [http://www.un.org/en/events/humanitarianday/2012/sq\\_2012.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanitarianday/2012/sq_2012.shtml)

### **Useful resources and links**

The International Institute of Social Studies (The Hague, Netherlands) has released a new publication called *Inclusion of Minorities* by Ellen Webbink. The publication is part of the ongoing project on "Indices of Social Development", geared at providing quantitative variables for policy analysis. For further details:

<http://www.indsocdev.org/resources/ISD%20Inclusion%20of%20Minorities.pdf>

The report of the Ageing Societies Working Group (Imperial College, London in partnership with Qatar Foundation) released in August 2012 is entitled *Creating Sustainable Health and Care Systems in Ageing Societies* and is conceived as a new framework for thinking about ageing societies. For further details: <https://go.madmimi.com/redirects/1345825785-242a86bdad0048156e074c580e4eefdc-56da1c6?pa=11347015631>

### **Words of gratitude to Denys Correll**

Dear subscribers to the Global Newsletter!

This month is my first month as Executive Director of the ICSW and editor of its Global Cooperation Newsletter, and one of my first tasks must be to express, on behalf of the ICSW, our debt of deep gratitude to the outgoing Executive Director and editor, Denys Correll, who retired effective 31 July 2012. Denys worked for ICSW for ten years. He is well known, not only as a top-notch professional with a clear mind but also as a person with a compassionate heart, who invested a lot of his energy and intellect into the fight against poverty, injustice, and inequality in the world. An efficient manager, he was never reluctant to carry even a disproportionate weight on many projects implemented by the ICSW, always focusing on the root causes of problems in our efforts to find a solution. His overall contribution to the work of the ICSW has been invaluable, and he has earned enormous respect from his colleagues and peers. All of us at ICSW wish Denys well in the new stage of his life. There are many good things ahead -- new people to meet, new books to read, new photos to take. And his friendly advice—so appropriate and important for all of us - is always welcome. Bon voyage, Denys! **Sergei Zelenev, ICSW Executive Director and Newsletter Editor**

The content of this Global Newsletter may be freely reproduced or cited provided the source is acknowledged. Views do not necessarily represent policies of ICSW.

Newsletter Editor: Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director

Address: ICSW, P.O.Box 28957, ICSW, Plot 4, Berkeley Lane, Off Lugard Avenue, Kampala, Uganda

Phone + +1 718 796 7417, +256414321150

Website [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org); E-mail: [szelenev@icsw.org](mailto:szelenev@icsw.org), [icsw@icsw.org](mailto:icsw@icsw.org)

If you wish to cease receiving this newsletter, please click '[here](#)' providing your name and email address