



Global Cooperation May 2007

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African Civil Society Forum

The theme of the meeting held in Addis Ababa was *Democratizing Governance at Regional and Global Levels to Achieve the MDGs*

ICSW participated in the forum held in March 2007 that brought together 250 participants representing 150 NGO and civil society organisations from 32 countries of the five African Regions.

The forum was convened by the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) together with the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)

This meeting was made possible with contributions from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UN Economic Commission for African (UNECA), the African Union (AU) and the International Organisation of the Francophony (OIF).

The forum aimed to establish an independent space for African civil society to have a larger voice at both regional and global levels. The forum was organized to develop a framework for African civil society to formulate and advance their advocacy strategies at national, regional and global levels.

Discussion centered on:

MDGs

- Participants spoke of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from a rights-based approach including gender equality and employment (decent work) issues.
- There was general agreement that with the current trend, the MDG targets will not be met. To improve the chances of meeting the targets the forum urged participants to seek a deeper engagement and partnership with their governments and international institutions at regional and global levels.

Democratizing Governance

The forum participants stressed the relevance of good governance and the participation of civil society as prerequisites for sustained progress in the achievement of the MDGs. The overarching theme of global governance was addressed through three thematic lenses: *Peace and Security; Governance and Human Rights; Development, Trade and Finance*.

UN Reform

The forum considered the Secretary General's report *In larger freedom*. The report gives equal weight and value to peace, development and human rights issues. Delegates acknowledged the role of civil society in the reform process. Delegates registered their appreciation of the new impetus and support for civil society engagement coming from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

Gender

On gender, participants recognized that a gender perspective and gender equality have not fully been mainstreamed into previous civil society gatherings. The forum expressed commitment to the development of a coherent policy of gender mainstreaming which is inter-generational and which impacts on advocacy policies and strategies.

Youth

Delegates acknowledged youth as agents of social and political transformation. They strongly encouraged and supported their participation at all levels.

Strengthening Civil Society and Self-assessment

Civil society organisations saw the need to put their houses in order, both at the collective and individual levels. This is necessary if civil society is to have a critical role in processes that further peace, development and human rights issues.

Outcomes

A major outcome of the African Civil Society Forum 2006 was consensus on continuation of the forum so Africa is permanently on the international agenda. This recommendation was endorsed by the organisers as well as the support agencies. For ICSW, this means that there is an opportunity for renewed engagement each year with delegates from all over Africa. ICSW could therefore use this opportunity to: further ICSW advocacy campaigns by planning side events at this meeting in consultation with CONGO; contribute by adding ICSW African membership voices to the international agenda by working with CONGO at the yearly event; use the opportunity to strengthen and further discussion with regional and continental blocks such as AU, UNECA, UNHR, and other regional offices based in Addis Ababa.

Civil society on Commonwealth Foundation Website.

The Commonwealth Foundation has launched a new area on its website to better present the 80 Commonwealth Associations (civil society organisations) including ICSW that are recognised by the Foundation.

Each association is assigned to one of the three Programme areas of the Foundation, Governance and Democracy, Sustainable Development and Culture and Diversity.

<http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/about/CA/>.

Commission for Social Development, 45th Session - Chairman's Summary on Full Employment and Decent Work for All

The following are some messages drawn for the Chairman's Summary

- “Full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of sustainable development.”
- “Globalization has both positive and negative affects.”
- “The challenges of achieving full employment and decent work require a comprehensive approach at the national and international levels”.
- “Creating an enabling environment, based on an integrated and coherent set of policies at the national and international levels is essential.”
- “Work alone is not enough to provide a decent living”
- “. . . economic growth alone does not automatically lead to the creation of jobs.”
- “Macroeconomic policy is an important instrument for employment generation and development, and full employment and decent work should be given a more prominent role in macroeconomic policy and not treated as peripheral or residual objectives.”
- “Monetary policies of central banks can contribute to employment generation, principally through exchange rate, interest rate and credit policies.”
- Structural conditions have a strong impact on the prospect of employment generation in an economy.”
- “. . .there is a need for capacity building of ministries and institution that are directly responsible for designing and implementing comprehensive social and employment policies.”
- “In a world where goods and large sums of money are freely moving across border, people should be able to move too; . . .”

The ICSW submission on *Full Employment and Decent Work for All* placed emphasis on the “decent work” part of the theme. ICSW drew attention to many examples of “indecent work” Sadly the Chairman failed to recognise that work can be indecent. The Chairman's Summary is at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007/Documents/ChairSumm_FEDW.pdf
The ICSW submission is at <http://www.icsw.org/whatsnew.htm>

New Publications

Why Is Africa Constrained from Spending ODA?

Drawing on the research of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) own Independent Evaluation Office, the author reports in this One Pager on “[Why Is Africa Constrained from Spending ODA?](#)”, The author concluded that the IMF concerns about safeguarding macroeconomic stability in Africa prevented governments from spending over 70 per cent of the Official Development Assistance that they received during 1999-2005.

Available online at: <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager34.pdf>

Absolute poverty measures for the developing world, 1981-2004

New World Bank publication by Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion of the Development Research Group. WB Policy Research Working Paper 4211, April 2007. The authors report new estimates of measures of absolute poverty for the developing world over 1981-2004. A clear trend decline in the percentage of people who are absolutely poor is evident, although with uneven progress across regions.

They find more mixed success in reducing the total number of poor. Indeed, the developing world outside China has seen little or no sustained progress in reducing the number of poor, with rising poverty counts in some regions, notably Sub-Saharan Africa. Available online (24pp) <http://d.repec.org/n?u=RePEc:wbk:wbrwps:4211&r=ltv>

New from UNRISD

The Rise and Development of the Global Debt Movement: A North-South Dialogue

For decades, the debt issue has remained a front-runner—or perhaps even the front-runner—on the agendas of civil society organizations and movements throughout the world.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/2A35FE558DCA39A0C12572C9002F6D79?OpenDocument>

Political Space for Non-Governmental Organizations in United Nations World Summit Processes

World conferences and summits held under the auspices of the United Nations have provided a new political space for involvement of non-governmental organizations.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/119D7568A3373C47C12572C900444EFF?OpenDocument>

This is just a sample of new publications from UNRISD. There are many new papers on water supply including country specific papers on Malaysia, Great Britain, Hungary, France and Colombia. There is a report on 10 Years after Beijing; Political and Social Economy of Care; Gender Equality in Arabic, Chinese and English. All UN Research Institute for Social Development publications can be found at <http://www.unrisd.org/>.

Coming events

ICSW Europe: European Region conference: *Equal opportunities for individuals, groups and nations* 14th to 16th June 2007, Vilnius University (Universiteto Street N 9/1, Vilnius, Lithuania):

http://www.fsf.vu.lt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=853&Itemid=1273.

Editor: Denys Correll. Contributor: Roselyn Nakirya Programme Coordinator Africa

Website: www.icsw.org Email icsw@icsw.org

International Council on Social Welfare

C/O MOVISIE Netherlands Centre for Social Development

P.O. Box 19129 DC Utrecht

The Netherlands

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Global Cooperation June 2007

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In this issue ICSW will introduce you to two important international organisations.

United Nations University Comparative Regional Integrations Studies

<http://www.cris.unu.edu>

The United Nations University Comparative Regional Integrations Studies (UNCRIS) is located in Bruges, Belgium. It is a research and training programme of the [United Nations University](#) that is driven by the following questions:

- Question 1:** What is happening in the world - Past, present and future - with regard to regional integration processes?
- Question 2:** What governance structures are emerging through regional integration?
- Question 3:** How can regional integration contribute to peace and human security in the framework of the UN?
- Question 4:** How can regional integration contribute to the development of Least Developed Countries?
- Question 5:** How do people and societies deal with regional integration?
Right click on the Questions to get more information

Transnational Institute (TNI)

<http://www.tni.org> (website in English and Spanish). Founded in 1974, the Transnational Institute (TNI) is an international network of activist-scholars committed to critical analyses of global problems. The TNI aims to provide intellectual support to the moves to have a world that is democratic, equitable and environmentally sustainable.

TNI seeks to create and promote international co-operation in analysing and finding possible solutions to global problems including militarism and conflict, poverty and marginalisation, social injustice and environmental degradation.

TNI engages in research, policy advocacy and civil society networking activities.

* The Alternative Regionalisms programme addresses the question of alternative development from the perspective of social movements and regional coalitions of civil society organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It facilitates cross-regional exchanges on a South-South and South-North basis through a series of People's Dialogues.

* The Drugs and Democracy programme analyses global trends in drugs policy. It promotes a pragmatic approach to tackling illegal drugs based on harm reduction principles. Its work on drugs and conflict in the Andean/Amazon region, Afghanistan and Burma forges connections between illicit drugs and wider issues of demilitarisation, democratisation, public health promotion and poverty reduction. These are then reflected in attempts to influence the policy debate at UN and regional decision-making levels.

* The New Politics programme engages with innovations by social movements, progressive political parties and governments worldwide. It stimulates new thinking and policy in participatory democracy, political organisation, urban governance and rural democratisation.

* The Environmental Justice project monitors negative impacts of pollution trading upon environmental, social & economic justice. It works to develop community-led responses.

* The Militarism and Globalisation project analyses the changing global frameworks for military intervention and the spread of new security infrastructures. It focuses on defence industrial reorganisation and the accountability of foreign military bases.

* The Water Justice project promotes participatory, public sector water as the most viable means to achieve the goal of water for all. It facilitates the creation of new regional and global networks to promote public-public co-operation in the water sector. TNI also publishes a Public Services yearbook on the impact of privatisation and experiences of public sector reform globally.

The TNI is based in Amsterdam The Netherlands

Quick response needed if you are interested in social work and social policy.

Sage Publications are offering free online access to all Social Work and Social Policy journals until June 30th 2007.

Journals include: International Social Work; Journal of Social Work; Qualitative Social Work; Affilia; Research in Social Work Practice; Critical Social Policy; Journal of European Social Policy; Global Social Policy.

To access the journals, <https://online.sagepub.com/cgi/register?registration=FT71926>

Correcting Global Imbalances with Exchange Rate Realignment? No thanks! – *One Pager* Using a new World Macroeconomic Model, the three authors, Francis Cripps, Alex Izurieta and Terry McKinley, examine the projected impact of exchange-rate realignments on current huge global imbalances. Specifically, they examine scenarios based on continuing depreciation of the U.S. dollar and appreciation of the currencies of China and other Asia countries. They conclude that such realignments have a ‘beggarmy-neighbour’ impact, benefiting mostly the United States and worsening the growth prospects of developing countries. This One Pager is an output from IPC’s ongoing research programme, *The State of the World Economy*. Available online at: <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager38.pdf>

Using ODA to Accumulate Foreign Reserves in Sub-Saharan Africa? – *One Pager* Costas Lapavistas argues in this One Pager that the current practice of sub-Saharan African countries of using Official Development Assistance (ODA) for excessive reserve accumulation acts as a substantial barrier to attaining the MDGs. Drawing on an evaluation by the International Monetary Fund Independent Evaluation Office, the author notes that ODA should be used, instead, for its intended purpose, namely, importing real resources into the economy and boosting economic growth and development. A major reason that developing countries have stockpiled reserves is that they have liberalized the capital account instead of managing it. This One Pager continues the debate on ODA and Macroeconomic Policies initiated by One Pagers #34 and #35. Available online at: <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager37.pdf>

The IMF and Constraints on Spending Aid – *One Pager* by David Goldsbrough A recent report by the Independent Evaluation Office of the IMF suggests that the IMF is constraining the spending of aid in Africa. The author disputes the suggestions that such spending limits are due to IMF’s excessively low inflation targets (see One Pager 34). The reason, according to the author, lies in the often unwarranted implicit assumptions the IMF makes about how the real economy will respond to changes in fiscal deficits and public spending. Available online at: <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager35.pdf>

Better Forecasts of Demand for Medicines in Developing Countries Could Save Millions of Dollars--and Lives

From Center for Global Development (CGD) Update 30th May 2007
(Right click for hyperlink or <http://www.cgdev.org/content/article/detail/13788/>)
Rich countries and private philanthropies spend billions of dollars every year to buy medicines for poor people in developing countries but the lack of reliable demand forecasts creates shortages and raises prices. CGD is proposing a practical new solution: a neutral third party--neither buyer nor seller--to aggregate information on anticipated demand and use it to produce reliable forecasts. Developing countries, pharmaceutical companies, and public-private health partnerships are urging that the proposal be implemented.

Extending Social Protection in Health

The International Labour Office, GTZ (The German international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development) and WHO have released the publication *Extending Social Protection in Health*. <http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/07-0378.pdf>

It is a challenge to every country and government to provide social protection systems in health which adequately respond to the needs of citizens while keeping within the bounds of available resources. Resource-poor nations are in a particularly difficult situation. Their scarce resources have to be shared among many priority areas of development. Health is the area where the needs are greatest. The problems are exacerbated by high population growth rates and epidemics such as AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Many countries, along with their development partners, have worked on different national or regional models of sustainable health care financing.

UN Coherence

Newsbrief from FES New York, No. 4/2007, 30th May, 2007

In May a group of representatives from civil society organizations met with the new UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro (Tanzania) to discuss the recommendations of the “High Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence”. NGOs called for an early implementation of the panel’s proposal to strengthen and restructure the gender architecture of the United Nations into one single entity led by an Under-Secretary-General. Others cautioned against a “one size fits all” approach to development and voiced the concern that the UN might be moving away from its norm-setting role. More information on the Coherence Panel follow-up process is available at the UN-NGLS website: www.un-ngls.org

NGO Accountability

The One World Trust has an interesting article by Monica Blagescu in its May 2007 edition. The title of the article is *Shifting the focus: what is the role of grantmakers in enabling NGO accountability?*

In the article Monica states: “Recently we have witnessed attempts to build a case against NGOs, suggesting that they are undermining national sovereignty and democracy and have no relationship to any real public”. The article can be found at <http://www.oneworldtrust.org/?display=accnewsMay07>

International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) - European Region – International Expert Seminar on Social investment and social protection as productive factors

The role of decent work and social integration for an economically successful and socially cohesive society

Madrid (Spain), 5th to 7th October 2007

Hosted by the Comité Español para el Bienestar Social (CEBS) secretaria@cebs-es.org

Editor: Denys Correll

Website: www.icsw.org Email icsw@icsw.org

International Council on Social Welfare

C/O MOVISIE Netherlands Centre for Social Development

P.O. Box 19129 DC Utrecht

The Netherlands

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