



## **GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER** **December 2009**

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**ICSW Volunteers and Staff wish you, our readers, seasons greetings and all the very best for 2010 in your work to relieve poverty in this world.**

### **Members of Parliament assess the economic crisis**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brought together 160 members of parliament (MPs) at the UN in November. They reviewed the impact of the global response to the economic crisis following decisions taken in the past few months by the G20, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The event, the Parliamentary Hearing, is a joint UN-IPU endeavour, designed to provide MPs with a unique opportunity to interact with high-level UN officials.

The MPs found the response measures taken thus far are mostly positive. But there remained several areas of concern both in terms of equity and of long-term impact. The global economic outlook remains uncertain and many imbalances and regulatory gaps will need to be corrected in order for governments to continue their difficult climb out of recession. The crisis should generate re-thinking of fundamentals, such as the way well-being and development are measured. The suggestion is to consider more holistic approaches that take into account the environment and the social dimension of economic life.

The most prominent of the MPs concerns was the need to target the stimulus packages at the poorest and most vulnerable. National responses need to be better negotiated in a tripartite fashion (government, employees and the private sector). They must aim to strengthen safety nets both as a way of mitigating the effects of the crisis and preventing new crises.

Participants noted that there are several long-standing commitments by developed countries, such as the elimination of duties and quotas on imports from least developed countries. If these commitments were met they could provide more economic stimulus than concessional loans. Several developing countries will, in fact, face a new debt crisis unless an international debt alleviation mechanism is set up as a matter of urgency.

ICSW Vice President Charles Abbey both moderated a session and spoke on behalf of ICSW. Charles Abbey compared the 1997 Asian financial crisis with the current global financial and economic crisis. The crises did not have similar causes and points of origin. Regardless, the social impact of the crises is the same.



Charles Abbey went on to say "The UN states that 100 million people have fallen into poverty or have failed to escape poverty because of this crisis. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) expects the unemployment rate to increase by 0.6 per cent this year (2009). According to the ILO, the number of unemployed people in the Asian region could increase by 23 million increasing those in extreme poverty to a staggering 140 million."

"Reports are showing that, because of income shocks, poor households are withdrawing their children - often girls - from school so that they can add to the household income by working in the informal labour market. This, as we all know, will just perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty and reduce future income during adulthood."

"The crisis is worsening income distribution. High income groups can withstand shocks by drawing down savings or by using banking facilities. Low-income groups often lack savings or access to financial services in order to improve their income."

"The crisis is disproportionately affecting the poor and those workers whose rights are least protected and those who have weak coping mechanisms in the first place."



Charles Abbey concluded, "This is a global problem and we need global and local solutions for the localised problems millions are experiencing. At the global level, donor governments, many of whose countries from whence this current crisis originated should have more reasons now to keep to their commitments to assist developing countries in the South."

At the national and local levels, especially in the south, governments must take this crisis as yet another opportunity to put in place comprehensive social protection systems for its people because it is the moral and economically right thing to do."

(Charles Abbey's full paper is on the ICSW web site - <http://www.icsw.org/publication/pp.htm>)

A great deal of attention was paid to the question of reforming the Bretton Woods institutions and their stewardship of the global economy

While acknowledging that important steps had been taken towards greater accountability and transparency, such as the World Bank's new disclosure policy, it was far from clear that the commitment to increase the quotas of developing countries by a few percentage points (3% at the Bank, and 5% at the IMF) would be sufficient to make decision-making at these institutions more attuned to the needs of their "clients".

Papers presented at the Parliamentary Hearing can be found at <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga09.htm>

[More from the UN on the economic crisis](#)

The World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) has produced two papers on the global economic crisis.

### [Policy Responses to the Global Economic Crisis in Africa](#)

Africa is the developing region most at risk from the global economic crisis. Its recent strong growth has been interrupted. Already home to the largest number of low-income countries in the world, the region is now likely to experience higher unemployment and poverty; increases in infant mortality; and difficulty coping with longer-lasting effects such as higher school drop-out rates, reductions in health care, environmental degradation and a rise in conflict. Africa therefore needs to recover as quickly as possible. In this policy brief UNU-WIDER draws on a number of recent studies to discuss the policy options for recovery.

### [The Global Economic Crisis: New Paradigm for Economic Recovery](#)

One year into the global economic crisis, it has become clear that the paradigm for international development has changed irrevocably. With leadership, moral authority and the capacity of the West in international development diminishing, developing countries' recovery and future growth will critically hinge on their own initiatives, solutions and leadership. This policy brief summarizes the global responses to the crisis over the past year, points to their shortcomings and argues that a new paradigm for recovery in developing countries is emerging

## **New from UNRISD**

**Annual Report 2008:** The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Annual Report 2008 - Progress Report by the Director. This report presents the Institute's work from January through December 2008, including its conference, research, advisory, publication and dissemination activities.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BF3C2/search/ED4D7C19479E1A71C125767100510B2D?OpenDocument>

**UNRISD on the Global Economic Crisis** The (UNRISD) has released a series of podcasts featuring extracts from the UNRISD Conference on the "Social and Political Dimensions of the Global Crisis: Implications for Developing Countries"

There are five podcasts. The first podcast examines the impact of the crisis on the livelihoods of those in developing countries and looks at the coping strategies employed by people affected by the crisis in the developing world. The second podcast considers the social policy changes that have been employed at the country and regional level as a result of the crisis. The third podcast studies the social policy changes that have been employed at the global level as a result of the crisis. This relatively longer podcast features in full the three presentations that were given on this subject at the conference. The fourth examines the political dimensions of the global crisis and the fifth presents reflections on the future. It considers what will happen following the present global crisis and includes the views of three experts whom have been asked the question: Where are we going to be in ten years time?

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/B6CC0CB09F0E2E43C1257678003AA52C?OpenDocument>

**New Book: The United Nations and Civil Society: Legitimizing Global Governance - Whose Voice?** This book pays particular attention to food and agriculture, which now lie at the heart of global governance issues. McKeon shows that politically meaningful space for civil society can be introduced into UN policy dialogue.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/D24858D7F40B9CD6C125762C002CD3D8?OpenDocument>

**UNRISD Podcast: The United Nations and Civil Society: Legitimizing Global Governance – Whose Voice?**

In this episode the author Nora McKeon talks about her book on "The United Nations and Civil Society: Legitimizing Global Governance – Whose Voice?"

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/4FA5CD6732157BA2C125762C0047842A?OpenDocument&category=Podcast+Transcript>

## **New from OECD**

Adema, W. and M. Ladaïque (2009), "How Expensive is the Welfare State? - Gross and Net Indicators in the OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX)", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 92, OECD Publishing, © OECD.

[http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34637\\_38141385\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_37419,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_34637_38141385_1_1_1_37419,00.html)

### **What Will Happen to British Development Policy if the Tories Win the UK election?**

<http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/> (with thanks and acknowledgement to the Centre for Global Development)

The Centre for Global Development hosted a speech by Andrew Mitchell the Shadow Secretary of State for International Development in early December. Mr. Mitchell is likely to be responsible for DfID if the Conservative Party wins next year's election. Mr. Mitchell based his comments on the Party's green paper <http://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Green%20Papers/Aid-Policy-Paper.ashx?dl=true>



Some of the key points made by Mr. Mitchell were: Development policy is now mainstream and bipartisan in Britain; The Conservative Party intends to keep the aid budget high, including the target of reaching 0.7% of national income by 2013; Democracy is likely to be more prominent; Britain will experiment more with aid innovations. As the report states, "All of this suggests that Britain, no matter who wins the next elections, is not about to discard its role as a leading edge in development thinking."

### **World Bank Annual Review of Development Effectiveness**

The independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank has just released its annual flagship publication -- the [Annual Review of Development Effectiveness](#) -- for 2009. This presents findings on the outcomes of Bank projects and country programs and the evolution of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It also examines the Bank's support for environmentally sustainable development compatible with economic growth and poverty reduction.

### **IFSW Scholarship for the Hong Kong Joint World Conference June 2010**

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) invites applications for this prestigious award from younger social workers or social work students who have a demonstrated interest in international social work. The winner will be funded to attend the 2010 Joint World Conference in Hong Kong. For full information go to <http://www.ifsw.org/p38001972.html> For the conference <http://www.swsd2010.org>

### **Nairobi Call to Action**

In the last issue of Global Cooperation I reported on the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion. The Nairobi Call for Action is now available at <http://gchp7.info/nc2ace.pdf>.

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