

GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development The Agenda Early Bird registration finishes 31st March The conference will be held from 10th to 14th June 2010. Visit the website to see what you will be missing if you do not register and attend www.swsd2010.org

UK Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society - Making good society



Making good society, the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, argues that civil society has been pushed to the margins in key areas including politics, finance and the media and that this must change. The report explores how civil society activity can help: grow a more civil economy; enable a rapid and just transition to a low carbon economy; democratise media ownership and content; and grow participatory and deliberative democracy.

The Commission hopes that the evidence and ideas provided in this report and the direction of travel it sets for a 'good' society will inspire individuals and organisations to act and invest in civil society activity.

Commission on the Status of Women – 54th Session

March saw the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in New York. The following is from the UNDP gender team

The gender-specific implications of climate change, the economy, HIV/AIDS, and post-conflict recovery were the subjects of panel discussions hosted by UNDP and partners during the meeting.

The 2010 CSW was focused on a 15-year review subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the landmark Fourth United Nations World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

Plenary sessions throughout the week were devoted to reviewing progress since Beijing and reports from Members States on achievements in gender equality and areas of challenge.

"We can be proud but not complacent," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at the Plenary's International Women's Day Observance. Mr Moon noted the prevalence of violence against women and urged the General Assembly to adopt a resolution as soon as possible to commit to create the proposed UN gender entity. The press release on the [SG's statement](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33954&Cr=gender+equality&Cr1=) is available at:

Other speakers included Norway's Minister for Gender Equality and Children's Affairs (notably a man), who said there is no gender equality as long as violence against women exists; a Canadian high school student and Chinese immigrant who said that gender equality will not be eliminated as long as the preference for sons over daughters exists; and the president of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

On Thursday, representatives of the UN's five regional commissions presented regional perspectives on progress achieved and highlighted remaining gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform.

They each reported that much progress has been made in a number of areas including girls' education and women's political participation. Nevertheless, the representative of Asia and the Pacific noted that maternal death is still extremely high in the region. The representative for Europe pointed to the inadequate availability of sex-disaggregated statistics and proposed to work more on policy dimensions of increasing men's involvement in care and house work.

The representative for Latin America and the Caribbean noted that if things progress at the current pace it will take 40 more years before the region can achieve gender parity in political participation. The representative was also concerned with the existing gender wage gap where a well-educated woman earns much less than a non-educated man.

At statements throughout the week, delegations of many countries expressed support for the UN's proposed new gender entity, with several urging that it be finalized and operational as soon as possible.

Strengthening Older People's Rights: Towards a UN Convention

Despite the fact that older women and men have the same rights as everyone else, older women and men around the world face age discrimination and are denied their rights on a regular basis. The world is ageing fast and age discrimination is increasing. This discrimination is completely unacceptable.

However, existing human rights instruments do not provide adequate legal protection of the rights of older people. In practice too, older women and men's rights are not being adequately addressed or protected through the existing human rights system.

The time has come for a special rapporteur and a convention on the rights of older people. These new human rights instruments would help change attitudes towards older women and men and increase their visibility at both national and international levels. A new convention would also clarify government responsibilities towards older women and men, improve accountability and provide a framework for policy and decision making.

The 12 page publication *Strengthening Older People's Rights: Towards a UN Convention* can be found at (<http://www.ngocoa-ny.org/resources/documents/strengthening-rights-resource.pdf> <<http://www.ngocoa-ny.org/resources/documents/strengthening-rights-resource.pdf>>). The publication was produced to strengthen understanding and awareness of the need for a special rapporteur and convention on the rights of older people.

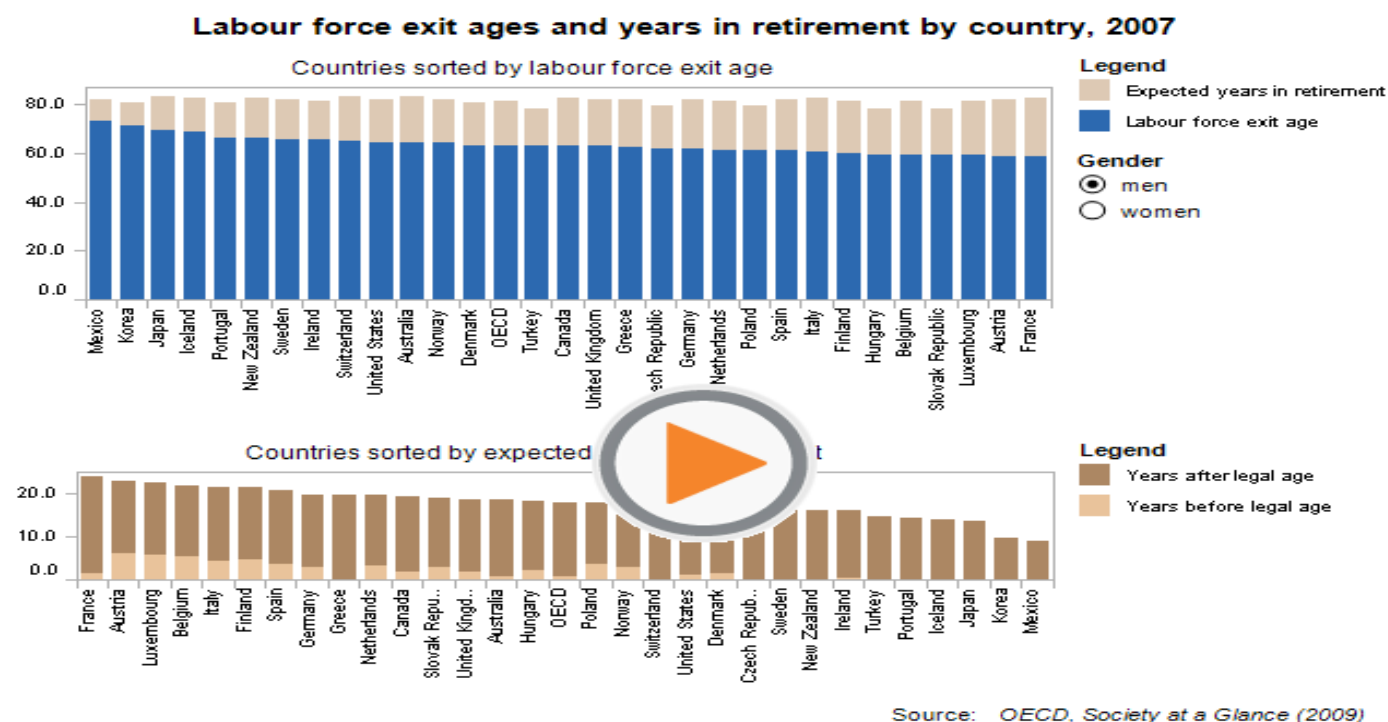
Retirement Ages

<https://community.oecd.org/community/factblog/blog/2010/02/03/keep-on-working>

Spain recently announced plans to raise its official retirement age from 65 to 67. Improved healthcare and falling birth rates mean the average age of people in developed countries is rising. By 2050, some societies face the expensive prospect of having as many retirees as active workers. Hence the move by Spain, and others, to raise retirement ages. The average legal age of retirement is just over 64, but it dips to as low as 58 in Greece and to as high as 67 in Norway and Iceland. (Note: ages can vary between the sexes, with women often entitled to earlier retirement.)

The labour force exit age – i.e., the actual average age when people stop working – is often higher or lower than the official retirement age. In Korea, the average man keeps working until he's over 71 – more than 11 years beyond retirement age; by contrast, his counterpart in Austria gives up work at about 59, or six years ahead of the official retirement age.

On average in OECD countries people spend just over 22½ years for women and about 17½ for men in retirement. For women, the longest retirements are in France, where retirement stretches on for about 27½ years; France also holds the OECD record for men – 24 years spent in retirement, compared with just over nine in Mexico.



tableau

New From UNRISD

Harmonizing Global Care Policy? Care and the Commission on the Status of Women

In March 2009 Member States of the United Nations met in New York at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to discuss, among other things, the priority theme of "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the

context of HIV/AIDS". This meeting provided an unprecedented opportunity to focus the international community's attention on care issues and to generate Agreed Conclusions that would lay out a roadmap for care policy, potentially influencing national legislation, policies adopted by UN entities and future international agreements. Using interviews with participants and an overview of official documentation, this paper seeks to summarize the achievements of the 2009 CSW, and to suggest where policy conversations about care might usefully focus next.

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Social Protection and Poverty

In the last decade, social protection has emerged as a policy framework employed to address poverty and vulnerability in developing countries. This report has two main aims: to provide an overview of social protection, and to provide an assessment of its potential contribution to addressing poverty and vulnerability in developing countries.

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Community Responses to HIV and AIDS

Although the AIDS epidemic has been examined from many angles, there is still a paucity of data on how communities themselves are responding to it. The UNRISD project, Community Responses to HIV/AIDS, initiated in 2004, commissioned researchers from eight sites across the globe to document what communities—individuals, extended families, households and wider social groupings—are doing about HIV and AIDS, how they are interacting with state and non-state institutions, and the opportunities for—or barriers to—more supportive community environments.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/3F7FC6E850BA9A61C125765E004F74D8?OpenDocument>

A Debate on the Public Role of Religion and its Social and Gender Implications

This paper addresses the relationship between religion, politics and gender equality through four aspects: (i) what authority, if any, states can cede to religious communities or groups without beginning to threaten gender equality; (ii) the informal impact of religions on attitudes and lives, beyond any institutionalized power; (iii) the possibilities and limits of internal reform; and (iv) the possibilities and difficulties of alliances between religious and secular groups. The central theme running through the essay is that religions most threaten gender equality when they are conceived of—and conceive themselves as—corporate bodies, capable of speaking with a unified voice.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/C6E7ED9E2588C1F6C125765E004C8F66?OpenDocument>

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