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In this edition

Expert Group Meeting on Poverty Eradication
Call for abstracts - 2012 World Conference of Social Work & Social Development
New Secretary General - International Federation of Social Workers
Progress of the world's women: In pursuit of justice
NGO Laws in Sub-Saharan Africa
World Social Situation: The Global Social Crisis
World Economic and Social Survey 2011
Poor Poverty: The Impoverishment of Analysis, Measurement and Policies
Conference - Reforming Social Protection Systems in Developing Countries

Expert Group Meeting on Poverty Eradication

ICSW President Christian Rollet represented ICSW at the expert group meeting on poverty eradication held in June in Geneva Switzerland. The meeting formed part of the preparations for the 50th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD). ICSW will be represented at the Commission meeting which is scheduled to take place in New York in February 2012.

The UN Economic and Social Council decided that the priority theme for the 2011-2012 review and policy cycle of the Commission should be "Poverty Eradication, taking into account its relationship to social integration and full employment and decent work for all." The outcomes provide important inputs to the work of the Commission, in particular contributing to formulation of policies that have been shown to have a major impact on efforts to reduce poverty.

The papers presented at the Expert Meeting can be found on the UN website at:
<http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions/2011/PovertyEradication.aspx>

Of particular interest are the following papers:

Report of the Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty,
<http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D5WxQuv7g8o%3d&tabid=1560>

Enhancing the Role of NGOs in Poverty Alleviation: Challenges and Opportunities by Catherine Ferguson
<http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=m02cRJ4sFlk%3d&tabid=1560>

Rethinking poverty eradication efforts post-2015 Issues Note for Discussion by Sakiko Fukuda-Parr
<http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0r1wi0QsG5Q%3d&tabid=1560>

Call for abstracts - 2012 Joint World Conference of Social Work and Social Development: Action and Impact

In July 2012 Stockholm will be the venue for the second joint world conference. It follows the amazing success of the first joint conference held in Hong Kong in June 2010

The organisers have made the first call for abstracts. **Deadline – 30th November 2011.**

The conference will take place in Stockholm, Sweden, between the 8th and 12th of July in 2012. The conference will be the meeting point for policymakers, social workers, scholars and students to exchange experience and development in social work practice, social research and education and social policy to develop a sustainable welfare system for the future.

Visit the conference website to obtain information about the conference and the call for abstracts. Information is available in English, French, Spanish and Swedish: www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org

For questions regarding registration, hotel booking, social events, abstract handling, exhibition management and general information please contact Congrex at socialwork2012@congrex.com. Regarding the scientific programme you are welcome to contact the Conference Secretariat that will open on 15th August. The conference administrator is Lina Fahlgren lfahlgren@icsw.org. Visit the conference on Facebook: *Stockholm 2012 – Social Work Social Development*

New Secretary General - International Federation of Social Workers

Gary Bailey, President of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has announced the appointment of Dr. Rory G. Truell as the new Secretary-General of IFSW. Dr. Truell, who has spent the last four years as the Chief Executive of The New Zealand Social Services Industry Training Organization, assumed the position on 1st July 2011. IFSW is a federation of national member organizations in 90 countries representing more than 745,000 social workers worldwide. IASSW, IFSW and ICSW are the partners in the world conference to be held in Stockholm in July 2012.

Progress of the world's women: In pursuit of justice

UN Women on 6th July 2011 launched its flagship report *Progress of the world's women* that focuses on women's access to justice. It can be found at <http://progress.unwomen.org/>

The report argues that well-functioning legal and justice systems can be vital mechanisms for women to achieve their rights and calls on governments around the world to "take urgent action to end the injustices that keep women poor and less powerful than men in every country".

Specifically, it calls on governments to:

- repeal laws that discriminate against women and ensure legislation protects women from violence and inequality at home and at work
- support innovative justice systems, legal aid and specialised courts for women
- put women on the frontline of justice delivery, in parliaments, the police and the courts
- increase funding for justice reform that specifically targets women and girls

Madeleine Bunting reviewed the report in *The Guardian* on 6th July 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2011/jul/06/un-women-report-access-to-justice?intcmp=122>

Ms Bunting said "More than half of working women in the world, 600 million, are trapped in insecure jobs without legal protection, according to the first flagship report of the new agency UN Women. A similar number do not have even basic protection against domestic violence, it finds, while sexual assault has become a hallmark of modern conflict.

Michelle Bachelet, the executive director of UN Women, said the document showed that many millions of women had no access to justice. "The report reminds us of the remarkable advances that have been made over the past century in the quest for gender equality and women's empowerment," she said. "However it also underscores the fact that despite widespread guarantees of equality, the reality for many millions of women is that justice remains out of reach."

For millions of women in both rich and poor countries, the search for justice is fraught with difficulty and is often expensive; laws and legal systems frequently discriminate against them. In Cambodia, for example, the forensic test necessary to lay a rape charge costs two weeks' wages, while in Kenya a land claim in an inheritance case can cost \$800 and extend across 17 different administrative stages.

The report offers 10 recommendations to overcome the paradox that while huge improvements have been made in the legal position of women over the last century, there is still a dramatic lag in translating that into equality and justice.

NGO Laws in Sub-Saharan Africa

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law has published *Global Trends in NGO Law: NGO Laws in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

Recent years have witnessed proliferating efforts by various governments in Africa to restrict the space for civil society. Many labels have been applied to a global trend of using law to narrow space for civil society: the “regulatory backlash against civil society,” the “associational counter-revolution,” and most recently, the “steel vice in which governments around the world are slowly crushing civil society and the human spirit.” It is within the global context that the same trend is unfolding across Africa. This issue of *Global Trends* provides examples of enacted or proposed regulatory measures – including laws, policies and regulations – that illustrate how this trend is taking shape in the region. The journal can be downloaded as a PDF at <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/globaltrends/GloTrends3-3.htm>

World Social Situation: The Global Social Crisis

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has released *The Global Social Crisis: Report on the World Social Situation*. The report can be downloaded from: <http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=v0LQqd2FT3k%3d&tabid=1561>

The DESA Report shows that recovery has been uneven and continues to be fragile, with a wide range of negative social impacts lingering from the economic downturn.

Importantly, the DESA Report asserts that the effects of the crisis in areas including health and education will become fully evident only in the long term. The increased levels of poverty, hunger and unemployment due to the global crisis is expected to continue, affecting billions of people for years to come. Poverty and unemployment have been linked to malnutrition, crime, domestic violence and substance abuse.

The Report stresses that it is essential that governments take into account the likely social implications of their economic policies. Economic policies considered in isolation from their social outcomes can have dire consequences for poverty, employment, nutrition, health and education which, in turn, adversely affect long-term sustainable development. The disconnect between economic policies and their social consequences can create a vicious circle of slow growth and poor social progress.

Cutting social expenditures may worsen and prolong negative impacts from the crisis. On the other hand, increasing expenditures to expand social protection systems and improve access to education and health services, as well as to promote productive employment, will help ensure more inclusive development with stronger domestic demand and a more solid foundation for future growth.

World Economic and Social Survey 2011

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has released the *Great Green Technological Transformation - UNDESA World Economic and Social Survey 2011*. It can be downloaded from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2011wess.pdf

In order for populations in developing countries to achieve a decent living standard, especially the billions who currently still live in conditions of abject poverty, and the additional two billion people who will have been added to the world’s population by mid-century—much greater economic progress will be needed.

In the next three to four decades, humankind must manage a fundamental technological overhaul or risk failure in fulfilling global commitments to end poverty and averting the catastrophic impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. This latest report analyses the options and challenges associated with the shift to more efficient and renewable energy technologies, with transforming agricultural technologies so as to guarantee food security without further degrading

land and water resources, and with applying the technology required to adapt to climate change and reduce risks to human populations from natural hazards.

Governments will have to take a leading role through implementation of investment and incentive schemes designed to accelerate green technological innovation and structural change directed towards sustainable production and consumption. Strengthened international cooperation and significant adjustments in multilateral trade and financing mechanisms will be needed if developing countries are to effect the necessary technological transformation without compromising their aspirations regarding growth and poverty reduction. Recovery with a human face must and can also be sustainable.

Poor Poverty: The Impoverishment of Analysis, Measurement and Policies

UN DESA's recent book, "*Poor Poverty: The Impoverishment of Analysis, Measurement and Policies*," offers a critical appraisal of the conventional measures and analysis of poverty as well as of poverty reduction policies. In particular, it highlights the major limitations of the international community inspired policies and popular poverty reduction programs. It also compares the performance of two apparently successful countries – China and India – and identifies their failures in critical areas such as inequality (both regional and interpersonal) and structural transformation.

The book argues that without sustained productive job creation, poverty policies and programmes will not succeed. Structural adjustment and other conventional policy prescriptions have resulted in reduced policy and fiscal space and hence greatly damaged economic development prospects, with dire consequences for poverty, inequality and destitution.

Economic growth needs to be stabilised with consistently counter-cyclical macroeconomic policies and institutions. Measures to promote structural change and reduce inequality are also crucial for development and poverty reduction. Universal social protection and more inclusive social provisioning should also be promoted. To obtain a copy of the book go to <https://unp.un.org/Details.aspx?pid=21558> The book costs USD38 for developed country buyers and USD19 for those from developing countries. Editor's note. It would be nice if OECD adopted a similar pricing policy.

Conference October 2011 Bochum Germany Reforming Social Protection Systems in Developing Countries – Determinants and Strategies of Institutional Change

The Institute of Development Research and Development Policy at the Ruhr-University of Bochum, Germany, together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is convening the International Conference 'Reforming Social Protection Systems in Developing Countries – Determinants and Strategies of Institutional Change'. The event will take place from 20th to 21st October 2011 in Bochum, Germany. The Conference aims to analyse on-going reforms of social protection systems in developing countries from both a political economy and legal point of view. After the event, the organisers plan to publish all conference contributions (full papers) in an edited volume. The conference registration is open until 15 August 2011. Conference website: <http://www.social-protection-conference.com/>.

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