

**GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER**  
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**National Councils and the Social Protection Floor - Central and West Africa**

The International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the Cameroon Women in Leadership and Development (CAWOLED) organised training on the social protection floor initiative (SPFI) for civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Commonwealth Central and West Africa Region. The meeting was supported by grants from the Commonwealth Foundation and SIDA. The meeting, held from 12 to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011, brought together umbrella and other organisations from Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Other meeting participants came from Senegal, Uganda and Paris. The main objective of this meeting was to increase civil society's contribution to the design and implementation of a social protection floor in the Sub-Saharan countries through a new awareness and the knowledge of the SPFI.



The meeting was officially opened by a representative of the Governor of the Littoral region – Mr Joseph Elongo who is also technical adviser for the economic cultural and social affairs department in the region and personal representative of his Excellency the Governor of the Littoral Region. His presence confirmed the importance the Cameroonian government attaches to the UN initiatives for social protection. He underscored the Cameroonian government's "desire to ensure sustainable universal access to services and quality care" by all citizens. Mr

Elongo quoted the Head of State of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul Biya, "The ultimate goal of my work remains the sustainable development of Cameroon in favour of Cameroonians. This is to give each Cameroonian the opportunity to food, health care, shelter, raising children and ensure their education, .....this is a great ambition, my greatest ambition which I want to see become a reality for all."

Mr Joseph Elongo stated in his address, the vision of the Head of State represents the political will and total commitment to the implementation of a social protection floor in Cameroon. He stressed that achieving a successful SPF should be given special attention by the Cameroonian State. Its success lies in a fight against poverty, adequate funding of programmes in a multidisciplinary context and social dialogue as well as the on-going and tireless contribution of development partners and NGOs. During the training the Cameroon media ran live sessions and popularised the SPF on both state and private radio and television stations.

Mr Christian Rollet, President of ICSW, who participated in the entire training, echoed the need for civil society organisations to engage in the SPF at national level.

Technical support for this training was provided by the International Labour Organisation through Mr Butare Theopiste who provided in depth understanding and appreciation of the SPFI. At the end of the three days, participants prepared a set of recommendations for all the stakeholders involved in the SPFI. The recommendations were aimed at governments, technical and financial partners, UN bodies, other related agencies and civil society organisations. Participants developed individual work plans detailing how their organisations would engage in the SPFI at national level.

ICSW thanks the Commonwealth Foundation and SIDA for supporting this training and the Cameroon Women in Leadership and Environment under the leadership of Ms Paschaline Tar, for organising an excellent meeting. A detailed report on the meeting will soon be uploaded on the ICSW website – [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org)

### **New social protection initiatives**

The International Labour Conference decided in June 2011 to take forward its commitment to social protection. The Social Security Department of the ILO in preparation for the 2011 Conference issued a [Report IV\(1\) Social protection floors for social justice and a fair globalization](#). It provides information on the law and practice concerning the establishment of a social protection floor or elements thereof at national level. The report, which included an overview of the main developments and emerging trends worldwide, was sent with a questionnaire on social protection to all governments.

Following the 2011 conference the ILO is seeking to influence world opinion in general and the G20 in particular on the social protection floor. The [Advisory Board](#) of the Social Protection Floor Initiative published the “Bachelet Report” in October 2011 - [Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization](#). (The Advisory Board is wider than the ILO and is a UN Chief Executive Board initiative agreed at its 2009 meeting). The Bachelet report called on the 2011 G20 Leaders Summit in Cannes to consider an “action plan” for implementing social protection floors through existing and new financing mechanisms. It shows that some countries – such as El Salvador, Benin, Mozambique and Vietnam – could provide a major social protection floor for as little as 1 to 2 per cent of GDP. The report shows that nationally-designed social protection floors are affordable even in low income countries.

### **Protecting democracy – Reclaiming civil society space in Africa**

ICSW participated in a meeting in Johannesburg South Africa, 21 to 23 Nov 2011 on *Protecting democracy: Reclaiming CSO space in Africa* organised by the Centre for Citizens' Participation on the African Union (CCPAU), the Midrand Civil Society Support facility, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), the Southern African Trust and Trust Africa (TA). The main objective of the meeting was to create awareness of the narrowing space for civil society to operate on the continent. The meeting was presented with research undertaken by Trust Africa, the Southern African Trust, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa and CIVICUS among others. The conclusions included strategies to implement recommendations emerging from the research; engagement with Pan African institutions on civil society space; skills building sessions on how to deal with and respond to shrinking civil society space and the development of tools and strategies to respond to the threats being faced by civil society.

Key priorities emerged from the conference. These included; consolidating and maximising opportunities, relations and spaces within regional and continental bodies; enhancing mechanisms to protect and support human rights defenders, activists, human rights campaigners at local, national and regional level in response to increasing vulnerabilities and threats; freedom of

movement (Africans vis a vis Europeans); promoting national level lobbies; advocacy and campaigning for supportive legal, policy and operational environments and penultimate creation and expansion of civil society space with a national emphasis; promoting civil society self-regulation mechanisms and enhancing accountability and effectiveness; strengthening and supporting coalition building and solidarity actions to defend, create and expand civil society space; financing civil society activities and relations between civil society and donors; effective engagement between civil society and governments (CSO-State relations). Recommendations were drafted under these major priorities.

### **New Publications**

**Social policies in Seychelles: Social Policies in small states series, No. 5.** This book provides comprehensive analysis of social policy development in the Seychelles from the colonial era onward, focusing on the political and economic developments that have led to the current situation. The challenge now is to maintain current levels of social policy interventions in the face of severe indebtedness and stagnant economic growth.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/3A9A74B074A08D26C12579580049787F?OpenDocument>

**UNESCO-CSH publication on the Right to the City in India New Delhi, 9 Dec. 2011** – On the occasion of the Human Rights Day, celebrated every year on the 10th December, Mr Miloon Kothari, former Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, United Nations Human Rights Council and Executive Director, Housing and Land Rights Network, launched the UNESCO-CSH publication titled Urban Policies and the Right to the City in India: Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship. The publication, prepared in collaboration with Centre de Sciences Humaines, New Delhi and supported by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, is a compendium of 16 research policy-papers covering several angles of the right to the city approach in India. The publication is intended as an advocacy tool to promote a rights-based approach to urbanization in India. A rights-based approach in the context of Indian cities has not yet been extensively documented and researched. For more information:

[http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15084&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15084&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### **A Fair Green Economy? Studies of Agriculture, Energy and Waste Initiatives in Malaysia**

This paper looks at how the Malaysian government deals with green economy. Through case studies of agriculture, renewable energy and waste-to-wealth initiatives, the paper demonstrates that green economy in Malaysia has the most potential when it involves the engagement of communities. ...

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/85AECC96CC26C369C12579760054BFCF?OpenDocument&cntxt=5F640&cookielang=en#top>

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