



**GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER**  
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**In this issue:**

- The Commission for Social Development convened in New York
- Partnership for Action on Green Economy launched
- Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board meeting in New York
- Useful resources and links

➤ **The Commission for Social Development convened in New York**

The 51st session of the Commission for Social Development, one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and an important forum for debate and policy guidance on social matters of international significance, was convened in New York from 6 to 15 February, covering a wide range of issues pivotal to the promotion of societies rooted in respect for the dignity of every individual, including youth, disability, ageing and African development.

Two weeks of negotiations, panel discussions and general debate, whose the priority theme was designated to be "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all", resulted in the adoption by consensus of the texts of all draft resolutions that were submitted for consideration. Representatives of Governments and civil society organizations from around the world described efforts to stimulate job creation, combat poverty and create inclusive societies, with a view to informing the Commission's policy session next year, and more broadly, the global development agenda beyond 2015.

Delegates and many other speakers affirmed the essential role of Governments in creating an enabling environment to empower people by providing the necessary tools and capacity-building opportunities. Many delegates reiterated that decent work was also vital to promoting empowerment, reducing poverty and enhancing social inclusion. The Commission laid the foundation for the 52nd session next year, when the 47-member body would produce a policy outcome on the priority theme. Several of the draft resolutions approved by the Commission highlighted the critical importance of empowering people and of their participation in advancing social development.

A draft resolution on "Policies and programmes involving youth" would have the Economic and Social Council urge governments, in consultation with young people, to develop holistic and integrated policies based on the Programme of Action for Youth. The text also underlined the importance of consulting with young people in the elaboration of

the post-2015 development agenda, encouraging states to consider including youth representatives in all relevant discussions of the Council and the General Assembly.

Following that action, Ahmad Alhendawi, sworn in during the work of the Commission as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, addressed the Commission for the first time, saying that, with three years to the deadline for attaining the Millennium Development Goals, it was a "golden period" for governments, civil society, youth and others to set the development agenda for the post-2015 period, and that his mission would be to help young people participate in that framework.

Along similar lines, a draft resolution on "Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda: towards 2015 and beyond", submitted by the Chair and approved without a vote, would have the Council welcome the upcoming High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, which will be held on 23 September and seeks to ensure the inclusion of all persons with disabilities in all aspects of development. It would encourage states to "seize every opportunity" to include disability as a cross-cutting issue on the global development agenda.

A draft resolution on the "Second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002", would have the Council call on states to promote and protect the rights of older persons. It would have them adopt measures to provide economic and social security and health care to older persons, and ensure their full participation in the decision-making processes affecting their lives.

The other two drafts approved focused on, respectively, the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (1994) and the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In its final action, the Commission took note of several documents: the Secretary-General's report on "Promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all"; a note by the Secretary-General entitled "Emerging issues: the social dimension in the global development agenda beyond 2015"; and the report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. It also approved the draft provisional agenda and documentation for its 52nd session, as well as a draft report on the organization of the session just concluded.

ICSW representatives participated actively in the work of the Commission during the discussions at the plenary submitting a statement, and took part in various side events.

### ➤ **Partnership for Action on Green Economy**

On 19 February 2013 four UN agencies-- the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) launched the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). The Partnership will help participating countries to shift investment and policies towards the creation of clean technologies, resource-efficient infrastructure, green skilled labour and good governance, among other

services. The reduction of environmental risks and the acceleration of the transition to a green economy have been identified as the key goals of the new Partnership, which aims at catalyzing change at the national level through targeted economic and policy instruments and the training of local staff. Developing countries could be major beneficiaries, if they can put in place the policies needed to reap the economic and environmental benefits of a resource-efficient, low-carbon growth and avoid at the same time the risks and shocks of carbon-intensive infrastructures.

PAGE is a direct response to the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which was held in June in Brazil. The outcome document, entitled "*The Future We Want*," calls on UN agencies to support countries that want to accelerate their transition to an inclusive green economy in order to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.

During the first two years of the Partnership, PAGE will focus on seven pilot countries, which are yet to be named, and will scale up its support to a total of 30 countries by 2020.

➤ **Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board meeting in New York**

The third meeting of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board took place on 11 February 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. Chaired jointly by the ILO and the World Bank, the meeting was attended by 48 representatives of 31 international organizations and bilateral institutions, as well as international NGOs. ICSW has been an active participant since the inception of this entity and took part in the New York meeting as well.

The meeting concentrated on three major topics: (a) social protection in the context of the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda, (b) inter-agency joint work at the country level, and (c) international cooperation in the field of social protection statistics. The meeting resulted in adoption of specific work plans charting the road in the above areas.

The ILO presented a proposed road map for positioning social protection within the post-2015 framework and identified possible entry points for social protection in the broader post-2015 agenda. There is positive momentum in advancing the social protection agenda that needs to be strengthened. A clear mandate for advancing the social protection agenda exists already from the Rio+20 outcomes, Recommendation 202 of the ILC on national floors of social protection, the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review 2012, and others recent decisions.

It was agreed that the Board could provide technical inputs to inform the policy discussion in the various tracks and processes related to the post-2015 and sustainable development frameworks and support member states in defining possible development goals and targets. The Board agreed that it is therefore important to work together to promote the role of social protection as a platform to achieve, in a consistent and coherent

way, objectives related to poverty eradication, the creation of decent jobs, the reduction of inequalities, food security and health, and to create more inclusive and sustainable development pathways. In this sense, social protection could be considered as a key objective of development geared at overcoming rampant insecurity, as well as the means of empowerment of people. While institutional definitions may differ, there exists a strong consensus for the promotion of an inclusive definition of social protection at the global level and for the need to avoid certain limiting interpretations.

Members of the Board agreed that indicators related to coverage are important for transparency and accountability, but they have to be simple in order to ensure reliability and be based on data available at the national level.

It was agreed that ILO and the World Bank would continue their joint effort in compiling the existing body of knowledge on social protection schemes, connecting it to the emerging post-2015 agenda. This document, largely of a technical nature, will bring to the forefront existing country evidence regarding the role social protection can play in poverty eradication, reducing inequality, creating decent jobs and promoting sustainable development, and will propose broad categories of potential coverage indicators or targets. The draft note will then be circulated among Board members for comments. The document will serve as an input to the on-going global thematic consultations and will be shared with the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Cooperation on social protection statistics has been proceeding smoothly and was welcomed by the members of the Board. The World Bank and ILO presented a [Joint Proposal on International Social Protection Data Harmonization](#), outlining the potential for cooperation in the areas of data collection and sharing. The initiative was a direct result of the outcomes of a [workshop organized by the Overseas Development Institute/Department for International Development and the World Bank](#) on social protection financing (London, 6 November 2012), in which international organizations agreed on the preparation of terms of reference for cooperation in the areas of the standardization of the terminology and classifications used and the harmonization of data collection efforts and the various databases, with a view to supporting countries in their efforts to enhance their capacity in producing reliable social protection data and establish national social protection statistical systems. The primary objective of this initiative is to promote data quality, increase institutional efficiency, avoid unnecessary duplication and develop a consistent statistical picture of social protection provision, which will also provide better guidance on data collection at the national level.

The members of the Board agreed that the data harmonization efforts should begin as soon as possible—even before an agreement on the specifics of social protection indicators is reached. There are still some gaps in data collection, especially regarding data on expenditure, but efforts should be made to engage countries and to develop capacity at the national level.

Members suggested that, as part of the reporting requirement associated with the Recommendation on National Social Protection Floors, the ILO could develop a reporting tool to assist countries in complying with their obligations. Indicators could be linked to those required data.

It was also agreed that the Board members would report on ongoing data collection efforts, providing information and contacts to the inter-agency group. The Inter-American Development Bank's Observatory for Social Protection was cited as an example, as they are launching a longitudinal social protection survey in 8 countries. The World Bank and ILO will provide feedback to the Bank so as to harmonize data collection efforts.

The ILO presented its inventory matrix of country-led social protection cooperation activities. While it cannot be seen as an exhaustive database, the matrix is still a useful and transparent tool for information purposes and is open to further improvements.

In the context of future efforts, the World Bank presented the SPARCS framework concept note aimed at benchmarking and assessing social protection and labour systems— a framework welcomed by the Board as a nationally-owned platform that includes different tools of participating agencies.

#### ➤ **Useful resources and links**

**Protection in Practice: Food Assistance with safety and Dignity**, WFP, 2013  
Nicholas Crawford and Gina Pattugalan (eds.)

This book published by the World Food Programme highlights the impact of providing food and nutritional assistance to people in need, questioning whether humanitarian agencies are doing enough to protect civilians in politically unstable and insecure areas. According to its editors, the book raises questions about pragmatic and moral issues that have affected WFP's work on the ground, and offers possible solutions that may be of interest to other humanitarian groups as well.

For more details please go to:

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wfp254460.pdf>

**In Aid for India. Defining a positive role for the UK**, by Will Straw and Alex Glennie

Given the outstanding development challenges facing India, the UK government's decision, announced in November 2012, to end aid in 2015 looks both premature and politically motivated. Instead of ending aid at an arbitrary point in time, the government should set out an 'exit strategy' for aid that specifies the development goals, relating to poverty and other objectives in recipient countries, to be met before aid is withdrawn.

Business investment and personal remittances between the UK and India vastly outweigh the value of British government aid. These non-aid flows are crucial to people in

both countries, and could provide greater benefits. The report recommends new approaches that the British government, British businesses, British investors and non-resident Indians based in Britain should adopt in order to enhance the impact of all those flows.

For more details, go to:

[http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/10231/in-aid-of-india-defining-a-positive-role-for-the-uk?mkt\\_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRovuaXBZKXonjHpfsX77u4vUaO%2BIMI%2F0ER3fOvrPUfGjI4ESMJiI%2FqLAzICFpZo2FFcH%2FaQZA%3D%3D](http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/10231/in-aid-of-india-defining-a-positive-role-for-the-uk?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRovuaXBZKXonjHpfsX77u4vUaO%2BIMI%2F0ER3fOvrPUfGjI4ESMJiI%2FqLAzICFpZo2FFcH%2FaQZA%3D%3D)

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