

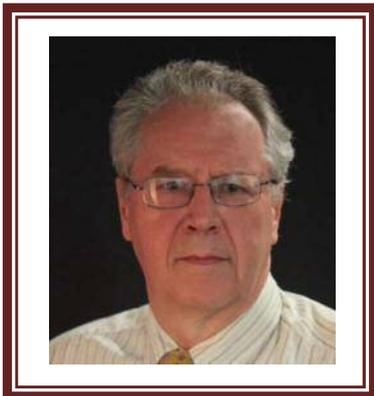


GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER
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In this issue:

ICSW today: proud history and challenges ahead
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Dr. Sergei Zelenev assumed his position at ICSW in August 2012. Prior to that he worked for the United Nations for almost three decades, both at Headquarters in New York and in the field, in Africa and the Caribbean. An economist by education, he dealt throughout his career at the UN with the socio-economic dimensions of the intergovernmental policy dialogue and took on various managerial duties, including such positions as Director of the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and the Chief of the Social Integration Branch in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA).



ICSW's History in Brief

Established in 1928, the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) is one of the oldest international non-governmental organizations aimed at promoting social development, social justice and social welfare everywhere in the world. ICSW's history is closely linked to the history of social work and social practice, unfolding across geopolitical borders and aimed at improving the human condition and well-being in the face of socio-economic uncertainties and risks generated by market-driven societies. While the emphasis placed by the ICSW on international social work and social development, nationally and internationally, has been shifting, the balance between these two aspects has evolved.

The immediate predecessor of the ICSW -- the first International Conference on Social Work -- was convened in Paris in July 1928. That ground-breaking event became possible following the dedication and vision of several extraordinary personalities willing and capable of assuming leadership in the preparation of the Conferenceⁱ in the aftermath of World War I, which brought devastation and suffering to many nations. Preparatory work for the International Conference began in earnest with several meetings of the Preparatory Committee being held over a three-year period. These culminated in a meeting in Prague in 1927, where the guidelines for the organization of the Conference were elaborated and adoptedⁱⁱ. The stated goals of the Conference were fostering discussion and idea-sharing between social workers and social welfare organizations from around the world; assistance with dissemination of ideas and professional information; and establishing personal contacts. These efforts promoted international cooperation within the social work profession and beyond, bringing on board numerous activists, experts and practitioners, while working apart from state-sponsored structures for improving the human condition. The largest intergovernmental organizations of that time—the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation -- provided technical support, with financial backing from several national and regional foundations.

Mapping and identifying the field of proposed activities, the first International Conference in Paris underscored that social work could not be constrained to individual cases but required broad-based

interdisciplinary efforts to relieve suffering resulting from want (i.e., providing palliative assistance), restore people to "normal" conditions of life (through curative assistance), prevent social afflictions (preventive assistance) and improve social conditions and raise standards of living" (constructive assistance).ⁱⁱⁱ

The importance of individual practice was acknowledged, along with the need to promote legislative and administrative measures targeting a group or community and coupled with research in the fields of social well-being and social welfare. Attempting to delineate the field even further, the participants at the Paris Conference underscored a link between the need to prevent or address social hardships and the availability of resources for social purposes.^{iv} There was agreement on the need for professional qualifications and skills, but opinions among more than 2500 participants, who represented a diverse group of social workers, health-care providers, welfare officers and other activists, differed as to the respective roles of the state and private institutions. The variety of views was also reflected in the submissions of national committees and in publications of the executive committee, even though there was agreement on the basic values of international social work practice and the general directions as outlined above.

Since the first Conference, the importance of the thematic approach was recognized; the first priority theme was "Social Work and Industry". About two-thirds of the participants at the Paris Conference participants were women. The Conference elected a woman -- Alice Masarykova, the President of the Czechoslovakian Red Cross -- as the first President of ICSW for four years. Doctor René Sand became the first Secretary General of the International Conference on Social Work-- a post he held from 1928 to 1932, after the Provisional Preparatory Group of the Paris Conference transformed itself in 1928 into a permanent organization under the name "International Conference on Social Work".^v

The aim of this move was to capitalize on the positive momentum and translate the wealth of ideas that had emerged at the first Conference into practice so as to continue its activities without any interruption. René Sand became President in 1936 and held that position until the outbreak of World War II. Having become a permanent organization, the International Conference on Social Work represented national councils on social work and social welfare, promoting humanistic values and advocating for disadvantaged population groups, and also assisting its members with information and consultative work. At the same time, recognition of the substantial differences in approaches taken at the national level and counterproductive responses to encouraging the same strategy for everyone led to acceptance of the substantial autonomy of each organisation.^{vi}

Before WWII two international conferences were convened with a four-year interval—in 1932 in Frankfurt, Germany, on the topic "Social Work and the Family", and in 1936 in London, UK, on "Social Work and the Community". The ICSW global conferences resumed in 1948 after the interruption caused by the Second World War. Since that time, the Global Conferences of ICSW have been held periodically, initially every four years, and since 2010 every two years. Global Conferences on social work and social development were organised through close collaboration among the ICSW, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – the three sister organisations as they have been termed.^{vii}

The international conferences regularly convened by ICSW, either separately or together with IASSW and IFSW, have dealt with recurring issues and new subjects that reflected political realities and deep changes on the global scene. During the 1950s and 1960s, the emergence of a large group of developing countries as independent political actors facing entirely new social and economic challenges caused ICSW to recast its agenda on socio-economic development so as to encompass social rights, social welfare and well-being, including dominant policy discourses around the: improvement of the lives of those living in poverty, participation, social cohesion, community development, and the growing significance of social services. These have become a constant feature of the global discourses on social issues, gradually expanding the scope and objectives of social welfare goals, analysing the interaction of key actors and presenting analysis of policy instruments.

^{viii} The membership of the ICSW expanded, as national councils from many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America became members.

Organizational adjustments followed, and in 1966, the ICSW—which until then was known as the “International Conference on Social Work”—changed its constitution and name to “the International Council on Social Welfare”—without having to change in its English acronym, ICSW. Commenting on that change, Kate Katzki, the Secretary General^x of the ICSW from 1967 to 1988, underscored the fact that ICSW could no longer focus on only one single goal, namely, serving as an international forum for discussion among social workers.^x The name change reflected the profound structural changes in the organization, the growing diversification in its activities and the higher political profile sought by the ICSW leadership.

Evolving structure and organization of activities

According to the Constitution of the International Council on Social Welfare^{xi} “the Council” is a “global, non-governmental, non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit organization which represents a wide range of national and international member organizations that seek to advance social justice, social welfare, social work and social development”.^{xii}

The primary objectives of the Council are as follows: Promote forms of social and economic development which aim to reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability, especially amongst disadvantaged people; strive for recognition and realization of fundamental rights to employment, income, food, shelter, education, health care and security; promote equality of opportunity, freedom of expression, freedom of association, participation and access to human services and oppose discrimination; promote policies and programmes which strike an appropriate balance between social and economic goals and which respect cultural diversity; strengthen civil society throughout the world to achieve these objectives; seek implementation of these objectives by governments, international organizations and non-governmental agencies in cooperation with its network of Member Organizations.^{xiii}

The *General Assembly*, which adopts the four-year global programme and the two-year budget framework, is the supreme governing body of the Council, electing the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and other members of the *Management Committee*, responsible for all matters not specifically allocated under the Constitution to the General Assembly or to the *Supervisory and Advisory Board*, which comprises the Regional Presidents, the President, the Vice President and the Treasurer. It is entrusted with supervision and monitoring the *Management Committee*, creating and amending the By-Laws, and establishing and restructuring regions.^{xiv}

While the ICSW is a worldwide non-governmental organization with regional structures, it is not a mass organization, and only one national council from each country can be accepted into membership. The regional organizations are indigenous to the regions. The regions play an active role, but membership is assumed directly with the international headquarters, and not via regions. The ICSW is a unified organization that could be compared to an amalgam rather than a mosaic as far as its membership is concerned.^{xv}

The regional structure is established under the By-Laws, and regions have their own decision-making bodies, as well as their own programmes of activities. Each member, with the exception of International Member Organizations, is allocated to a region by the Board for the purposes of the allocation of membership fees, and each member is entitled to the same rights in the region as globally. At the same time, there is substantial organizational flexibility - any member organization is able to cooperate with any member organization in other regions, as well as, by agreement, participation in other regional meetings, activities and ICSW structures. Regional General Assemblies and other regional organs have been established under global and regional by-laws.^{xvi} Some regional entities have their own legal status separate from the ICSW.

The President of the ICSW is the highest elected official and representative of the Council and is elected to a single four-year term, without the possibility of a second consecutive term. In his capacity of the strategic leader of the organization, the President sets overall direction and proposes innovative

policy solutions, maintaining interaction with other partners and stakeholders at the regional and global levels.

The ICSW Executive Director is responsible for implementing the decisions of the General Assembly, Board and Management Committee and for keeping the Management Committee informed on issues that are important to the proper functioning of the organization. The Executive Director combines supervision of the day-to-day operations of the Global Office with substantive outreach activities, editing the Global Cooperation Newsletter published by ICSW in English, French and Spanish, and maintaining links with various partners, including other NGOs and intergovernmental organizations.

ICSW has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), ILO and other UN agencies. This status enables the ICSW to address UN bodies through broad-based statements and advocacy, participate in the intergovernmental discussions and present recommendations to intergovernmental bodies. ICSW's Global Programme is a strategic framework of the organization designed to operate at the global, regional and national levels, setting the goals and umbrella policy for the Council's operations for 4 years.

Expanding the scope of work at the global level

Over the years, the priorities of the ICSW have been changing, reflecting the political changes in the world, the development and refinement of a global perspective in its work, as well as the growing awareness of the need to reconcile social and economic policy. In the face of the progressing integration and liberalization of the world economy and the new intensity of international competition - with its profound, and not necessarily positive effect on social spending, including reduction of social transfers and of the delivery of social services - the welfare situation has varied significantly from one region to another. More recently, growing inequality between and within countries has become a pressing issue at the national level and internationally, creating a new impetus for civil society organizations, including ICSW, to raise their voice on behalf of persons and groups left behind and marginalized.

The development discourse has also not been static. Human development has emerged as one of the central concepts in international development since the early 1990s, supported not only by civil society but also by many governments and international organizations. The need to view people as the ends of development as well as its means, to focus on both poor and poorest people, and to prioritize capability-enhancing services (such as food security, education and health), and the multidimensional conceptualization of human well-being and poverty have shifted the focus of many economists and policy-makers away from the earlier emphasis on per-capita economic growth as the sole indicator of socio-economic progress. The 1990s marked a watershed in the evolution of ideas about poverty reduction. ^{xvii}

At the onset of the 1980s, ICSW had three core priorities: convening conferences and ensuring space for discussions, providing support to national committees, and building stronger relations with the United Nations. The situation changed in late 1980s and early 1990s, when a more comprehensive agenda emerged both at ICSW headquarters and in the regions. In the 1980s, a gradual shift in the philosophy of the organization became apparent, including its main thrust from the idea of "social work" to "social welfare" and then to "social development"^{xviii}.

A deliberate and consistent move was made in the 1970s and 1980s to go beyond social work and enhance the social development dimension in its global activities and broaden the scope of ICSW's activities. The interdisciplinary and holistic nature of the ICSW approach to development thinking formed after the Second World War and was vividly demonstrated at ICSW global conferences. The ICSW has been invited to take part in numerous conferences, expert group meetings, research seminars and other events of international significance, to share its experiences and to provide substantial inputs. Its global image was strongly reinforced during the preparation of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) convened in Copenhagen in 1995.

The World Summit for Social Development represented an important political threshold for the ICSW, not only in terms of opportunities to contribute to the outcome documents but also the fact that it became an important benchmark for ICSW-affiliated organizations during the implementation phase; in many ways ICSW activities in the post-Summit period became aligned with the Ten Commitments made in Copenhagen and the recommendations of the Plan of Action adopted at the Summit. The principles of social justice, equity and equitable societies -- high on the WSSD Agenda -- are shared by the ICSW, which has been striving for many years to put these principles into practice on the ground and promote them in high-level international forums. Creating an environment to enable achievement of social development, eradicating poverty through decisive national action and international cooperation, promoting full employment as a basic priority, and fostering stable, safe and just societies to promote social integration—all the commitments that emerged at the Summit have been taken on board as guiding principles by the ICSW in its own activities. In the wake of the 2000 Millennium Summit and the subsequent adoption of the MDGs, ICSW actively supported advocacy and multilateral policy efforts at the national, regional and global levels to improve the human condition in a systematic and concerted way.

Promoting social protection-- seen by ICSW as one of the pillars of a forward-looking social policy aimed at securing universal access to social services and basic income-- has become one of the key priorities and recurrent themes in ICSW advocacy efforts. The shift away from universal, publicly provided social protection schemes to needs-tested targeted assistance, which became evident with spread of neo-liberal economic policies encouraged by the international financial institutions, has been extremely painful for many societies. ICSW efforts have sought to draw attention to the existence of positive alternatives to targeting, and the detrimental dimensions for well-being of the "race to the bottom" resulting from cuts in social spending. ICSW has advocated consistently for the principles of the universal public provision of basic social services and basic income, in other words going beyond a "safety net" approach. The need to protect people against contingencies and risks, along with the developmental and social justice functions of social protection, is well known^{xix} and has always been underscored by the ICSW in its policy statements at various fora.

The new impetus to these efforts was provided when the ILO Recommendation 202 on national floors of social protection was unanimously adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 101st session in 2012. There is increasing recognition of the fact that the implementation of nationally defined social protection floors (SPFs) may be regarded as an important tool in the fight against poverty and inequality. A rights-based approach aimed at protecting women, men and children from risks and vulnerabilities helps to sustain their well-being throughout the lifecycle, guaranteeing access to health care and other basic services, as well as at least a basic level of income security. The ICSW has supported the Social Protection Floor Initiatives of the United Nations, one of its nine initiatives to cope with the global financial crisis, since its inception by the United Nations in 2009.^{xx}

Partnerships

Joining forces with more than 80 other NGOs, the ICSW formed a Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, which has an increasingly important role to play in shaping the debate, raising awareness, achieving a national consensus on policy priorities and monitoring the progress of SPFs. The Coalition played a major role in promoting the role of social protection in the current process of formulating the new development goals for the post -2015 development agenda (when the existing Millennium Development Goals expire). The ICSW was one of the co-authors of a joint statement of the Global Coalition demanding a stand-alone development goal on social protection. But the coalition with NGO partners is not the only joint effort undertaken by ICSW in connection with social protection promotion. Among a limited number of other international NGOs the ICSW has been invited to take part in the work of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, which was created at the behest of G-20 and is chaired jointly by the ILO and the World Bank. The Board has been instrumental in developing conceptual tools for the performance assessment and optimisation of the operation of national social protection systems, and in future will probably play a major role in inter-agency

technical advisory work at the country level, cooperation in the field of social protection statistics and other key issues linked to social protection promotion.

Another important partnership was formed by the ICSW at the UN with civil society organizations working to promote the rights of older persons. The ICSW has been closely collaborating with the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, voicing its support for the elaboration of a new legal international instrument to protect the rights of older persons.

Apart from ties built within the UN environment, the ICSW has also built a strong collaboration and partnerships with sister organizations which have the same historical roots—namely with the IASSW and IFSW. The three organizations work together to produce the *International Social Work* journal, and collaborate in organizing joint world conferences on social work and social development issues every two years. The conferences such as the forthcoming Joint World Conference in Melbourne, Australia in July 2014 provide ample opportunities for the stakeholders to discuss issues which the social work and social welfare sectors face on everyday basis and to ensure a closer link between evidence-based practice, policy objectives and social development goals. Furthermore, the joint global conferences have revealed how actions geared on accomplishing the priority goals of the joint Global Agenda adopted by ICSW together with IASSW and IFSW might impact on the conditions of people and demonstrate how actions by the social work and social development community can contribute to an enduring physical environment, promote compliance with a range of climate-related policies and measures, and help raise awareness and build capacity among practitioners regarding the imperatives of sustainable development.

Coming together in Paris in mid-November 2012 to consider specific actions in the context of the implementation of the Global Agenda, the three partner organizations decided to establish a Global Agenda Observatory to gather evidence about the activities of social workers, educators and social development practitioners who support the implementation of the Global Agenda and to give visibility and credibility to their contributions and promote further action. This new entity is structured around the four themes of the Global Agenda commencing with the theme of promoting social and economic equalities. The themes to be covered in subsequent years include: promoting the dignity and worth of people, working toward environmental sustainability and strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships. A focus on ensuring an appropriate environment for practice and education will be maintained throughout. ^{xxi}

Regional and national activities

At the regional level, the ICSW seeks to increase the consideration of social development by regional groupings of governments; at the same time, at the national level, the ICSW works to strengthen the ability of national councils to influence social policy and programmes in their respective countries, taking into account local conditions and priorities of national socio-economic development.

Activities covered by the national councils are wide-ranging, but within the remit of the ICSW Global Programme. For example, in 2012-2013, the regional activities of the ICSW-affiliated organizations in Latin America concentrated on the affordability of social protection and the feasibility of the social protection floor initiative, exploring new tools and policy measures. In Asia, activities covered issues of the applicability and affordability of social protection schemes to the specific regions (South Asia), highlighted the importance of partnerships and collaboration among governments and NGOs on social policy and welfare matters (South-East Asia and the Pacific), and explored challenges of ageing and long-term care (North-East Asia).

ICSW Europe has convened seminars to explore the situation of the working poor -- people who have been pushed into the lower end of the job market. Their plight represents a growing concern in countries at all levels of development, including economies in transition and developed-market economies. The applicability of the Social Protection Floors Initiative in the European context was explored at the seminar convened in March 2014 in Rennes, France. The participants analysed the

merits of the existing systems of social protection in Europe, highlighting at the same time the gaps that need to be plugged and the policy measures that should be taken.

In June 2013, the ICSW in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region organized a high-level Forum on the importance of national civil dialogue, where issues of social inclusion and participation were discussed, along with finding ways and means to ensure that the “voices” of various groups in society are heard, giving real substance to the concept of citizenship and democracy. The event was extensively covered by the regional press and other mass media^{xxii}. In May 2014, the MENA regional conference convened by ICSW in Rabat together with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung concentrated on the problematic of social cohesion and comparison of experiences in this area in the Arab world. In the African region, ICSW activities focused on capacity-building, promoting partnerships and addressing resource mobilization issues.^{xxiii}

In North America, major efforts have been undertaken by ICSW to promote social inclusion, social cohesion and active citizenship (e.g. in Canada). Much remains to be done, given that the meaning of social welfare in this part of the world is often interpreted as a mere dependency, providing a pretty narrow perspective.

The ICSW training programme to strength national councils is an integral part of its ongoing work, representing a combination of bottom-up and top-down efforts. Apart from capacity-development, training sessions organized by ICSW provide opportunities to strengthen existing links with the academic community and to build new knowledge-based networks.

Looking forward

As the ICSW looks back over its past 85 years of history, the organization recognizes not only its achievements, but also the multiple challenges. First of all, we need to retain and reinforce an identify of our own, using our unique experiences to advance the goals that we all share. ICSW is known as the organization of social development practitioners; we should make sure that it is also known as an organization of top-notch professionals in the social policy field, working at the forefront of conceptual thinking, advocacy and training. Second, we should continue our work in creating a quality space for discussion on the most acute and highly relevant policy issues in every region where we work, as well as at the global level. In this light, our regional and global cooperation Newsletters could play a most important role serving as an organizing and binding medium for members, and as a platform informing members of ongoing activities and facilitating the dissemination of best practices. With the further development of information technology, the updating of the regional and global websites becomes equally important, as it is complimentary with the dissemination of the Newsletters that we publish. And last but not the least—we should not hesitate to revisit and recalibrate the tools we use in our work, particularly regarding monitoring the impact of our organizational activities and ensuring our financial sustainability.

The number of non-governmental organizations dealing with social development issues has mushroomed during the last twenty years. For the ICSW, retaining its influence and finding a niche in the new international environment require much professionalism and dedication, and a constant quest for meaningful, innovative and cost-effective policies.

ICSW is well positioned to act as the connector, convenor and knowledge broker, binding together issues and regions, and mobilizing partners along shared priorities that will shape progressive social and economic policies across the global village.

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References

ⁱ Among these, the name of the Belgian doctor, scientist and educator, René Sand (1877-1953) stands out. In 1921, he became Secretary-General of the "League of Red Cross Societies", which was created in 1919. Sand endorsed the idea of a large-scale world forum on social welfare in 1923, thereby reviving a proposal floated earlier by Dr. Clotilde Mulon at the 46th US Conference for Social Work. Julia Lathrop, the President of the National Conference for Social Work, invited René Sand to address the 50th American Conference on the issue of international cooperation, where he was able to generate a positive reaction to the idea.

ⁱⁱ. Le Conseil international d'action sociale (ICSW) Quatre-vingts ans d'histoire (1928-2008). Presses de l'Ecole des hautes Etudes en santé publique, Rennes, 2008, p. 14

ⁱⁱⁱ. Macdonald, John, "The International Council on Social Welfare. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, a Short History", ICSW, New York, 1975, p.7

^{iv}. Première Conférence internationale du service social, Paris, 1928, tome I, 1929, Statuts, pp.25, 172

^v. Kerstin Eilers, "Social Policy and Social Work in 1928. The First International Conference of Social Work in Paris Takes Stock", in Sabine Hering and Berteke Waaldijk (eds), History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and their influence on the Development of International Social Organizations. Leke+Budrich, Opladen, 2003, p.120

^{vi}. Le Conseil international d'action sociale, op.cit, p.16

^{vii} In 1929, an International Committee of Schools of Social Work was established to give prominence to the specific needs of social work education, explore best practices and facilitate international cooperation; the first Conference of IASSW was held in 1929 in Berlin. The first Conference of IFSW was held in 1956 in Munich, at the same time as the ICSW conference (see: Le Conseil international d'action sociale, op.cit. p.50)

^{viii} Ian Gough, "Welfare regimes in development context" in Ian Gough and Geof Wood with Armando Barrientos, Philippa Bevan, Peter Davis and Graham Room "Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Social Policy in Development Contexts" Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.22

^{ix}. In 1996 the position of the "Secretary General" was renamed the "Executive Director"

^x. Kate Katzki, 60 years of ICSW, New York, 1988, p.16 quoted in "Le Conseil international d'action sociale, 80 ans d'histoire", op.cit, p.32

^{xi}. The most recent Constitution was adopted by the Committee of Representatives on 29 December 2007, and amended on 14 June 2010. The Committee of Representatives itself was given a new name of "General Assembly", retaining the same duties and prerogatives.

^{xii}. The ICSW Constitution, clause 1

^{xiii} Ibid, clause 1

^{xiv}. Ibid, clause 9,10 and 11

^{xv}. ICSW membership is classified into several different categories. Category A covers national committees having a broadly-based membership in their respective countries and seeking to enhance social justice, social welfare, social work and social development in that country. Category

B is reserved for international non-governmental organizations trying to achieve the same objectives. Categories C and D are intended for civil society organizations that cannot claim to work on a full range of issues and be the key party representing social welfare issues in the country, but seeking to enhance social justice, social welfare, social work and social development anyway (The ICSW Constitution, Clauses 5-7).

xvi. The ICSW Constitution, clause 8

xvii. For more details: David Hulme, "The making of the Millennium Development Goals: Human Development meets Results-based Management in an Imperfect World". The University of Manchester, Brook World Poverty Institute, December 2007, page 2

xviii. Le conseil international d'action social. 80 ans d'histoire, op.cit.p.45

xiix Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Report on the World Social Situation 2001, United Nations, New York, 2001, p.217

xx. See the ICSW Statement on Poverty eradication, Commission for Social Development, Fiftieth session

xxi The Global Agenda Observatory is conceived as a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Agenda Commitments and will consist of networks or consortia composed of institutions of higher education and professional/practice-based organizations that jointly conduct research, analyse, synthesize and report on Agenda activities. It also involves a process that will evolve over time. It aspires to establish a strong, credible monitoring mechanism over the next 10 years. The Global Agenda Observatory will be established at the local, national, regional and international levels, working through the existing structures and work plans, taking into consideration the existing priorities of each of our organizations.

xxii. Le Matin, Rabat, 13 June 2013

xxiii One of the most innovative projects in the context of promoting North-South partnerships is the joint project between the Tanzanian Council for Social Development (TACOSODE) and the Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health (STKL, recently renamed SOSTE), which aims at regional capacity-building programmes to strengthen national councils so that they can be effective advocates for social development and poverty reduction

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