



GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER
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Latin America Preparatory Seminar for the 2010 Joint World Conference



Latin American members of ICSW met with civil society and representatives of government in Montevideo Uruguay. The Seminar was called "Social politics in the 21st Century – National strategies in the region". The Uruguayan Minister for Social Development, Mtra. Marina Arismendi gave a stimulating opening address. Minister Arismendi said the government of President Tabare Vazquez Rosas has been in power since 2004 and that during the last five years has worked to undo the worst excesses of neo-liberalism including reversing the privatisation of public services. Minister Arismendi said simply that privatisation of public goods had not worked. The government has reformed the tax system and made it simpler using the changes to bringing about social reformation. The government has focussed on long term policies in the context of ensuring citizens have food to eat, a roof over their heads and access to education.



The ICSW Regional President for Latin America and the Caribbean – Danilo Santos de Miranda spoke on - *Strengthening national and regional advice*. He said that the politics that guides development should target the reduction of social inequalities. He said the first commitment of human development should be sustainability in the context of establishing a social pact which takes into account citizens' expectations of their future and their quality of life.

Mr de Miranda said we are faced with the first effects of the economic crisis. The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are 2.5 million unemployed in Latin America. Countries including Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Venezuela have developed measures of support to stop further damage to their economies and societies. In this sense the subject of the Seminar "social politics" is fundamental. The international crisis will not affect all countries equally, although the rate of unemployment will be high for poor men, women and youth.

Danilo Santos de Miranda referred to the need for ICSW to have healthy structures that are capable of meeting the commitment to promote social development.

In that sense, it is urgent we establish a coherent set of actions that reaffirm our commitment to social protection, social development, resources and infrastructure for health, education, knowledge, participation, sustainability and citizenship.



ICSW congratulates Consejo Uruguayo de Bienestar Social and its President Mirtha Crevoisier for the initiative in conducting a valuable seminar of direct relevance to vulnerable groups in Latin America. Speakers and participants came from Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay.

Subjects covered in the Seminar included; child and adolescent welfare; political strategies for children and adolescents; active ageing and long term care; active ageing; social work contribution to the building of social policies; the axis of ethics and politics in social work practice; and education in social work.

Speeches presented at the Seminar will soon be available on the ICSW website: <http://www.icsw.org/region/la.htm>. Details of the 2010 Joint World Conference of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Federation of Social Workers and ICSW can be found in Chinese, English, French and Spanish at <http://www.swsd2010.org/en/index.html>.



Prior to the seminar representatives of some ICSW Latin American members met with the Regional President and global Executive Director to plan future development of ICSW in the region

UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis

Last month (July) we reported briefly on the UN conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development. Here is a bit more – the recommendations. Thanks to Selim Jahan, Director, Poverty Practice, Bureau for Development Policy UNDP and Rob Vos, Director, Development Policy and Analysis Division with UNDESA for this summary.

First, on the global governance system, the following recommendations were made:

- The global economic governance system needs to develop effective monitoring mechanisms that could flag potential problems.
- National governments need to be assisted in conducting their assessment of the impact on the livelihood and welfare of different demographic groups.
- To minimize the impact of the crisis, it is important to reduce dependency on exports. Developing countries urgently need to build their own domestic demand for goods and services by improving livelihoods and raising income, especially for those from the rural areas who are mainly engaged in agriculture.
- There has been a significant increase in the level of developing countries' participation in the international financial regulatory bodies such as the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) and the Financial Stability Forum (FSF). However there is still room for improvement in the representation of small and medium countries as well as non-financial stakeholders.

Second, the following challenges have been particularly highlighted:

- Almost all of the \$1.1 trillion promised by the G20 for aid is the form of loans. This would raise potential debt problems in the future.
- Concerns have been expressed for conditionalities attached to IMF loans. Even though the IMF has claimed changes of its policy, the effect of the policy change still remains to be seen.
- The current global financial system is not representative enough. It needs not only greater representativeness and legitimacy but also new coordination mechanisms. National self-interests tend to guide policies and hence get in the way of global cooperation and regulation.

Third, the implications of the crisis to the development of Africa and to vulnerable populations around the developing world have been reiterated:

- The current crisis should not divert attention from core development issues in Africa. Out of the \$28.3 billion pledged by rich nations to Sub-Saharan Africa by 2010 at the Gleneagles Summit, only \$9.4 billion (less than a third) was actually delivered. The current crisis is expected to further affect the delivery of aid.
- Low-income commodity-dependent countries should increase their output share of manufacturing in national income through proper industrial policies.
- Vulnerable groups such as the poor, women, elderly and people with disabilities are among the biggest victims of the crisis. NGOs, grassroots organisations in particular, have played a critical role in attending to the needs of the vulnerable at a community level and in making sure their voices are heard in times of crisis.
- Links between education, training and work should be revisited. National ministries such as Health, Labour and Education, should work together to tailor education and training to fit labour market conditions and individual needs.

The following link will take you to feedback:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.214/3&Lang=E.

Commentators noted that developing countries, including those that are ODA-dependent today – would seek to reduce their reliance on North-South relationships. The question for the UN development system is how best to position itself as the axis tilts away from its traditional North-South bearings toward stronger South-South links. For example, the final Outcome Document stated that International Financial Institutions (IFI) programmes should not contain “unwarranted pro-cyclical conditionalities.” Is the UN ready to contest these conditionalities in its partnership with IFIs?

- Donors were encouraged to meet established ODA targets, but more needs to be done. The UN should continue advocating those including the Gleneagles scenarios. Northern NGOs can exert pressure more effectively on their own governments to meet ODA commitments.
- Certain issues received relatively less attention. These included the Paris Declaration and green recovery in conjunction with climate change.
- There continues to be a lack of representation of the poor in the decision making process, leading to unrealistic development premises and inadequate North-South development approaches. For example, it was suggested that a national consultation process that started from local levels especially in rural areas, could lead to more equitable global solutions.

The outcome document includes language on issues raised by developing countries especially for creating their own policy and fiscal space. These provide a basis for follow up that could expand the UN's role, provided the UN has the capability to engage credibly. There are important references to follow up actions such as an "ad-hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly" mandated to follow up on the Outcome Document after the UN General Assembly in September 2009. ECOSOC is asked to make further recommendations, and consider the "possible establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts on the world economic crisis and its impact on development".

Full contributions can be accessed at the UN conference website:

<http://www.un.org/ga/econcrisissummit/edis.shtml>.

Living up to commitments: 2009 UNDP annual report (for 2008)



"This report sums up UNDP's success in navigating the past year. As UNDP supports developing countries in how they address the current economic and financial crisis, it is staying true to the shared sets of values as set out by the Millennium Declaration. UNDP will stay the course as spelled out in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and focus its efforts on reducing poverty, promoting democratic governance, supporting crisis prevention and recovery efforts and achieving sustainable development results in energy and environment, efforts that are crucial to achieving the MDGs." <http://www.undp.org/publications/annualreport2009/index.shtml>.

Pensions at a Glance 2009: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD Countries

Pension and retirement policies have changed dramatically in recent years, as governments have tried to balance the goals of adequate retirement incomes and the long-term financial sustainability of pension systems in the face of population ageing. *Pensions at a Glance 2009* provides a consistent framework for comparing pension policies between countries along with reliable data.

Chapter 1 examines the *implications of the present financial and economic crisis* on pension systems. Which countries and which individuals are most affected? What can governments do to help and which policies should they avoid?

Chapter 2 looks at *incomes and poverty of older people*, looking at trends over the past two decades. In many countries, the position of pensioners has improved relative to the population as a whole, but there remain pockets of old-age poverty.


Chapter 3 updates the *analysis of pension reforms* in the second edition of *Pensions at a Glance*. How have pension systems changed in the period 2004-08?


Chapter 4 considers *coverage of voluntary private pensions*, extending the analysis to look at how this varies with age and earnings. It also evaluates five different policies to expand coverage.


Multilingual summaries can be found at the on-line bookshop in French, German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Swedish, Chinese, Danish, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Korean, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Portuguese, and Turkish.


<http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?lang=EN&sf1=identifiers&st1=9789264060715#MultiLingualSummaries>


Country-specific highlights


 [Australia](#): Superannuation funds have been heavily hit by the financial crisis, with real losses of 26.7% in 2008... More than one in four Australian seniors lives in poverty on international measures...


 [Austria](#) (in [German](#)): Austria has the second highest public spending on pensions in OECD countries... The pension replacement rate (pension entitlements relative to earnings) of 80% is much higher than the OECD average of 59%...


 Canada (*forthcoming*)

 [France](#) (en [Français](#)): The over-65s rely more on public transfers for their income than almost anywhere else... Reforms have substantially cut future pension benefits for today's workers by around 20% for average earners... Coping with high public pension expenditures and population ageing will require working longer and a more diversified retirement-income system...

 [Germany](#) (in [German](#)): The German pension system has so far been less affected by the crisis than many other OECD countries... Replacement rates for low-earners are the lowest within the OECD at 43.0%...

 [Ireland](#): Ireland's private pension funds have been heavily hit by the financial crisis, with real losses of 37.5% in 2008... More than 30% of Ireland's pensioners live in poverty (on international measures)...

 [Italy](#) (in [Italian](#)): Italy had the highest public pension spending of OECD countries... Legislated changes that would have increased the pension age and reduced benefits to reflect increased life expectancy have been postponed...

 [Japan](#): Japan is the OECD's 'oldest' country, with just 2.6 people, of working age for every person aged over 65... Public pensions in Japan are projected to provide the second lowest pensions relative to individual earnings of OECD countries.

The full report can be obtained from the OECD -

http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,3343,en_2649_34757_42992113_1_1_1_1,00.html.

Paperback + Free PDF Price: €35 \$47 £29 ¥4300 Standard shipping included.

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