



Global Cooperation October 2006

In this edition, Global Round Up Black Sea

**New from UN Research Institute for Social Development
New from the International Labour Organisation**

Global Round Up

What has been happening on the global scene? In the following I will give you the briefest summary of global activities in trade, work and human rights.

World Trade

The European Commission's Director General for Trade, David O'Sullivan has spoken out on trade negotiations. He said in October that the Doha development round which runs between now and early 2007 has serious economic and political risks if progress is not made.

Background - The Doha round began with a ministerial-level meeting in Doha, Qatar in 2001. Subsequent ministerial meetings were held in Cancún, Mexico (2003) and Hong Kong, China (2005). Related negotiations have taken place in: Geneva, Switzerland; Paris, France; and again Geneva. For information on the history of the talks the following website provides a very clear summary. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha_round

David O'Sullivan said that failure to complete the negotiations would result in serious economic losses and put the entire multilateral trading system at risk. He said that Doha would bring benefits in terms of market access, subsidy reduction and improved trade rules and measures. All these are indispensable for growth and jobs.

This trade round is geared to help poorer countries develop through trade although it would not solve all problems.

If the talks fail the least developed countries will be the worst hit. Here Mr O'Sullivan has a good argument. Least developed countries are in the weaker bargaining position in bilateral deals. Multilateral rules-based solutions strengthen the bargaining position of least developed countries.

In addition to the big players agreeing, the final agreement must be approved by all members of the World Trade Organisation. Much of the focus is on the USA.

Decent Work Agenda

After falling off the global agenda for almost a decade, decent work has become a big issue in UN circles. The UN Economic and Social Council met in July and decent work was the key issue. Unfortunately the UN has a bad habit of creating long titles for their sessions. This one on decent work consisted of 26 words. I won't repeat it.

The concept of decent work was expressed as “dignified work that allows people to properly support themselves and their families”. The issue of work was put into context by Juan Somavia who heads up the International Labour Organisation. He said that the world was facing a global jobs crisis that called for a global response. Policies of the last decades have considered job creation as an outcome of macro economic policies not as a specific objective in itself.

Decent work links to the previous subject of trade. Speakers at UN Council stressed that the trade negotiations must reduce barriers to global trade and global growth.

As expected there was a declaration at the end of the three days of discussions at the UN. The declaration recognises that full and productive employment and decent work for all encompasses social protection and rights at work as well as social dialogue. The declaration gives individual countries guidance on steps they can take to create more productive employment opportunities.

The full declaration can be found in UN languages at

<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/jump2ods.asp?symbol=E/2006/L.8>

ICSW has prepared a policy statement on decent work. It has been sent to all ICSW members for consultation and will be presented by ICSW delegates to the meeting of the Commission for Social Development in February 2007. The theme for the Commission meeting is Decent Work.

Human Rights

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has released a handbook to provide NGOs with a comprehensive and user-friendly guide to the work of OHCHR. The handbook includes key information on human rights mechanisms, entry points for NGOs and contact details with a view to assisting NGOs in identifying areas of possible cooperation and partnership with OHCHR. It also anticipates the changes of the current United Nations reform process. The Handbook is current to June 2006. It is only available in electronic format and in English. Efforts are underway to translate it into other UN languages in the next few months.

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/ngohandbook.htm>

Black Sea

Non government organisations have been undertaking pioneering work with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). In mid October representatives of the Black Sea NGO’s Network met with representatives of BSEC. (BSEC consists of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine). The occasion was the BSEC meeting on *Good Governance and Institutional Renewal* held in Istanbul.

The NGO representatives indicated their preparedness to cooperate with governments, inter-governmental structures, international organizations, local self-governing bodies and all the interested institutions with the aim of poverty reduction and securing sustainable development in the region.

They acknowledged the efforts made by governments to find solutions on social issues and poverty reduction overall. However, they emphasised that there has been insufficient efforts to ensure social progress in the Member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Progress has been hindered by slow economic growth, prevalence of

corruption, inequitable distribution of resources and limited state budget allocations in the social sphere. All this has resulted in the weakening of social protection systems. The NGOs said they understood that within democratic societies the effectiveness and efficiency of measures to address social issues are formed by the interaction and partnership of various independent actors, including NGOs. ICSW applauds the Black Sea NGOs for establishing a dialogue with BSEC and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

New from UNRISD

Transformative Social Policy: Lessons from UNRISD Research

Research and Policy Brief 5 looks at the lessons from UNRISD research on social policy. Findings highlight the developmental role of social policy, even as it addresses issues of intrinsic value such as social protection, equality and social citizenship, and call for rescuing social policy from the residual role it was assigned during much of the 1980s and 1990s.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/C77A2891BC2FD07FC12572130020B2AC?OpenDocument>

Presentation by Edward Anderson: "*A New Equity Agenda?*"

Edward Anderson's presentation is based on a recent Overseas Development Institute working paper, which he co-authored with Tammie O'Neal, entitled "*A New Equity Agenda: Reflections on the 2006 World Development Report, the 2005 Human Development Report and the 2005 Report on the World Social Situation*"

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BD6AB/search/F4B6A8DFB6D06EEBC1257204003430ED?OpenDocument&category=Presentations>

New From the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

There are new publications from the International Labour Organisation's Social Security Department. The first is a policy paper, which is being published as a consultation paper. The ILO has indicated that comments are most welcome.

ILO Social Security Department, 2006: *Social security for all: Investing in global social and economic development: A consultation, Issues in Social Protection* Discussion Paper 16 (Geneva: ILO),

<http://www3.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/1519sp1.pdf>

In addition ILO Social Security Department has produced new discussion papers on the affordability and impact on basic social protection, namely social cash benefits:

Gassmann, F. and Behrendt, C., 2006: *Cash benefits in low-income countries: Simulating the effects on poverty reduction for Senegal and Tanzania, Issues in Social Protection* Discussion Paper 15 (Geneva: International Labour Office),

<http://www3.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/1515sp1.pdf>

French version: Gassmann, F. and Behrendt, C., 2006: *Les prestations en espèces dans les pays à faible revenu: Simulation des effets sur la réduction de la pauvreté au Sénégal et en Tanzanie, Questions de Protection Sociale* 15 (Geneva: International Labour Office),

<http://www3.ilo.org/public/english/protection/seccoc/downloads/1514sp1.pdf>

Mizunoya, S. et al., 2006: *Can Low Income Countries Afford Basic Social Protection?* First Results of a Modelling Exercise for Five Asian Countries, Issues in Social Protection Discussion Paper 17 (Geneva: International Labour Office),

<http://www3.ilo.org/public/english/protection/seccoc/downloads/1527sp1.pdf>

Another paper assesses the availability of information on social protection in household survey data:

Sowa, A. and Behrendt, C., 2006: *Assessing the quality of social security in low and middle income countries on the basis of household survey data: A feasibility study, Issues in Social Protection* Discussion Paper 14 (Geneva: International Labour Office),

<http://www3.ilo.org/public/english/protection/seccoc/downloads/1531sp1.pdf>

ICSW Africa Office Move

ICSW has now moved to new office premises in Entebbe, Uganda.

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Conferences:

Forum – Achieving social cohesion in a multicultural Europe.

9-10th November 2006 at the Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg. The Forum is being organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. For further information contact gilda.farrell@coe.int

5th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health

10 to 14 December 2006, HK Convention and Exhibition Centre www.swh2006.com

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