



International Council on Social Welfare Annual Report for 2005

Introduction

The 2005 year proved to be a turning point in the fortunes and direction of ICSW. The Council had suffered a number of difficult years both financially and in terms of leadership. Qazi Faruque Ahmed, the President elected in late 2000 encountered severe problems in his country of Bangladesh. He and his organisation Proshika had fallen out of favour with the government elected in 2001. Dr Ahmed was persecuted and even spent a period in gaol on charges that were later dropped. Such is the fate of leaders with the courage to support oppressed people in their own countries. On a happier note, it is only recently that ICSW has learned that the release of Dr Ahmed from prison was assisted by the action of ICSW members. We asked our members to raise the issue of Dr Ahmed's imprisonment with their governments. We now know of a member that asked their Minister for Foreign Affairs to intervene. The Minister raised directly with the Government of Bangladesh the injustice of Dr Ahmed's imprisonment. It is good to be aware that we can correct injustice.

The impact on ICSW of Dr Ahmed's imprisonment was devastating. Dr Ahmed could not fulfil his role as President. This coincided with a long period when ICSW was without a permanent Executive Director.

Fortunes started to change when Denys Correll was appointed Executive Director in 2002 and Solveig Askjem was elected President in 2003.

This was the beginning of the recovery. ICSW had lost ground as an international leader in social welfare and social development. The path to recovery included the very successful meeting of experts that met in Finland in early 2004. International leaders gave very generously of their time and knowledge to identify the issues they saw predominating in global welfare and development. From this meeting the ICSW leadership developed a four year global programme. This was adopted by the membership at the global conference in Kuala Lumpur in August 2004.

The global programme created a new focus for ICSW and this annual report uses the framework of the global programme. Linked with the global programme was the emergence of new leaders in ICSW. A lesson learned from the earlier misfortunes was to

develop a broader leadership base. The President and Executive Director work as a team and are supported in this by the Global Treasurer. New leadership includes regional presidents. Regional leadership needs to be developed even further so there are active leaders in all parts of the globe.

The Executive Director has changed the nature of functioning of the secretariat. The number of staff has been reduced to a minimum to enable donor funds to be sent to strengthen the activities of the regions to reduce poverty. This resource distribution model results in donor funds being used in the regions of the world that are the targets of assistance.

The detail of the 2005 annual report contains information on the continuation of existing programmes and the emergence of new directions. Of great interest are the new elements of North South Cooperation and South South Cooperation. Both are providing new impetus to ICSW's work in welfare and development.

ICSW is committed to strengthening civil society in all parts of the world. In 2005 we achieved outstanding results in some new areas and in particular Central and West Africa and the Black Sea Region. Too little attention is given to the former states of the Soviet Union. There is widespread and severe poverty, poor governance, high levels of corruption and dreadful trades in vulnerable people. Civil society has a major role to play in ridding this world of vile practices that oppress the peoples of our global society.

Finally the work of ICSW is made possible by the support of the members, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, The Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs of Norway, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Now turning to the achievements in the global programme. "Global Advocacy and Strengthening the South"

1 Social Welfare and Social Development

ICSW has a commitment to taking a lead in both social welfare and social development issues.

The ICSW European Region conference was held in Lucerne Switzerland in July 2005. The focus was the future of the European Social Model in an ever-changing world. More than 180 participants and speakers from 30 countries participated in the conference. The conference was organised by the Swiss ICSW member, the Swiss Conference on Social Welfare SKOS.

The Conference was thought-provoking. Plenary presentations and workshops approached the European Social Model from different angles and tested its sustainability and reach. Speakers took into account the changes taking place in European and global society. The European Social Model is based on the view of countries of a socially cohesive society based on equal rights and solidarity. But to survive the challenges ahead,

reforms were felt to be needed to reconfirm the underlying basic values and establish the European Social Model as a balanced economic and social model for the future.

Later in the year ICSW Europe met in Paris to work on the Lucerne paper *Considerations and recommendations on the Future of the European Social Model*. The paper creates a framework for further direction and for giving ICSW a clearer profile at the European level. It is quite unique that a European network is so explicitly supporting the European Social Model. This Model is not a model for a welfare system or a specific regime but a set of values, social rights and objectives. The aim is to achieve an inclusive Europe with an actively participating civil society, based on respect and trust, on social justice and solidarity.

At the same time the ICSW paper expresses the need for modernisation, an open attitude to change and the resolution to meet new challenges. By accepting the *Lucerne paper* ICSW Europe is asking members to safeguard and help implement the model explicitly and to discuss this document with their national networks. In particular members are asked to discuss the consequences and the implementation.

The European Committee of Representatives agreed to hold the next European Conference in 2007 in Vilnius, Lithuania under the provisional title *Inclusive Europe: opportunities for all*. A theme in line with the EU Year of Equal Opportunities 2007.

2 Networking and linking our work

ICSW has a substantial global network of members, related individuals and organisations that are a powerful force for change.

In February the Presidents and Executive Directors of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and ICSW met at ICSW's offices in Utrecht. With us were the representatives of SAGE Publications and Karen Lyons the Editor of our joint publication *International Social Work*. Our agenda included information exchange, the signing of contracts with SAGE Publications and planning for future cooperation. The report from SAGE Publications was very positive and all the three parties signed a common contract for the publication of *International Social Work*.

The three organisations are holding a joint global conference in 2010 in Hong Kong.

ICSW Europe has agreed to work closely with the European Schools of Social Work, the International Federation of Social Workers and FESET (social educators or social pedagogues). ICSW Europe has as a high priority the encompassing of new members from Central and Eastern Europe.

3 Communicating with our stakeholders

ICSW communicates its message through multiple mediums.

ICSW communicates with its members through the monthly electronic newsletter *Global Cooperation*. The ICSW website is the primary vehicle for new and historical material on social welfare and social development. The journal *Social Development Review* ceased publication at the end of 2004. ICSW is now providing financial support to the journal *Global Social Policy*. From 2006 ICSW is making the journal available to all members.

4 Ongoing Global Advocacy and Socially Responsible Global Governance

ICSW has an advocacy programme to strengthen and reform the multilateral system. In addition, ICSW is extending its involvement through engagement with emerging processes focused on the reform of globalisation and global governance.

In February Solveig Askjem ICSW President, Charles Abbey Regional President for Central and West Africa and Denys Correll Executive Director represented ICSW at the 43rd Session of the UN Commission for Social Development. ICSW prepared a statement to the Commission. Covered in the statement were aspects of the fight against poverty that have received little attention. In the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the definition of poverty was given a narrow definition. This is in contrast to the broader definition that was adopted at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. ICSW wants to see a return to the broader definition. The ICSW statement says employment is a major solution to poverty eradication. Employment was one of the four outcomes of Copenhagen but receives scant attention in the MDG's. Surely the most certain way of relieving poverty is for people to have paying jobs? ICSW supports the International Labour Office promotion of "decent work". Of course there needs to be adequate social protection measures for people who are unable to work including those with severe disabilities.

ICSW has been represented by the Executive Director for two years at the World Economic Forum in Davos and also the European Economic Forum. On each occasion the Executive Director has presented at symposiums. In Davos he contributed to the session on "Getting the Millennium Development Goals back on Track".

ICSW participated in the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference. The themes in 2005 included the development of a new convention or declaration on occupational health and safety and promoting youth employment. The Director-General of the ILO said in his report that the ILO is "*the international organisation that is closest to the pulse of our societies*". Further he says, "*A similar drive is needed at the level of the multilateral system to recognise the significance of decent work for the international development agenda and its contribution to the goals of poverty reduction and a fully inclusive and equitable globalization which were called for in the Millennium Declaration*".

Financing for Development: UN General Assembly Dialogue

ICSW Regional President for Central and West Africa, Charles Abbey participated in the June 2005 round table at the UN. The theme was “Mobilising Domestic Financial Resources for Development” Thirty five Member States, seven intergovernmental organisations, three civil society and three business sector representatives participated in the round table.

Charles Abbey asked the round table to consider children, youth and persons with disability who constitute nearly 60% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their access to quality, affordable education has suffered and continues to suffer at an alarming rate. Equally, they do not have access to quality, affordable health services. These factors, combined with unfavourable trade policies and unemployment, have led many citizens of Sub-Saharan Africa to explore every means to migrate to the West. They have become vulnerable to war lords and leaders who use or rather misuse them as tools of violence and unending wars in the sub-region. Charles Abbey concluded that quality education and health services are fundamental to individual and national development.

World Health Organisation

“Policy and partnership for action: addressing the determinants of health”. Under this heading, WHO held its sixth global conference on health promotion in August 2005 in Bangkok. Mr. Carel Tenhaeff, senior policy advisor of the Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare, presented a paper and represented ICSW at the conference. The overall outcome of the conference is the Bangkok Charter.

New Frontiers of Social Policy: Development in a Globalizing World Arusha Tanzania 2005

Charles Abbey, ICSW Regional President, Central and West Africa represented ICSW at this conference held in Tanzania in December 2005.

Ten years after the World Summit for Social Development the New Frontiers conference provided a forum for the review of research and debated how to increase development effectiveness by integrating social policy within national and trans-national programmes.

5 Regional Level - Regional Cooperation

At the regional level and as an extension of the Regional Cooperation Project, ICSW facilitates the cooperation of civil society with regional intergovernmental bodies to achieve regional social policy and the development and adoption of social charters in Southern regions.

The regional cooperation component of *Global Advocacy and Strengthening the South* started in March 2005. The Regional President for Central and West Africa visited Mali and Cameroon to meet with non government organisations, community leaders and government officials to identify national and regional issues.

Cameroon Women in Leadership and Development (CAWOLED) was challenged to draft a Country Action Plan that synchronises the needs of civil society in Cameroon. Civil society representatives want issues including unemployment, security, health, education and fundraising included in the plan. CAWOLED will coordinate the voices of civil society organisations and be an ICSW link to other civil society partners in the north of Cameroon. Civil society organisations called for ICSW support in organising training in fundraising, lobbying, advocacy, and leadership skills for members. Other recommendations by civil society included the conduct of an ICSW national conference and an ICSW Regional Conference to coordinate strategies and activities in the region.

Government officials endorsed ICSW activities in Cameroon.

In Mali the non government organisations recommended training in peace building strategies, providing mentoring opportunities for youth and placing the welfare of older persons on the development agenda.

During October the Regional President for Central and West Africa visited Nigeria to meet ICSW members, officials and the Economic Community of West African States. At the end of the visit at a press conference Mr Abbey commented that it is time for Africa to wake up from its developmental slumber. The issues of unemployment, education, health, democracy and governance, proliferation of arms, violent conflicts, child trafficking, unfair trade practices, political, economic and social enslavement of our peoples must be addressed with urgency and appropriateness.

Mr Abbey said that unless and until civil society takes its rightful place, makes the right linkages and does the right things at the right time, nobody will take our “cacophonous voices” serious. He appealed to all governments and civil society to forge mutually reinforcing and beneficial partnerships.

South East Asia establishes a regional plan

Regional President Michael Raper met with key South East Asian members of ICSW in Manila in October. An outcome was a new regional plan.

Civil society has an increasingly important role to play in achieving good governance and improved social development and social welfare policy in individual states throughout both the Pacific and South East Asia. It is desirable that civil society begins to play a regular role in the existing regional structures and forums. The ICSW region will seek recognition by ASEAN as a regional civil society organisation with membership from an even spread of ASEAN member countries.

Ideally, a parallel civil society forum, such as the ASEAN People’s Forum jointly organised by ICSW in Bangkok in July 2001, should be held in conjunction with each ASEAN Summit or ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and each meeting of the Pacific Island Forum. ICSW will therefore examine the progress of such forums and seek to jointly organise and participate.

An essential part of this plan is the need for capacity building within ICSW member organisations to prepare them for such a role. There are three elements to the plan for capacity building.

First, ICSW is updating its publication "Civil Society and the Association of South East Asian Nations". A similar publication covering the Pacific Island Forum will be produced. These guides are essential to civil society's understanding of the structures and policies of regional governmental bodies.

Second, priority issues that should be raised with ASEAN and the Pacific Island Forum are to be identified. This requires consultation and research and a process for engagement with member organisations in preparation for advocacy.

Third, the members in the region have sought training in "Participatory Budgeting" to develop their contribution to national budgets in the regions. The Asia Development Bank funded and the Australian Council of Social Service produced a "Participatory Budgeting" training kit. This has been used for a pilot training project in the Pacific. It is being used in an expanded project in the Pacific region. This training kit will be invaluable in the conduct of a similar process with ASEAN country members.

Fourth, where there is no national umbrella organisation in any ASEAN or Pacific Island Forum country, ICSW and its members will assist in identifying or helping to develop appropriate national councils of social welfare and development. The ICSW draft national councils manual will assist building umbrella organisations where they do not exist. Where active and credible umbrella organisations already exist the aim is to assist in strengthening them.

In addition to these major aims, the regional plan includes an extensive list of activities including research, advocacy and exploration of funding options.

South Asia

ICSW has worked closely with the South Asia Partnership International (SAP-I). SAP I has been active for more than twenty years. In recent times, SAP-I has sought to influence the agenda of the meetings of governments in the region. The governments of South Asia include Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. They meet as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation – SAARC. SAP-I consists of national organisations from the SAARC countries.

The agenda setting for SAP-I occurs at People's Summits which have been held each year since 2001. SAP-I has concentrated on a limited number of issues. These are; 1. Reduction of disasters in South Asian Nations; 2. Trafficking and human security; 3. Social security; 4. Governance and democracy; 5. Peace and militarization

Black Sea Cooperation

Civil society representatives from the twelve countries of the Black Sea Region have reached unanimous agreement on a programme, key issues, a structure, a board and a President. In late December the ICSW President and Executive Director worked with representatives attending the second Black Sea Civil Society Forum to bring about these outstanding results.

The Black Sea area is not in the main vision of those outside the region. Some of the problems of the region are covered in the ICSW statement to the 2006 meeting of the Commission for Social Development. The Commission reviewed the first Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

ICSW states, “Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (have) experienced a dramatic increase in poverty. The number of people living on less than \$2 a day in Central and Eastern Europe and CIS rose from 23 million in 1990 to 93 million in 2001, or from 5 per cent to 20 per cent.” Further, “In the countries of the former Soviet Union life expectancy has dropped dramatically, especially for males. In the Russian Federation life expectancy for males had dropped from 70 years in the mid 1980s to 59 today – lower than India”.

The alarming indicators for the region further convince the leaders of ICSW that the growth of civil society in the Black Sea region is a high priority in the quest to alleviate poverty.

Representatives of government participated in the Forum and encouraged the Network to seek the recognition of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC). The positive comments by political leaders were reported widely on Armenian television. Fortuitously, PABSEC is to be chaired by Armenia in 2006. ICSW representatives and the newly appointed President of the Black Sea Non Government Organisations’ Network, Ms Hripsime Kirakosyan visited the Armenian Parliament at the end of the Forum. Mr Gagik Minasyan, Chairman Standing Committee on Finance, Loan, Budgetary & Economic Affairs, National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia was enthusiastic and supportive of the involvement of civil society organisations in regional activities and networks.

Returning now to the work of the Forum. The Black Sea Non Government Organisations’ Network has recognised Focal Organisations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. The representatives from the four other countries, Albania, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey agreed to assist in ensuring that Focal Point Organisations are appointed in their own countries.

The goal of the Network is to consolidate the efforts of non government organisations in collaboration with each other for the development of social partnership, the promotion of solutions to social issues as well as for the elaboration and execution of efficient and

effective social policy in the region.

The Network identified its key issues as unemployment, declining public health, labour driven mass migration, violation of human rights and women's rights in particular and deterioration of the environment.

The Network will pay particular attention to vulnerable groups in the region and in particular to, older people, refugees and internally displaced people, disabled persons and children and youth.

A work plan was developed by the participants in the Forum as was a strategy for the Network's lobbying group.

The host for the Forum was Mission Armenia which has been appointed secretariat to the Network. Hripsime Kirakosyan is the first President of the Network.

6 North-South Partnerships - Northern Activism

ICSW's northern members engage with national ministries of development and trade to ensure more effective overseas development assistance and a socially responsible approach to globalisation by Northern governments.

The first North South project has started. The Finish National Committee of ICSW and Tanzania Council of Social Development met in December to forge a partnership. The ICSW European members have adopted in their plan for 2006 to 2008 that they will "play an active, constructive role in solidarity with the global ICSW. ICSW-Europe will continue to contribute to the global ICSW, by promoting the global mission and by supporting the global projects. In particular the North-South projects aiming at building strong civil societies in the South, especially in Africa, will be endorsed".

7 South-South Policy Dialogue - Southern Social Policy Dialogues

ICSW enhances the sharing of information, knowledge and experience between South actors. Actors learn from each other successful practices in participating in regional governance, new modes of decentralised provision of social services and new approaches to social and economic security.

South – South Cooperation is a key component of the global programme. Dr Rohit Nepali, the Executive Director of South Asia Partnership International (SAPI) contributed to the Black Sea Civil Society Forum that was sponsored by ICSW in December. Dr Nepali brought to the Black Sea civil society group the knowledge and experience of SAP-I. The Black Sea group is in the early stages on development. ICSW is seeking an acceleration of civil society input into regional development through South-South Cooperation.

Financial Review of the Year

During the year the governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden made commitments to support the work of ICSW in achieving its global programme “Global Advocacy and Strengthening the South” The specific commitments are from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, The Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs of Norway, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

With the support of members and the donors the financial result for the year was positive and enables ICSW to rebuild reserves to a safe level.