



***GLOBAL COOPERATION OCTOBER 2005***

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**ICSW regional president's visit to Nigeria**

During October Charles Abbey, Regional President for Central and West Africa visited Nigeria to meet with officials, ICSW members and the Economic Community of West African States. The visit was part of the programme to strengthen civil society in that region. At the end of his visit Charles Abbey met with the media. In his statement he made very pertinent comments about development issues. This is some of what he said: "The time has come 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.

I am here to add my voice and that of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) to the voice and activities of civil society in Nigeria and Africa. There must be a quick and radical transformation in our core values, attitudes, practices and leadership.

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. NGOs and CSOs are so divided and fragmented that this fragmentation works to the advantage of those who are not really interested in the total development of our continent. Enough of our in-fighting and lack of accountability and transparency.

I appeal to all governments and civil society to forge mutually re-enforcing and beneficial partnerships. The mutual suspicion and mistrust that has bedevilled Government-Civil Society Relations across the continent must become history. We have had enough of the "token" recognitions that several governments give to civil society. I call for a new chapter in these relations and partnerships. To what extent are the considered views and positions of civil society factored into national and international development agendas? Do we as civil society have real involvement and participation in government meetings at ECOWAS, United Nations and other inter-governmental bodies?

It is also important for all partners in development to consider a big shift from meetings to practical implementation of the tens of signed agreements and protocols that continue to gather dust on shelves.

Charles Abbey concluded by appealing to all civil society organisations in Nigeria and Africa to spearhead the transformational change in Africa. He appealed to the Government of Nigeria to continue to open its doors to civil society organisations and facilitate the increased participation of such in all its policies and meetings at inter-governmental levels. He stated "I strongly believe that if Nigeria is able to move the Government-Civil Society Partnership to a higher level, it will positively impact the whole of Africa, beginning with ECOWAS".

### **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 regional plan which will be further tested with members in the region. Michael Raper plans to meet with Pacific members early in 2006. The following is an extract from the regional plan.

NGO's have 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 NGOs begin to play a regular role in the established regional structures and forums. As first steps in this direction each of the ICSW member organisations in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region will seek to apply to ASEAN for formal recognition as an NGO. The ICSW region will also seek recognition by ASEAN as a regional NGO with membership from a relatively even spread of ASEAN member countries.

Ideally, a parallel NGO 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 / or participate as appropriate.

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 will update 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 NGOs understanding of the structures and policies of regional governmental bodies.

Second, the identification of priority issues that should be raised with ASEAN and PIF. This requires consultation and research and a process for engagement with member organisations in preparation for advocacy.

Third, extensive training in "Participatory Budgeting" to develop the capacity of ICSW members to contribute to and monitor national budgets in each region. 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 PIF 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, there is an extensive list of activities including research, advocacy and exploration of funding options.

ICSW wishes to acknowledge that the activities outlined in this issue of Global Cooperation have been made possible through the support of the governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden.

#### **New from UNRISD**

Transforming the Developmental Welfare State in East Asia.

This paper seeks to explain changes and continuity in the developmental welfare states in the Republic of Korea (Korea) and Taiwan Province of China (Taiwan) within the East Asian context.

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Civil Society in United Nations Conferences: A literature Review. In this paper, Constanza Tabbush reviews the current literature on the role of civil society at UN conferences.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/2698FCE2FDAC8826C125708800269FE8?OpenDocument>

#### Politics and HIV-An Overview

Much of what has played out in national and global responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic is shaped by political factors. Yet, little analysis has been done to dissect political dynamics and motivations. Several research studies supported by UNRISD provide insights into some of the dimensions of the political realities that surround approaches to, funding for, and the engage of communities in dealing with HIV/AIDS.

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Commercialization of Health Care: Global and Local Dynamics and Policy Responses  
<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/B3F2CBF4A638E53DC12570A10045C2D4?OpenDocument>

UN World Summits and Civil Society: The State of the Art.

Mario Pianta addresses the concepts and history of, as well as qualitative and quantitative evidence on, the co-evolution of UN world summits and civil society activities on global issues.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/5709F9C06F40FDBAC12570A1002DC4D2?OpenDocument>

### **Conferences**

32<sup>nd</sup>. International Conference on Social Welfare 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006. Brasilia, Brazil.

Theme: Social Inclusion: facing poverty and social inequality

Other themes will include; Poverty and Inequality in a Century of Waste and Strategies for Human Development. For further information <http://www.cbciss.icsw32.org/>

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