



**GLOBAL COOPERATION FEBRUARY 2006**

**In this edition**

**UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty UN Commission for Social Development  
New Publications from UNRISD  
32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Social Welfare – NEW INFORMATION**

**UN Commission for Social Development 44<sup>th</sup> Session February 2006**

As reported in the last issue ICSW was represented at this year's Commission meeting in New York. Each year there is a "Priority Theme". This year the theme was the review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. ICSW prepared a paper for the Commission. This can be found on the ICSW website. [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org) (what's new). In addition ICSW presented an oral statement during the second day of the Commission meetings. More on the substance of the ICSW contribution later in this newsletter.

While in New York the ICSW representatives met with representatives of delegations that were attending the Commission. This year there were extensive discussions with the Dutch, Finnish, German and Tanzanian delegates. ICSW was represented by the President Solveig Askjem, the Regional President for Central and West Africa, Charles Abbey and the Executive Director. Charles Abbey was a prominent participant in the many discussions that occurred with delegates. He was one of the very few civil society delegates from the global South.

In addition to these formal meetings the ICSW representatives met informally with country delegates and the representatives of international agencies such as the World Bank. Side events are held during the Commission meeting. Of particular interest was the panel discussion "New Frontiers of Social Policy". The panel was organised by the World Bank and the Social Development Advisors Network. The major theme was the follow up to the December 2005 meeting held in Tanzania. This conference organised by the World Bank focussed on the new challenges for social policy in the development context. The panel members presented a number of challenges and observations. Per Knutson of Swedish SIDA suggested that the concept that poor people would naturally benefit from economic development was both inadequate and wrong. People are assets not liabilities. There was much emphasis on fighting poverty from a human rights perspective and the indivisibility of economic and social policy. It was reassuring to hear from Anis Dani of the World Bank that the Bank has moved away from preconceived conditionalities. The Bank is more interested in providing annual budget support to

countries rather than lending outside of the budget. Mr Dani said there is more of a dialogue on protecting social sector expenditure.

Returning now to the substance. China continues to capture attention as a major global actor. In the presentation by the Ambassador Zhang Yishan he referred to the reduction of the number of people in poverty in China. The numbers in poverty have fallen from 250 million in 1978 to 26 million at the end of 2004. The Ambassador stated that China integrates poverty eradication into the overall plans for the development of the Chinese economy.

There was considerable reference to governments cooperating with civil society in achieving poverty eradication. Finland and the European Union were prominent proponents of working with civil society. Last year with all the concentration on the Millennium Development Goals there was a neglect of the outcomes of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. It was heartening this year to have so many governments refer to the 1995 Summit and in particular to the issue of employment as a major method to eradicate poverty.

The Rt. Hon. Clare Short Member of Parliament for the UK gave a powerful key note address. She said the picture of poverty was mixed after this first decade of poverty eradication. Her historical analysis highlighted that growth in European gross domestic product from year 500 to 1500 was zero. Since the industrial revolution there has been sustained growth. "But those countries used their wealth and strength to plunder and dominate the rest of the world until...empires crumbled". The people of China, India, Africa and Latin America are entitled to the way of life of the OECD countries. But this would be catastrophic for the planet. The full text of Clare Short's speech can be found on her website <http://www.epolitix.com/EN/MPWebsites/Clare+Short/73fc98ad-a716-49e3-8b8d-a3660bd4cacc.htm>

In the ICSW oral statement to the Commission, Denys Correll emphasised the responsibility of developing countries, developed countries, and the multilateral institutions:

Developing country governments must ensure:

Good governance;

Social protection for the poorest and most vulnerable;

Priority on social sector spending, especially primary education and health care;

Economic and political empowerment of all citizens, especially the poor; and

Efficient, transparent, and accountable institutions.

Developed country governments must ensure:

A more open and equitable system of international finance and trade, to increase development assistance and to enhance international commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction.

Developed country governments must:

Assist in the development of poorer nations by opening their markets to the exports of developing countries.

Continue to honour their development-aid commitments.

And multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations' bodies and regional commissions; the World Bank and regional development banks must: Seriously heed the criticisms of their poverty-reduction operations, the resources they consume, and the impact of their programmes on poverty. Remain at the front line in international development efforts. Ensure that their international, regional, and bilateral assistance be better coordinated, less competitive and more committed to narrow the gap between words and institutional action on poverty eradication.

ICSW participated in the development of the NGO declaration developed by the NGO Committee on Social Development. The declaration is at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ngo/csocd44/documents/NGODeclaration44thcommision.pdf>

The outcome of the Commission's discussions on the first United Nations Decade for the eradication of poverty was not concluded at the time of writing this newsletter. Some statements and particularly the official ones can be found at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2006/statements/stat06.htm>

As a final comment, the member countries of the UN are very distracted with the continuing debate on the restructuring of the UN and who will be the next Secretary General. Included in the debate is what happens to the Commission for Social Development. Some see its existence threatened in the restructure. Perhaps the comment by the representative of Germany at the panel discussion on social policy sums up ICSW's view – "The Commission for Social Development is the major UN venue for the social development debate".

#### **New from UNRISD**

Social Policy & Development Programme Paper 23: Targeting & Universalism in Poverty Reduction

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, Thandika Mkandawire discusses the forces behind the shift from universalism toward selectivity in using social policies to combat poverty in the developing countries. In the second part, a review of the lessons from such policies, he considers the administrative difficulties of targeting in the poor countries, the political economy bases of policy choices, and the consequences of policy choices for individual incentive. Mkandawire pays special attention to cost-effectiveness, because advocates of selectivity in the fight against poverty raise it as the main argument in its favour.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/955FB8A594EEA0B0C12570FF00493EAA?OpenDocument>

Occasional Paper Gender Policy 10: "Your Justice is Too Slow": Will the ICTR Fail Rwanda's Rape Victims?

The author maintains that the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has delivered little justice to the victims of sexual violence. She calls for a concerted effort to learn from the experiences of the Rwandan rape victims to ensure that the United Nations does not continue to short-change victims of sexual violence in war.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/2997A3D7A8355BB7C125710D0049ADA7?OpenDocument>

**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. The website is now in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Opening in the afternoon

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July

Plenary: Poverty and social inequality on Waste Century

Symposiums: 1. Work and its transformations; 2. Poverty and Inequality - Challenges for education; 3. Social Inclusion

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Plenary: Ethics and solidarity for a more equitable world

Symposiums: 1. Human Rights today; 2. Ethics and Media; 3. Ethics and Silent Violence

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July

Plenary: World commitments for human and social development

Symposiums: 1. Government and Social Welfare; 2. Objectives for this Millennium - victories and challenges; 3. The organization of civil society and their action

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July - Field Visits

For up to date information and registration go to <http://www.cbciss.icsw32.org/>

**International Federation on Ageing 8th Global Conference on Ageing** Denmark 30<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2006 Visit the Conference website [www.global-ageing.dk](http://www.global-ageing.dk)

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