The July edition of the Newsletter is devoted to several ICSW-related events that took place in conjunction with the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development in Dublin, Ireland. Two symposiums organized by the ICSW are profiled, with summaries of the statements made during the discussions. Information on the General Assembly and the Board meetings is presented, along with the Dublin Declaration adopted by the General Assembly.

*Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director and the Editor of the Newsletter.*

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In order to commemorate its 90-years’ anniversary, the International Council on Social Welfare organized a symposium on 5 July 2018 in Dublin during the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development.

The symposium brought together speakers from around the world to discuss the complexities and challenges faced by social-development scholars and practitioners in such broad fields as poverty eradication, employment promotion, social inclusion, social protection and others, profiling the ICSW’s role as a major global organization committed to improving human well-being. Its main purpose was to highlight achievements of the organization over the years, contemplating at the same future strategies and options.

The list of speakers included: Eva Holmberg-Herrström, President of the ICSW (opening remarks); Isabel Ortiz, Director of the Social Protection Department, ILO; Christian Rollet, scholar and author, past President of the ICSW (France); Michael Cichon, scholar and author, immediate past President of the ICSW (Germany); Driss Guerraoui, Regional President, MENA, Secretary-General of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of Morocco, (Morocco); CHENG Lai-Ling, Crystal, Business Director, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (Hong Kong); Sandra Carla S. Mirabelli, Technical Assistant, Management Studies and Social Programmes, Serviço Social do Comércio (Sesc), (Brazil); P.K. Shajahan, Regional President, South Asia, ICSW Professor, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, (India) Cassandra Goldie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Council of Social Service (Australia); Chinchai Cheechoroen, National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand (Thailand); Ronald Wiman, Regional President, ICSW Europe, Visiting Scholar, National Institute for Health and Welfare (Finland).

The discussion was moderated by Solveig Askjem, past President of ICSW (Norway). Below we present brief summaries of several statements made at the symposium. Fuller versions of the respective presentations will be published on the ICSW website in the near future.
In her opening remarks, Eva Holmberg-Herrström, President of the ICSW, underscored the important role that the ICSW has played throughout the years in promoting the ideas of social justice, progressive economic and social development and human rights. The adoption of Agenda 2030 by the United Nations reflects the scope of the daunting new challenges, but it also provides new opportunities for civil-society organizations to move forward their agendas and to make their voices heard. The ICSW has been a beacon for several generations of social-development practitioners, and we should live up to the high expectations that many of our members will continue to have in the years to come.

Isabel Ortiz, Director, Social Protection Department, ILO, thanked the ICSW for its consistent position and active support in the ongoing struggle to implement nationally appropriate social-protection systems and measures for all, including floors.

The ILO will be 100 years old in 2019, and both institutions have successfully helped to advance social justice and extend social security/protection systems over the past nine decades.

Achieving increased coverage of the poor and the vulnerable through universal systems during the next 12 years, as envisioned by Agenda 2030, is hardly possible without the active role played by civil society. Among the steps required to extend social-protection floors, she mentioned a need for national dialogue in order to formulate national social-protection strategies for all. Some essential pre-requisites entail identifying gaps in coverage, determining appropriate social-protection schemes — whether contributory, non-contributory or both — as well as the time frame and sequencing for progressive achievement of the objectives. The costs, resource needs and options for fiscal space should be discussed with national Ministries of Finance. It is often argued that there are no resources for social protection or — worse — that austerity cuts are unavoidable. This is not correct; options to extend the fiscal space exist, even in the poorest countries, ranging from re-allocating public expenditures, increasing tax revenues, increasing contributory revenues, tapping into
fiscal and foreign exchange reserves, fighting corruption and illicit financial flows, and other measures. Adopting a more accommodative macroeconomic framework (e.g. tolerance of some inflation or fiscal deficit, restructuring debt obligations and lobbying for increased aid transfers) could provide another set of options in the context of the obligatory national dialogue aimed at expending social-protection coverage across the life-cycle. The ILO looks forward to continued collaboration with the ICSW to advance social justice.

Reflecting the past and on the future roles of the ICSW, Christian Rollet, Distinguished Fellow of the ICSW and past President of the ICSW, underscored a specific, proactive role for the ICSW as a knowledge-based organization in the global debates on social policy. At the same time, we maintain close links with our national organizations on the ground, getting permanent reality checks and updated, very current knowledge of the challenges existing in the field. It is our common responsibility to maintain a “two-way” street regarding the information flows, both bottom-up and top-down, making sure that our global thinking is closely aligned with local actors.

In his view, the ICSW Global Cooperation Newsletter is an established tool at our disposal to increase our influence and global reach. Addressing audiences beyond our membership, such as politicians, civil servants from international organizations, journalists and social activists at large, is most important, and it must be done professionally, with high research standards and with invitations to well-known people, scholars and leaders in various fields to present their opinions and views. It is crucial to rely on strong networks of global experts, bringing them on board when necessary. The introduction of the new category of membership, namely, Distinguished Fellows, was a good innovation at the global level, but it may be equally important to have similar innovations on the ground.

The format of the global conferences that we convene may also be subject to re-consideration. We do not want to become victims of our success in terms of conference participation only to lose at the same time the ability to debate acute topics, even if difficult or even controversial, that are highly relevant for contemporary societies. Rather than concentrating on micro-issues we should promote debates on the cross-cutting issues. The high level of the debate — without shying away from “hot”, even controversial issues — may become an additional attraction for participants, along with the interactive approach used in the sessions. Opposing views and their respective arguments by well-known speakers could be presented in such a way as to stimulate the engagement of the audience. An “open microphone” after the session should become a standard
practice, encouraging participants to present their views, get into the discussion with each other and learn from each other. Sharing information better within the organization and using various means, including effective contemporary electronic means, are also important.

Michael Cichon, Distinguished Fellow of the ICSW and immediate past president of the ICSW, stressed that he looks forward to the challenges of the next 10 years for the ICSW, after which the organization will celebrate its 100th anniversary. In 1928 our predecessors thought globally and acted locally. The ICSW was a unique NGO in social development and social work long before the term NGO was coined. In acting locally our member organizations made a difference for people.

Globalization has changed that fundamentally. Countries and societies are no longer social islands. They are interlinked by a multitude of economic and political ties, alliances and — as the case may be — adversary relationships. It no longer suffices to think globally, we also have to act globally.

By 2012 we were responding to that challenge rather well, but the biggest challenge is still to come. We became one of a handful of founding organizations of the Global Coalition for the Social Protection Floor. We were the first global NGO to adopt the SPF concept, and we helped to push the SPF Recommendation through the ILO. Later we helped to get the SPF into one of the targets of the SDGs of Agenda 2030. And just recently, as a member of the Global Coalition, we persuaded the IMF to listen to civil society as they now develop their own social-protection strategy. The latter development epitomizes our major policy challenge.

While we have forced them to listen to us, we cannot force them to hear and heed what they are told. The IMF is one of the most powerful international organizations and has so far pursued a residual, minimalistic, neoclassical doctrine in their social-protection policy “recommendations” to countries — just as the World Bank has done in many cases. There is little reason to believe that it will change fundamentally. Phillip Alston, the UN Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, indicated in his recent report on the IMF that “to date, the IMF has been an organization with a large brain, an unhealthy ego and a tiny conscience”.

We must try to counteract the neoclassical attacks on welfare by using the international normative and ethical instruments that we can promote, influence, and use. We should campaign together with our brothers and sisters in the Global Coalition for an ILO or UN
Convention on Social Protection or on the Social Protection Floor. And once it is accepted, we should campaign for national ratification. Once ratified, a convention is almost as good as national law. The international financial institutions (IFIs) should have to respect international law and national law. Unfortunately, this is not a magic bullet, but it is one of the very few we have.

(Continuation of the publication of the statements made at the Commemorative symposium is scheduled in the next issues of the ICSW Global Cooperation Newsletter)

The symposium organized jointly by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Council on Social Welfare aimed at discussing the nexus between social-work education and social-development practice. Below are summaries of the discussion at the symposium.

Professor Lena Dominelli, School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University, United Kingdom, began the discussion by urging participants to engage in controversial points about the social protection floor. Although such a floor was, in her view, a good idea in principle, it had many shortcomings in practice. She cited the termination of the SPF experiment in Finland as a good example. It was ended because it was too expensive to fund, and that was in one of the richest countries in the world with a good track record on welfare and the redistribution of resources towards those less well-off. She encouraged people to reconceptualize ideals by drawing upon lived experiences and not to defer idealism when trying to reconcile social-policy design with the lack of resources on the ground for implementation. Even the best-laid schemes, such as Social Protection Floor initiative, can become stuck when faced with resource constraints and the inability of proponents to increase the resource base and budget allocations. Rampant poverty is a huge stumbling block in the formulation of socio-economic policies that have meaningful content and need to succeed in order to improve the lives of the half of the world’s population mired in low incomes. This requires that social protection schemes go well beyond minimum levels so as to empower people in their efforts to acquire a
decent quality of life. The effectiveness and efficiency of social protection schemes can be reduced not only by the limited resource base in many countries, but also by the fragmentation of the data collected concerning its success. Becoming innovative and creative by co-producing solutions with service users and practitioners could provide a way forward. But that means that researchers, policymakers and practitioners would have to cede control over development and share policy with others if poverty is to be ended.

In order to discuss the significant interaction and synergy between social development and social work, professor Manohar Pawar, Charles Sturt University, Australia, and President of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD), presented three important points. First, he emphasized that there is a sound foundation of interaction and synergy between social development and social work, as many social-work educators and practitioners and their professional bodies, including ICSD, have contributed to the knowledge-base for social development. Both social development and social work focus on and work with individuals, families, communities, organizations and institutions at the local, national and global levels, and both focus on well-being and welfare outcomes. Secondly, however, the quality and quantity of the interaction and synergy between them is affected by misconceptions about social development and by our inability to convey what social development is, and it appears that the overcrowded social-work curriculum has little space for any new content, however important, or it is finding it hard to expand the comfort zone of clinical practice.

Thirdly, notwithstanding these issues, new conceptualizations of social development have created great opportunities for strong and meaningful interaction and synergy between the two. Professor Pawar argued that the ideas and ideals of social development are universally applicable; social development is practical and it is possible to practice and achieve social development; social and economic aspects do not compete against each other, as economic development is one of the crucial dimensions of social development; and social development is comprehensive, flexible and evolving. Together social development and social work can flourish.

A cooperation project aimed at supporting national, regional and international expert initiatives focused on strengthening and systematizing analytical and management capacities in the social-protection area in 11
mainly low-income countries was presented by Dr. **Timo Voipio**, Director, EU Social Protection Systems Initiative (EU-SPS), THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland. Taking into account the specific contexts and needs of the host countries, this Initiative brings on board national and regional capacity-development institutions in the assessment and strengthening of national capacities for social protection, making them country-owned and sustainable. The resources that can be tapped to meet the country’s needs vary according to the specifics of the situational context.

Dr. Timo Voipio

range of national and regional activities associated with the project and having direct impact on social-work practices was analyzed, e.g. the assessment of organizational capacities and financial options for delivering social assistance; legal assistance regarding social protection; the training of trainers on inclusive policies in various fields; university curriculum development pertinent to social protection; capacity development for local government social workers; the study of shock-responsive social-protection systems, and many others. Building the problem exploration skills of the local participants often required better linkages with the academic community and other experts, both local and international.

Speaking about educational challenges in the areas of social work and social protection, Professor **Krzysztof Hagemejer** (Poland), ICSW Distinguished Fellow and professor at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, stressed that synergies between social protection and social work include building strong awareness about social-security policies as major tools available to social workers that are indispensable to the achievement of their professional objectives. Successful implementation of social-security policies (and social-protection floors in particular) requires the full and engaged involvement of professional social workers, not just bureaucrats who identify benefits to be distributed.

Prof.Krzysztof Hagemejer

Thus, social workers are important stakeholders and should participate in shaping all stages of social-security policy design and implementation.
However, we are facing major challenges that make it difficult to profit from these synergies fully, because there are some pre-requisites that may not always be in place. For example, social-work education and social-security education as academic disciplines, and their respective professions, should to a much greater extent incorporate the body of knowledge of the other discipline into research, academic curricula and professional skills. Moreover, both disciplines are interdisciplinary and thus require a broad interdisciplinary approach (ranging from law and sociology to labor economics, public finance, demography and actuarial mathematics). In this context, there is an urgent need to create awareness of both disciplines and their synergies among stakeholders, policy-makers, opinion-makers and the general public.

Referring to the interaction between social-work education and social-development practice, Professor Antoinette Lombard, Head of the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria, South Africa, indicated that this interaction is embedded in the socio-economic and political realities of society. By adopting a developmental approach, social workers commit to a human-rights-based framework, where both psycho-social services on a micro level and advocacy and policy practice on a macro level are important. In developmental work, social protection is a human right. However, social workers have an ethical responsibility to make sure that people who are already behind do not stay behind by maintaining a survival mode. Promoting well-being starts with people, with respect for their dignity and ensuring that their voices are heard. In the context of sustainable developmental, social protection must be complemented with socio-economic development programs that take the environment into account. Students should be placed in progressive organizations where they can gain experience in challenging social injustice and do advocacy work that will promote social change.

Gabriele Koehler (Germany), ICSW Distinguished Fellow, UNRISD senior research associate, addressed the issue on the agenda relating to whether social protection is a new social norm, taking as a point of departure the world migration crisis.

As we are well aware, 68 million persons are currently forcibly
displaced,\textsuperscript{1} and there are an estimated 260 million international migrants.\textsuperscript{2} At the US-Mexican and the Southern European borders, the human rights of refugees and migrants are being flagrantly violated on a massive scale.\textsuperscript{3}

The connection of these tragedies to the themes of the Dublin Conference is direct: “... refugees would not risk their lives on a journey so dangerous if they could thrive where they are” (Fleming 2017).\textsuperscript{4} The notion of “thriving” is essentially about decent work and income, access to social care, education and health services, and about social protection. But: a quick look at social-protection coverage statistics shows that some of the home regions of refugees and migrants feature extremely low social-protection coverage: in Sub-Saharan Africa – 13\%, Asia and the Pacific - 39\%, Northern Africa - 40\%.\textsuperscript{5} This is one of several factors driving forced displacement and distress migration.

Three international normative frameworks could serve to advance the ability of such people to thrive – the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,\textsuperscript{6} which has several goals directly addressing decent work and social protection; and two new Compacts – the Global Compact on Refugees (2018)\textsuperscript{7} and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018).\textsuperscript{8} It is hoped that the social-welfare and social-work communities will be able to use these frameworks as policy anchors to stop the violation of basic human rights, and promote the thriving of all.

The panelists addressed questions raised by the audience, as well as some cross-current themes highlighted in the presentations.

\textsuperscript{3} US immigration policy systematically separates children, including breastfeeding infants, from their families. 1400 persons attempting to reach Europe have drowned in the Mediterranean since January 2018; many are children.
\textsuperscript{4} https://en.tiny.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_a_boat_carrying_500_refugees_sunk_at_sea_the_story_of_two_survivors
\textsuperscript{7} http://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5b1579427/official-version-draft-3-global-compact-refugees-4-june-2018.html
\textsuperscript{8} https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180711_final_draft_0.pdf
The discussion was moderated by Professor Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director, ICSW.

The ICSW General Assembly was held on 7 July 2018 in Dublin following the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development.

The President of the ICSW, Eva Holmberg-Herrström, welcomed the delegates and presented her report. The President underscored the important role that the ICSW plays in the social-policy area globally and regionally, and the new opportunities brought by the adoption of the SDGs of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Social Development. She also addressed the issue of the “democratic deficit” resulting from changing the status of several ICSW members within the organization, as well as the need to redouble the efforts of the organization on the regional level aimed at building up new partnerships and designing new projects.

Sharing his vision for the future and underscoring the need to ensure that the ICSW remains relevant and vibrant, Prof. Shajahan in his presentation focused on the need to expand the democratization process within the organization. His proposals regarding enlarging the membership basis and rationalizing the fee structure were met with great attention by the delegates. These issues will be further explored within the organization in the immediate future, taking into account the specifics of the situation on the ground. The need to think and act strategically with cogent vision and to make use of innovative tools and techniques was acknowledged as a priority for the ICSW.

The General Assembly adopted the Dublin Declaration, which can be seen at http://icsw.org/index.php/news/88-dublin-declaration

The ICSW Board meeting convened on 8 July continued the discussion of the most acute issues on the agenda of the organization. The implementation of the ICSW 2016-2020 Global Programme globally and regionally brought several innovative
suggestions. It was underscored that there is an urgent need for new strategically-oriented ideas that could ignite qualitative change. The decision was made by the Board to establish a number of in-house task forces to explore new opportunities and challenges.

The issues of governance at the global level and beyond were also discussed at length.

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