

Global Social Policy Digest 13.2

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Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

REDISTRIBUTION

While there has been considerable attention given to the leak of national tax revenues from countries due to strategic tax planning by multi-national companies (see Regulation), discussion about anything as radical as a global tax raised by a global tax authority for global public goods purposes is significant by its absence (though at least for global public goods, the [Centre for Global Development reports](#) some World Bank initiatives). At the EU regional level, however, [despite internal disagreements](#), progress towards implementing a regional Tobin style tax continues. Furthermore, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Council Directive implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the financial transaction tax, which mirrors the scope and objectives of its [original FTT proposal](#) of September 2011. Nevertheless, the UK continues to resist the policy despite argument in its [national press](#) that the time is right for a financial transaction tax.

Given that movement on global redistribution by means of taxes is not really progressing, it is even more worrying that official development aid (ODA) fell by 4% in real terms in 2012 (following a 2% fall in 2011), as reported by the OECD DAC in April 2013. The continuing financial crisis and euro zone turmoil has led several governments to tighten their budgets, which has had a direct impact on development aid (an exceptional case being the UK that despite cuts now reaches a 0.7 development aid target). In addition, there is a [noticeable shift in aid allocations](#) away from the poorest countries and towards middle-income countries, which is questionable given that this is occurring at the same time as the end of the MDGs and potential future development goals or processes are being intensively discussed (see below). Richard Manning argues that the OECD is “encouraging finance ministries to get away with murder as they seek to massage reported aid upwards at minimum costs”, as discussed at the [CGD website](#).

In terms of aid for trade, [according to WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy](#) (at the OECD Policy Dialogue on Aid for Trade, 16 January 2013, Paris), “significant progress in securing additional financial resources” has been made, but “sustaining financing flows in the continued tight fiscal environment is going to be tough” (see also the [Aid for Trade Policy Dialogue 2013](#)). So, whether or not we like the idea of aid for trade, another pillar in development aid might begin to totter.

At the same time, official development aid as such is not uncontested. For example, the Nigerian finance minister, [Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala](#), said in the context of the post-2015

development agenda discussions that Africa “can’t be dependent on donors”, and demanded innovation, infrastructure and jobs created by the private sector. Despite these sentiments the aid business seems increasingly obsessed once again with aiding private business as a means by which poverty can be alleviated through growth. This can be seen from a report ‘[Investing in Business of Development](#)’ from the North-South Institute and CCIC. Needless to say the IFC’s support would point exactly into the same direction (see also [its recent study on job creation](#) and a related [life webcast](#)). And of course, discussions in Duncan Green’s blog ‘[Aid and the private sector: a love story](#)’ are critical of such ideas.

It is not only global taxes which seem to be overlooked as the proposed global fund for Social Protection is not attracting the support it might either (see GSP digest 13.1 and Social Protection). And while the Global Fund for Aids TB and Malaria continues (see GSP digest 13.1), currently the discussions about health are rather muted in the major international meetings and debate (see also Health).

A related issue is the increased sense that developing countries should raise their own revenues for social spending. The [UK government](#), for example, has said it will cut aid to Pakistan if its elite do not pay more in national taxation. Trying to square the circle has been the proposal argued for within the [Recovery Human Face free list](#) that such a global fund for social protection should operate on a matching fund basis whereby “[e]very dollar in revenue raised by a country by its own fiscal policy which is earmarked for spending on its own social protection floor could be rewarded with a dollar from the fund.” More discussion can be found at the [Canadian International Development Platform](#).

While the transnational taxes issue might be more successfully addressed at a regional, rather than a global level, other mechanisms of redistribution have shifted to the BRICS. Clearly global influence is shifting to countries within the Global South (see Governance) and this in turn is changing the nature of the debate about Northern driven aid. Influencing these debates is the economic and political rise of the BRICS which was reflected in the latest UNDP Human Development Report ‘[The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World](#)’. This report examines the profound shift in global dynamics driven by the fast-rising new powers of the developing world and its long-term implications for human development. There is a [discussion](#) of the Report by Duncan Green of OXFAM; more [thoughts about the BRICS](#) at Dani Rodrik’s blog, and from the [Bretton Woods Project](#). Furthermore, [China Development Bank is now the world’s largest institute for overseas loans](#) and is playing a leading role in promoting Beijing’s economic interests abroad and the five BRICS countries

have in principle agreed to create a development bank to provide initial funding for infrastructure projects worth \$4.5tn (£3tn), in a potentially historic challenge to western-dominated financial institutions. Additionally, the leaders of the BRICS sat together on stage in a highly symbolic show of unity in Durban. The keynote phrase was "new paradigm" – and western politicians were conspicuously absent from the gathering. In this context the UK based ODI is asking 'how are developing countries managing the new aid landscape?' where they now have several choices between donors.

While the BRICS might be growing economically, inequity within each of the BRICS countries remains an issue (even if absolute poverty had been reduced in some of these countries) as is reviewed in 'BRICS: The Inequality Challenge'; a discussion of which is at Duncan Green's blog. A related discussion paper and Blog Post are available from Branko Milanovic (World Bank). Also more generally, inequality emerges as an issue with regard to intensified debates about the post-2015 development agenda. In a lecture at the Stockholm School of Economics, hosted by the European Commission and UNDP, Kevin Watkins (incoming head of UK ODI) made the case for "putting inequality at the heart of the agenda" because it violates basic human rights, and "will act as a break on progress towards vital post-MDG goals." (see also GSP digest 13.1). Joseph Stiglitz's discussion about the 'Causes and Consequences of Growing Inequality' can be viewed as a webcast and live blog from the World Bank. Similarly, Anthony Lake (UNICEF Executive Director) at a Global Consultation Process Meeting said "[a]ddressing inequalities is not a choice – it's a moral and practical necessity." A more 'quantative' approach to inequality can be found in a World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 'Inequality of Opportunity, income inequality and economic mobility: some international comparisons'.

However the official communiqué from the High Level Panel's meeting in Moravia in February 2013 did not have inequality as a main focus. The final report of the Panel is awaited. Meanwhile the UN System Task Team (not the High Level Panel) second report 'A renewed global partnership for development' looks at the possible features for the global partnership for development (the flawed Goal 8 of the MDGs) in the post-2015 era. Also unprecedented global discussions about development priorities have started in 100 countries. Duncan Green is rather unimpressed by the European Report on Development 2013 'Post-2015: Global Action for an inclusive and sustainable future'. But an interesting discussion about the 'Next Generation of Comprehensive Human Development Goals' by Köhler et al has been published by the IDS and ISS.

A valuable opinion on the post-2015 '[Show me the money: development finance in the post-2015 era](#)' brings us back to confront the increasingly uncertain question of where the money will come from to pay for the post 2015 agenda: traditional aid, new donors, new BRICS Bank, global funds and taxes or private finance?

Finally, an OPHI (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative) paper by Sabina Alkire and Andy Summer 'Multidimensional Poverty and the Post-2015 MDGs' proposes the consideration of a [Multidimensional Poverty Index](#) (MPI) 2.0 in post-2015 MDGs (for discussion see [Duncan Green's blog](#)). In the meantime, Martin Ravallion prefers calculating '[How long will it take to lift one billion people out of poverty?](#)'. Another World Bank paper wonders '[How to make the next round of MDGs more compelling?](#)'.

REGULATION

Further on the issue of private sector engagement in the post-2015 development agenda (see also Redistribution), the UN Global Compact and WBCSD submitted a [Joint Report to the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#) (a meeting took place on 25-27 March 2013 in Bali; a [related event of private sectors leaders](#) from 24 to 25 March 2013 also in Bali; see also the [Global Compact's website](#)). The report, amongst other things, claims "a genuine shift in the minds of many business leaders [...] [; they] have come to understand that there are both commercial and ethical imperatives in relation to the global sustainable development agenda". These are said to include natural resources constraints and environmental degradation, sustainability economic growth, human rights and human welfare, governance, and morality and ethics (further information is on the Global [Compact's website](#)). Related to this, already on 25 January 2013, a [meeting](#) between leading executives and the UN Secretary-General had taken place that discussed the future of the Sustainability Leadership Platform, including the desired role of business in the development of the post-2015 development agenda.

More clearly, such issues were expressed by [WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy](#) on 7 March 2013 at the Conference on International Cooperation in 2020 in The Hague:

economic growth and trade – as driver of growth – deserve a prominent place in the post 2015 development agenda. We need an agenda that integrates economic growth with social inclusion and with environmental protection. [...] Collectively we must plan for a common destination for the post-2015 development agenda. We need a compass that has countries

converging around the same destination. [...] [He referred to t]rade as a Platform for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

A more radical contribution to the debate about how to regulate the global economy in order to limit further carbon emissions and consequential climate change damage came from the World Social Forum meeting in Tunisia.

Commissioned by the G20, the OECD prepared a study 'Addressing Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)' in which it shows that

some multinationals use strategies that allow them to pay as little as 5% in corporate taxes when smaller businesses are paying up to 30% [...] [and] some small jurisdictions act as conduits, receiving disproportionately large amounts of Foreign Direct Investment compared to large industrialised countries and investing disproportionately large amounts in major developed and emerging economies.

OECD Secretary-General Angel Guerria said

These strategies, though technically legal, erode the tax base of many countries and threaten the stability of the international tax system, [...] [and as] governments and their citizens are struggling to make ends meet, it is critical that all tax payers – private and corporate – pay their fair amount of taxes and trust the international tax system is transparent.

Furthermore, the OECD has published 'Aggressive Tax Planning Based on After-Tax Hedging' (13 March 2013), described as "another example of what enhanced international co-operation in tax matters can bring about" (see also GSP digest 12.2). Relatedly, the UK based Tax Justice Network has published a second edition of 'Tax us if you can' reporting that some 32 trillion dollars are stored away in tax havens. In developing countries where capital increasingly can't be taxed, VAT on poor people's consumption is raised instead which has a regressive impact (see also 'Global Social Justice' website). Finally, on the story of capital that refuses to be taxed, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) released its first report from a 15-month investigation that cracks open the historically impenetrable world of offshore tax havens.

On the issue of migration, UNDESA convened the 11th Coordination Meeting on International Migration (21-22 February 2013) focussing on recent migration trends and their relevance for development in countries of origin, destination and transit. Recent publications concern new trends in migration, and the protection of migrants in times of crisis.

On trade and its impact on developing countries, a number of analyses come from the OECD and WTO, as well as from the World Bank.

RIGHTS

On global social rights, at the most general level the ILO published 'Globalizing Social Rights'. Discussions and recommendations of the "post-2015" development agenda have also become central in the area of social rights. Placing human rights, equality and non-discrimination at the centre of the "post-2015" development agenda has been stressed by largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system. They argue that MDGs have remained silent on inequality and that in the "post-2015" agenda there should be a "stand-alone goal on equality in order to foster more inclusive forms of development." Highlighting this need for equality and dignity particularly in relation to gender based violence was this year's International Women's Day (March 8th) theme: 'A Promise is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence against Women!' A joint statement by several UN organizations on this issue including UNICEF, can be found [here](#).

Present in many discussions was the point that gender based violence in addition to most direct and visible consequences also impacts the access to socio-economic resources and institutions further resulting in unequal treatment of women and girls. This theme was explored in an e-learning course on "Gender Equality and Development" from the World Bank which was launched on March 11. Also examining the price of violence against women and girls was a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) side event. Importantly, the event sought to address some long term impacts in relation to the issue and a variety of concerns such as health and lost productivity. In similar terms, UNDP Associate Administrator Rebeca Grynspan pointed out that gender based violence bears huge costs for the victims, their families and societies in which they live. As an example she pointed to a study in Chile that found that women's lost earnings alone as a result of domestic violence cost US\$1.56 billion or more than 2 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. In the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW57) which culminated on Friday (15 March 2013) Member States underlined their commitment that women and girls have the right to live a life free of violence, exploitation and abuse.

Adding some other consideration was the UNICEF panel in New York which discussed the importance of early intervention and quality education to end violence against girls. Focusing on the topic of discrimination against women was the 54th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

More broadly rights of persons with disabilities were dealt with extensively in the context of the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) held from 25 February to 22

March 2013. The fifth annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities (6 March 2013) focused on the work and employment. The HRC also adopted without a vote a resolution on the work and employment of persons with disabilities (draft resolution A/HRC/22/L.4). The resolution calls upon States parties to the CRPD to adopt and implement appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to work on an equal basis with others.

Promoting empowerment of people was at the core when the Commission for Social Development convened for its 51st session from 6 through 15 February. “Empowering individuals and social groups requires a comprehensive set of policies and institutions. From education and health care to economic and social policy, activities that seek to empower people are expected to increase opportunities and improve people’s quality of life”, said Ms. Larysa Belskaya, Vice-Chair of the Commission’s Bureau. Chaired by Ms. Sewa Lamsal Adhikari of Nepal, the Commission focused on this year’s priority theme, “Empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all.” Ms. Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stressed that,

The right to work is a fundamental human right that is inseparable from human dignity. Not only does it provide individuals with the means to make a living and support their families; insofar as work is freely chosen or accepted, it contributes to their development and recognition within their communities. Work carries no less meaning to persons with disabilities.

The “Study on the situation of indigenous persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on challenges faced with respect to the full enjoyment of human rights and inclusion in development”, reviews the situation of indigenous persons with disabilities in the enjoyment of their human rights.

The Bretton Woods Project discusses the World Bank’s commitment to incorporate human rights (including those of indigenous people) in all of its activities.

A group of NGOs sent a letter to Ministers of Labor urging them to ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (Convention 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers) and to protect child domestic workers. The ILO has announced that the 2013 World Day Against Child Labor, observed worldwide on June 12, will focus on child domestic labor. The 62nd Committee on the Rights of the Child was held from 14 January-1 February 2013. Alternative Reports can be found here. Pressing issues impacting the rights of children are lack of access to proper water and sanitation, lack of protection from humanitarian crisis and violence. Children dying daily because of unsafe water supplies and poor sanitation and hygiene.

Global Social Governance

The Davos World Economic Forum took place 23-27 January 2013, with many discussions continuing to focus on the global economic and financial crisis, including unemployment issues, but also discussing health systems, future development goals and a few other social policy related topics. However, a main emphasis is not visible from the website, and the event is in general not about coming up with big and clear conclusions and prescriptions (however see Social Protection section for its discussion of pensions policy).

In contrast, the meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors concluded on 16 February 2013 in Moscow with a communiqué that amongst other things reaffirms the important role of the IMF in fighting the crisis in countries and urges its governance reform; and it welcomes the OECD report on tax base erosion and profit shifting (see also Regulation). However, the role of the IMF continues to be contested as Jesse Griffith (eurodad) asks “G20 starts to work on long-term investment, but will the IFIs give the right advice?”; the Center for Economic and Social Rights discusses ‘King, Keynes and Obama’s legacy at the IMF’; while Bloomberg reports doubts about prescriptions to austerity from IMF staff. Yet, the OECD, in its latest Going for Growth report still includes among its key findings and policy messages:

- *The pace of reforms has been particularly high in euro area countries under financial assistance programmes or direct market pressures (e.g. Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain), including politically-sensitive areas such as labour regulation and welfare systems [...]*
- *The stronger emphasis on active labour market and social benefit policies is largely consistent with countries' own structural reform commitments and core priorities, as expressed in the context of the G20 action plans [...]*
- *Measures in the areas of employment protection legislation, wage bargaining institutions and the minimum wage, which are recommended to improve employment opportunities for low-skilled workers and young people, may widen the wage distribution and thus exacerbate income inequality in the short run.*

An alternative view on the austerity crisis and one which reflects the impact on many non-OECD countries is provided by Isabel Ortiz (currently Directing the Global Justice Programme within the Initiative for Policy Dialogue at Columbia University), and entitled ‘The Age of Austerity – A Review of Public Expenditures and Adjustment Measures in 181 Countries’. It examines the latest IMF government spending projections for 181 countries by

comparing the four distinct time periods, reviews IMF country reports to identify the main adjustment measures considered in high-income and developing countries, discusses the threats of austerity to development goals and social progress; and calls for urgent action by governments to adopt alternative and equitable policies for socio-economic recovery. Within this context it is important to include 'Southern Voices in the Post-2015 Development Debate'.

It remains to be seen if real changes away from inequity generating austerity towards inclusive recovery can be detected from the upcoming IMF-World Bank spring meeting taking place 19-21 April 2013; but the Bretton Woods Project reviews the past year and states "large bureaucracies are slow to change, as the IMF found out with its inability to extricate itself from the morass developing in the Eurozone." The Bretton Woods Project also noted that "many hoped that Dr Kim would completely reorient the Bank's operations [...] but some viewed his first six months more as a public relations exercise" (see also <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/art-571937>, <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/art-572259>). His speech on 3 April 2013 does, however, address the issue of growth with inclusion as the way to end poverty, and referred to the problem of inequality.

As inspiring as this World Bank speech is, more promising in the long term might be the outcome of a new UN working group (The UN internal Task Team for post 2015) convened to provide inputs on a renewed global partnership for development in the post-2015 development agenda. Their report appeared in March, and argues (para 45) the need for strengthened global governance:

global public goods are under-provisioned. Overcoming the collective action problems in the supply of public goods will require internationally coordinated actions in order to ensure adequate provisioning. Striking the right balance between global rules that are both effective but also fair will be a key factor in a successful global partnership for development

The several think pieces penned by UN agencies to inform this report are of interest including the one on global governance.

As an alternative site of global governance to the UN, as part of the G20 meetings preparing for the 2013 St Petersburg Summit the G20 Development Working Group Meeting was held 26-27 February 2013, attended by representatives of the G20 Ministries and Official

Development Assistance Agencies and international organisations.¹ The Russian Sherpa (<http://www.g20.org/news/20130226/781239408.html>) admitted that the G20 objective to achieve steady and balanced growth globally cannot be reached without assisting developing and least-developed countries in strengthening their own capacities for growth and establishing solid foundation to make such growth sustainable. Narrowing the development gap and reducing poverty can facilitate a more robust global economy for all. That is why the development agenda is one of the priorities of the Russian Presidency in the G20, and the work of the Development Working Group is central in delivering specific actions in this area. The Bretton Woods Project asks, “G20 working on international financial architecture, while the IMF ‘to bury its head in the sand’?”

Meanwhile, the UK has taken presidency of the increasingly marginalised G8, and formulated its priorities to be trade, tax and transparency (a related letter goes more into detail).

The World Social Forum took place in Tunis 26-30 March 2013. The Declaration of the Social Movements Assembly expresses the struggles against transnational corporations and the financial system as the main agents of the capitalist system, for climate justice and food sovereignty, against violence against women, and for peace.

The process of electing a new head to the WTO looks at nine nominated candidates. Brief media presentations of all candidates can be found here. The Centre for Global Development engages in discussions about the elections (see also http://international.cgdev.org/blog/interview-wto-candidate-anabel-gonzalez?utm_=). Furthermore, the UN ECOSOC has a new President – Nestor Osorio of Colombia. The Global Compact has appointed Klaus Leisinger, Chairman of the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development, as Special Advisor on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Business Ethics. Brice Lalonde, former Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Coordinator of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, will serve as Special Advisor on Sustainable Development to the UN Global Compact.

¹ The process of preparing the 2013 St Petersburg Summit (5-6 September 2013) can be followed at the G20 Information Centre <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/summits/2013stpetersburg.html>

International Actors and Social Policy

HEALTH

Despite quite some important international events (see Redistribution, Regulation, and Governance), since about 2010, global health debates appear relatively muted in the beginning of the years. What has happened?

Early on in the year the WHO's Executive Board (EB) convened from 21-29 January 2013. The Report by the Director-General to the Executive Board refers to numerous health policies, including the post-2015 development agenda, austerity measures, climate change, child health; but if there is a focus then it is on medical issues particularly polio – it is more difficult to find that health systems, health system financing, universal health care have also been considered – there are reports on 'Universal Health Coverage' that explain repeatedly that

[m]oving towards universal coverage is a process that needs progress on several fronts: the range of services that are available to people (consisting of medicines, medical products, health workers, infrastructure and information required to ensure good quality); the proportion of the costs of those services that are covered; and the proportion of the population that is covered. These gains need to be protected during financial or economic downturns. Universal health coverage is not about achieving a fixed minimum package.

Outlining and planning the way forward, the report hints to a more comprehensive document 'Health Systems Financing. The Path to Universal Health Coverage'. Other reports to the EB concern the health related MDGs. Particularly the second report, on health in the post-2015 development agenda is interesting as it stresses the role of universal health coverage and health systems. In addition, at the EB, the future strategy of the WHO was discussed.

A Ministerial Meeting on universal health coverage took place 18-19 February 2013 in Geneva (co-organised by the WHO and the World Bank). In her opening speech, Margaret Chan mentioned:

The recent enthusiasm for universal coverage occurs in a world in which social inequalities, in income levels, in opportunities, and in access to health care, are at the greatest levels seen in at least half a century. At a time when policies in so many sectors are actually increasing social inequalities, I would be delighted to see health lead the world towards greater fairness in ways that matter to each and every person on this planet.

In a CGD blog, Amanda Glassman asks ‘[What Will Universal Health Coverage Actually Cover?](#)’, and Adam Wagstaff (World Bank) asks if universal health coverage is ‘[old wine in a new bottle](#)’. To be enthusiastic or not remains a question given the fact that health system issues that used to be top of the agenda on the major international meetings have now vanished.

However, at the same time, at the launch of the joint WTO-WHO-WIPO study ‘[Promoting Access to Medical Technologies and Innovation](#)’ on 5 February 2013, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, said that “coherence between health policies, intellectual property rules and trade policy is key to finding sustainable solutions to access to medicines and medical technologies.” A [UNDP policy brief](#) examines the “option for LDCs to retain the policy space which enables them to confront their health burdens with effective and affordable strategies. It covers to extend the transition period under which LDCs must become TRIPS compliant.” But Duncan Green warns that ‘[The poorest countries are under renewed threat from WTO rules on access to medicines](#)’.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The third meeting of the new Social Protection Inter Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) was convened on 11 February 2013 in New York by the ILO New York Office in the context of the Annual UN Social Development Commission meeting in New York (for background see previous GSP digests). Its [agenda](#) included inserting social protection in the UN Post 2015 agenda and collaboration between the World Bank and UN and bilateral agencies on social protection statistics. Among the papers tabled was one by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Ms. Magdalena Sepulveda and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Olivier de Schutter on ‘[The need to include a rights-based approach to Social Protection in the Post 2015 Development Agenda](#)’. In addition to calling for social protection to be included in the ‘new MDGs’ it referred to their earlier argument (see GSP digest 13.1) to establish a global fund for social protection. However no discussion took place with a view to lining up the SPIAC-B behind this proposal and no steps were taken to bring it into existence. It seems that the concept of a global fund which might grant funds to poor countries might now being played down within SPIAC-B in part because the concept clashes with the interests of the World Bank, who jointly chair the Board, in lending money for building social protection systems.

Given that the SPIAC-B now undertakes much of the work of the earlier 2009 initiated UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (UN-SPF-I) it is likely that it will not be reconvened. The G20 initiated web site (www.socialprotection.org) has not provided information about the SPAIC-Board even though the G20 was formally central to its creation. Indeed the countries that had been given responsibility for the G20 work on Social Protection: Pillar 6, Resilient Growth (Australia, Indonesia and Italy) and on Pillar 9, Knowledge Sharing (Korea and Mexico) were not at the third SPIAC-B meetings, highlighting the problem the informal G20 with no permanent secretariat has in following through on initiatives. At the time of writing work is advancing on the creation of a dedicated SPIAC-B site within the ILO New York Office probably to be linked to the existing ILO's Partnership and Development Cooperation section.

The invitation for the meetings of the SPIAC-B are extended to a large number of mainly Northern OECD member ‘donor’ countries, several international organisation and some INGOs including HelpAge International, Save the Children, the ICSW and Solidar. Interestingly Michael Cichon, now President of the ICSW, having resigned from the ILO in December 2012 was not presenting the ICSW at the February SPIAC-B meeting but instead posted the following on the ICSW Cooperation Newsletter where he argues it is now the turn of trade unions and civil society to advance the social protection floor concept:

Political will on the national level can also not be created by international organisations, which are ultimately owned by national governments. These organizations have carried the ball as far as they could [...]. The global consensus on the Social Protection Floor provides moral guidance and legitimacy, as well as a political shield for national demands. The global community of nations has decided that everyone should enjoy a minimum of social protection and that societies should gradually build higher levels of social security on the basis of strong principles. And it has decided so unanimously. There is nothing that should stop national pressure groups from reminding national governments of that consensus whenever necessary and demanding the establishment or safeguarding of social protection floors at the national level.

Within this context the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Geneva office convened on 8-9 April 2013 the core team of the NGO Coalition for a social protection floor to meet – together with trade unions – “to develop future strategies and joint activities to help achieve real social protection based on human rights in all parts of the world”.(<http://www.fes-globalization.org/geneva/events.htm>) . Meanwhile there is a new book Rethinking Social Protection announced on the <http://www.globalsocialjustice.eu/> where Francine Mestrum suggests, “While these (ILO etc) proposals have to be welcomed and promoted, there is a real risk that they will not go beyond poverty reduction”. This book was to be discussed at a

session on “Building the path towards the universalization of social protections/social security within the context of economic, social and political crisis and false universalistic promises” at the World Social Forum on Health in Tunisia on 24 March 2013.

Curiously the World Bank Social Protection division and the Policy division of UNICEF, immediately after Michael Cichon had given up the reigns of social protection at the ILO and after Isabel Ortiz had done the same with regard to Economic and Social Policy at UNICEF, convened a joint web meeting to agree a common strategy on building Social Protection Systems. Although mention is made of the SPF it is somewhat disturbing (from the point of view of those wanting to focus on and role out SPFs) that the two organisation will work together with a new methodology, called SPARC (Social Protection Assessment of Results and Country Systems) which seems to ignore the already existing ILO rapid assessment protocol for helping countries work out the cost of the gaps in their SPFs. Despite the creation of SPIAC-B (earlier) tensions, jockeying and positioning still seems to be the name of the global social protection game.

Support for Social Protection being a key part of the external dimension of EU policy came from the Directorate General for External Policies of the EU in the shape of a report on The Feasibility of Social Protection Schemes in Developing Countries. More support for the role of the EU in supporting SPFs comes from Frank Hoffer of the ILO’s ACTRAV - Universal Social Protection Floors – A Minimum The World Is Too Rich Not To Have.

The link between ‘food security’ and ‘social protection’ continues to be made by UNRISD in a Podcast and in ‘Can social protection floor guarantee food security’. Other discussions have focused on the link between gender and social protection in the developing world: beyond mothers and safety nets.

An interesting report; Developing Future Social Protection Systems Retirement Income was tabled at the World Economic Forum setting out the argument that all of the 4 pillars of the World Bank’s multi pillar system had problems including the individual savings pillar being subject to investment risks (for the ISSA’s contribution see <http://www.issa.int/News-Events/News2/ISSA-contributes-to-World-Economic-Forum-report>).

EDUCATION

In March 2013, the Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda took place in Dakar, Senegal. About 100 representatives of international organizations, UN agencies, governments, civil society, the private sector and the academia were present. The final outcome document reflects the most important debates that were given in the meeting and proposes an umbrella education goal for the post-2015 development agenda: "*Equitable, quality, lifelong education and learning for all.*" This was seen as a way of transcending the reductionism of the prevailing educational MDG, which focuses on universal primary education.

In the context of the Dakar Thematic Consultation, the UN released a new study that proposes ways to close additional \$10 billion funding gap for education for all. Among other measures, the authors of the study suggest that, instead of sending students from developing countries to study in donor countries, some of the funds could be spent on developing education systems in the South.

UNESCO, together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), recently released the document Technology, broadband and education: advancing the Education for All agenda that widens up the scope of the EFA debate. With this work, these organizations advocate for harnessing the power of the internet and other information and communication technologies in efforts to reach the 2015 internationally agreed development goals.

The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report has released the draft paper GMR Proposed post-2015 education goals: emphasizing equity, measurability and finance, which suggests what the new educational goals for the post-2015 period could look like.

Also in the run-up to 2015, UNESCO, through its Institute for Statistics, and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, in the context of the Learning Metrics Task Force, have released the report Toward Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn. The report presents a framework for what every child and youth should learn and be able to do by the time they reach post-primary age.

The new OECD report Trends Shaping Education 2013 brings together international evidence to address questions like: What does it mean for education that our societies are increasingly diverse? How is global economic power shifting towards new countries? In what ways are working patterns changing?.

The Third International Summit on the Teaching Profession held in Amsterdam on 13-14 March 2013 brought together education ministers, union leaders and other teacher representatives to discuss how teacher quality is defined and what standards are set and by whom; what systems are in place for teacher evaluation and how evaluations are conducted; and how teacher evaluation contributes to school improvement and teacher self-efficacy.

The Global Partnership for Education's new report "Making Education Aid More Effective" explores how education stakeholders can ensure that all children receive a quality education with the resources available from both developing countries and donors.

UNICEF has just released the report Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview. The report considers five dimensions of children's lives (material well-being, health and safety, education, behaviours and risks, and housing and environment) and examines them in relation to 29 different countries. Changes in child well-being, in part as a consequence of the global financial crisis, over the first decade of the 2000s are examined.

In the February UNICEF's Executive Board, held in New York, the right of children with disabilities to education was debated. UNICEF advocates for a Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education and argues that inclusive education promotes tolerance and equal participation in society. It leads to better learning outcomes, not only for children with disabilities but for all children, and is central to the achievement of high quality education for all learners, reducing inequities and building more inclusive societies.

The World Bank Education Year in Review 2012, a comprehensive overview of all recent Bank's education publications and knowledge products with additional information on historical lending data, is already available.

The International Association of Universities has released a portal on the role of Higher Education in Promoting Sustainable Development (HESD) that aims at promoting more equitable and ecological societies, by making sustainable development a central theme of academic and institutional work.

FOOD

Given that the FAO Food Price Index dropped by 7 per cent as reported in the beginning of January (10 January 2013), there were also voices to make the case for food to be at the core of the development agenda.

On 14 February 2013, a joint UN meeting on food security took place between the UN ECOSOC, the UN GA, world experts and the UN food agencies. Already in advance of the meeting, senior UN officials stressed “[n]utrition and food security should be the top development goal as the international community sets its priorities beyond 2015”. In a video message UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for greater action in fighting global hunger, including by means of the ‘Zero Hunger Challenge’ –

The Challenge aims for a future where every individual has adequate nutrition and where all food systems are resilient. Its five objectives are to make sure that everyone in the world has access to enough nutritious food all year long; to end childhood stunting; to build sustainable food systems; to double the productivity and income of smallholder farmers, especially women; and to prevent food from being lost or wasted.

On international women's day (8 March), FAO and other international organisations highlighted the links between women, violence and food security. Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur Olivier De Schutter, said “Sharing power with women is a shortcut in reducing hunger and malnutrition, and is the single most effective step to realizing the right to food” (a related report was submitted to the Human Rights Council’s 22nd session).

FAO announced it will test a new, faster and more precise way of measuring hunger and food insecurity, called 'Voice of the Hungry project' (13 March 2013)

The latest main messages from the World Bank's Food Price Watch are:

- *The prices of internationally traded food continued to decline between October 2012 and February 2013, increasing to six the number of months with consecutive declines. Lower demand in tight international markets and improved supply conditions have contributed to these price falls.*
- *However, international food prices remain only 9% below the all-time high recorded in August 2012, and several uncertainties on both supply and demand sides still threaten international markets.*
- *Seasonal factors, domestic policies, and other local circumstances are interacting to maintain strong domestic prices in many monitored markets.*

- *However, even in this context of high food prices, the current global overweight and obesity epidemic is likely to expand. This will present even more challenges to the post-2015 efforts to reduce global malnutrition.*

Kimberley Ann Elliott (Center for Global Development) authored a paper 'Innovating for Food Security and Smallholder Livelihoods'.

At the WTO, discussions are taking place about loosening price support disciplines for developing countries' public stocks and domestic food aid.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter argued that empowering women is the shortcut to tackling hunger argued when he presented his report on Gender and the Right to Food to the UN Human Rights Council. In particular he argued that "If women are allowed to have equal access to education, various pieces of the food security jigsaw will fall into place," he explained. "Household spending on nutrition will increase, child health outcomes will improve, and social systems will be redesigned – for women, by women – to deliver support with the greatest multiplier effects." A discussion of De Schutter's arguments can be found at the Guardian Poverty Matters Blog.

While on the topic of the right to food it is important to mention De Schutter's report on his mission to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. De Schutter also discussed the fact that FAO must do more to promote food as a basic human right. De Schutter also urged EU legislators to development proof the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). He stated, "Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy means high stakes not only for European farmers, but for millions of others worldwide who are affected by EU policies," the UN expert said. "Development concerns should be made an essential part of CAP reform, and the window of opportunity for doing so is rapidly closing." More recently Karin Ulmer, Concord, the European confederation of relief and development NGOs and development network Aprodev, states that "Development concerns have been ignored, which is a failure for voices who want to ensure that the CAP is living up to the global sustainability challenge of the 21st century. The majority of parliamentarians have voted down amendments in support of a monitoring system to assess the external impact in developing countries, as well the introduction of crop rotation including protein plants."

HABITAT, LAND, HOUSING

Access to water has increasingly become highlighted and the celebrations on World Water Day, March 22, focused on the theme of water cooperation. Attention was called to the allocation of water through market mechanisms which impact the most marginalized and vulnerable. The UN has called on countries to ensure access to water and sanitation is included in the ‘post-2015’ development agenda. The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson launched a call for urgent action to end the crisis of 2.5 billion people without basic sanitation, and to change the fact that more people have mobile phones than toilets. A clean and healthy environment was pointed to as furthering human rights of individuals in the interactive dialogue held by the Human Right Council with experts on the Human Rights and the Environment and Foreign Debt. Since, the World Bank is undergoing a two-year consultative process to review and update its environmental and social safeguard policies an independent UN expert has called on the Bank to increase protection and promotion on the right to adequate housing. Though environmentally safe housing with appropriate sanitation is necessary also needed is security of tenure to housing pointed out the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing to the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council. In other words, individuals must have some security and protection of their housing.