

Global Social Policy Digest 10.1 2010

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Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation, and Rights

REDISTRIBUTION

Initiatives concerned with global redistribution were primarily reactions to the global economic and financial crisis. The OECD launched a [new website](#) on the crisis¹, including a [“strategic response”](#) to the crisis². The latter says, amongst other things: “To make it fairer, we need to share the benefits of prosperity by: boosting employment and social inclusions, fostering development and providing adequate education and health care”. Further, the OECD Development Centre published a [study](#) that demands the financial crisis should provoke a thorough re-examination of the conditions placed on aid to developing countries. “In the wake of the financial crisis, the study calls for more modesty from the donor community when defining “good” and “bad” practices. Recipient countries also need to say ‘no’ more often to aid with excessive strings attached”³. However IMF lending practices continue to be regarded by critics as mainly unchanged and largely pro-cyclical rather than counter-cyclical (Digest 9.3).

The UNCTAD [Trade and Development Report](#) 2009 also focuses on the world financial crisis and its effects both on developed and developing countries⁴. The [report overview](#) claims that "the current crisis is due to the predominance of finance over productive sectors of the economy where real wealth is created. This was made possible by policymakers' euphoria over the efficiency of free markets." The overview emphasizes also "the imperative need for reform of the international monetary and financial system" in order to stabilize trade and financial relations⁵.

UNICEF and the UK based [ODI](#)⁶ hosted a conference [The global economic crisis – including children in the policy response](#)⁷. It took place November 9-10, 2009 in London, UK. Echoing the 1987 call by UNICEF (Richard Jolly) for Adjustment with a Human face, Isabel Ortiz of UNICEF's policy division called for a [recovery with a human face](#)⁸.

UNESCO's [MOST Programme](#) also reviewed the social dimensions of the crisis⁹.

The UN's [World Economic and Social Survey 2009](#) dealt with sustainable development, trying to bridge environmental and developmental concerns¹⁰. It aims to push for an agenda of low-carbon high-growth plans, advertised as a [NEW MARSHALL PLAN](#): ‘This potentially win-win strategy will require the readiness of the international community to step up to the plate with multilateral financing on a much larger scale than has been forthcoming to date and new approaches to transferring technology from rich to poor countries.’¹¹

The accord agreed between USA, Brazil, China, India and South Africa, “recognised” by the UN climate conference in its [final communiqué](#) says (para 8) the rich countries will jointly mobilise \$100bn annually by 2020 , drawing on a variety of sources: "public and private,

bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance." A main stumbling block during the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit has been precisely whether the new monies offered by the Global North is in addition to the already promised increases in AID or merely to be counted as part of that aid. The final communiqué says that "scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding...shall be provided to developing countries...(and) will be delivered through effective and efficient fund arrangements, with a governance structure providing for equal representation of developed and developing countries. A significant portion of such funding should flow through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund". Para 9 added "to this end, a High Level Panel will be established under the guidance of and accountable to the Conference of the Parties to study the contribution of the potential sources of revenue including alternative sources of finance, towards meeting this goal. So, despite the failure to reach a legal agreement progress on global funding does seem to have been made during the conference and not repudiated in the final "accord"¹².

UNRISD convened a [conference](#) in November on the social and political dimensions of the crisis and one panel addressed the implications for global financing of rescue packages for developing countries and the implications for aid. Each speaker called for a global financial transaction tax to fund the MDGs, climate change adaptation and a fiscal stimulus for poorer countries. "If donors want to escape their increasingly unmet aid commitments and if recipient countries want to be free of aid dependency then the search both technically and politically for sources of global funds to aid a massive global redistribution project become of central importance"¹³.

Initially there were divisions in Europe over such a [Tobin tax proposal](#)¹⁴ but subsequently [UK Gordon Brown](#) called for a global transaction tax albeit to only pay for the costs of rescuing the Banks¹⁵. The IMF has been tasked by the G20 meeting in September to report on its [feasibility](#) by March 2010¹⁶. Meanwhile the "Leading Group of countries" established a [Taskforce on International Financial Transactions and Development](#) which met for the first time on October 22nd 2009¹⁷. [Campaign organisations](#) call for the proceeds of any such tax to be used for a range of development and climate change needs and not just the replenishment of the coffers of Northern governments who bailed out the banks¹⁸.

The need for such funds to be used for the MDGs is made clear as the MDG Taskforce published "[Strengthening the Global Partnership for Development in a Time of Crisis](#)" "The report highlighted a gap of \$35 billion per year on the 2005 pledge on annual aid flows made by the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized countries in Gleneagles, including a \$20 billion annual shortfall on commitments to Africa"¹⁹.

Other global redistributive mechanisms continue to be discussed and extended. Gordon Brown unveiled the [expansion of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation \(Iffim\)](#) at the UN in New York. The additional funds will be used for the first time to fund health service delivery systems and not just drugs²⁰. (See also health section). The original Global Fund for AIDS/TB/Malaria produced its [end of year results](#)²¹ http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/pressreleases/?pr=pr_091130 reporting that \$2.4 billion in [new grants approved](#)²² but that 95 countries applied for [grants for a total \\$4.8 billion](#)²³.

Meanwhile the IMF produced working papers on remittances: “[Fiscal Sustainability in Remittance-Dependent Economies](#)”²⁴ and “[Determinants and Macroeconomic Impact of Remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)”²⁵ At the same time a UN agency calls for harnessing of [untapped potential](#) of remittances²⁶.

The actual negative impact of the crisis on poorer countries has been reviewed by the [IMF](#)²⁷ and the [Centre for Global Development](#)²⁸

On aid and aid effectiveness, a number of publications have been published. Owen Barden, discusses the [benefits of markets and networks for aid](#)²⁹. The OECD published [Better Aid. Improving Incentives in Donor Agencies](#)³⁰ addressing the need for donors and partner countries to commit strengthening incentives for their agencies to work toward harmonisation, alignment and results. Sebastian Paulo and Helmut Reisen present [diverging perspectives](#) about the role of new donors, such as China and India³¹. Meanwhile [Sweden ranks first](#)³² in the [2009 Commitment to Development Index](#)³³.

REGULATION

Also in response to the global crisis policy discussions about regulating aspects of the global economy continue in terms of taxation policy, migration policy, the banking and financial sector and corporate behaviour generally. The G20 Pittsburg Summit in September reported Greater Transparency and International Cooperation in Tax Matters. The [SG's Report](#) noted “unprecedented action to implement the OECD initiated and now globally endorsed standards of transparency and exchange of information in tax matters”³⁴. Despite such progress a French National Assembly Cross-party [report on tax havens](#) explains the continuing problem posed by them³⁵. Similar is the [TUC report](#)³⁶ on [UK tax avoidance](#)³⁷. There was also the Global Financial Integrity's report on [Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2002-2006](#)³⁸. The Tax Justice network continues to expose the [many scandals](#) associated with off-shore financial activity³⁹ but also sees the possibility of progress through the [UN tax committee discussions](#)⁴⁰. This committee met for its [fifth annual session](#) between 19th and 23rd October⁴¹ and considered again a [draft proposal](#) for a voluntary code of conduct on cooperation in combating international tax evasion⁴². There is a new project on [Mapping Secret Jurisdictions](#)⁴³.

The problem of how to regulate and manage migration flows for the benefit of all generated a flurry of reports. The [Second Conference on International Migration and Development](#), supported by the World Bank Migration and Development Program and the Agence Francaise de Développement, took place in September at the WB headquarters⁴⁴. The UNDP released the [Human Development Report 2009 – Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development](#)⁴⁵. The OECD published [The Future of International Migration to OECD Countries](#) exploring future social, economic and environmental forces attracting migrants to come to OECD countries⁴⁶. The ILO produced “[Facing the global jobs crisis: Migrant workers, a population at risk](#)”⁴⁷ Lets talk about skills flow and not brain drain says a [CGDEV report](#)⁴⁸. The [Eighth Coordinating Meeting on International Migration](#) took place in New York,

16-17 November 2009, intended to address the following issues: to assess the impact of economic and financial crisis on international migration; to review initiatives to strengthen the evidence base on international migration and development; and to exchange information about United Nations entities and other relevant international organizations on current and planned activities in the area of international migration and development⁴⁹.

In terms of concrete policy initiatives and action there is UNICEF and ILO's [Training Manual](#) to fight trafficking in children for labour, sexual and other forms of exploitation⁵⁰

December saw the launch of the first [European Social Watch Report on Migration](#) which focuses on the links between migration and development. The report contains 30 articles on different aspects of migration and the role that migrants play – both as contributors to Europe, and to the development of their countries of origin⁵¹.

The United Nations Global Compact and the OECD have recently begun to enhance their [collaborative efforts](#), particularly in countries that have both Global Compact Local Networks and National Contact Points (“NCPs”) on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.⁵²

Meanwhile [Guidelines](#) have been produced on cooperation between UN and business sector which specify among other things that the UN will not engage with Business Sector entities that are complicit in human rights abuses, tolerate forced or compulsory labour or the use of child labour, are involved in the sale or manufacture of anti-personnel landmines or cluster bombs, or otherwise do not meet relevant obligations required by the UN⁵³. At the same time the number of companies delisted since 2008 for failure to meet the UN Global Compact's mandatory annual reporting requirement, has now passed 1,000. As part of the announcement, the Global Compact Office also released a [full listing](#) of the 1,004 companies delisted as of 6 October.

An [agreement](#) was reached on 13th November to a mechanism to monitor implementation of the *United Nations Convention against Corruption*. According to UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the legally binding Convention obliges 142 States to prevent and criminalize corruption, promote international cooperation, recover stolen assets, and improve technical assistance and information exchange. Under the new mechanism, all States will be monitored every five years to see how they are living up to their obligations⁵⁴. The UNODC [reported](#) on the Anti-corruption policies and measures of the Fortune Global 500⁵⁵. Meanwhile on the side of business comes the 7th World bank's [“Doing Business report 2010: reforming through difficult times”](#).⁵⁶

Finally the period covered by this Digest saw a number of initiatives to encourage the Banking and Finance Sector to be more socially responsible by reigning in bank bonuses, by giving priority to customer lending rather than finance gambling. The Bretton Woods Project convened a [conference](#) on *Recovery Towards What: Finance, Justice, Sustainability* in November⁵⁷. A [keynote speech](#) was delivered by Jomo K S of UNDESA based on his involvement in the Stiglitz UN Commission on the Global Financial Crisis⁵⁸.

RIGHTS

The Human Rights Council convened in December the [first meeting](#) of the Open-ended Working Group to explore the possibility of elaborating an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which would permit of individual complaints to be considered⁵⁹.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon marked the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 24th by launching a [Network of Men Leaders](#), a major new initiative bringing together current and former politicians, activists, religious and community figures to combat the global pandemic⁶⁰.

Linking these two types of rights was the Conference - [Bridging the Divide between Women's and Children's Human Rights](#) held on December 03-04 2009 in London⁶¹. The anniversaries of two important bodies of [human rights legislation](#), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979) triggered this conference which was concerned how separate the two constituencies appear to be, with little co-ordination or consultation occurring across the divide over areas of common or overlapping concern⁶².

Meanwhile the new Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities meeting on 19-23 October drafted [guidelines](#) on the documents to be submitted by states under article 35, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶³.

Not yet recognised by the UN system is the [right to palliative care](#)⁶⁴. The campaign for this new right [has progressed in Africa](#) recently⁶⁵.

In her [address](#) as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the 12th session of HHRR Council Ms Pillay focussed among other topics on discrimination against the Roma; saying “my Office has received credible reports regarding a number of fatal attacks against Roma in Hungary. Ill-treatment of Roma by police has been reported in Slovakia and elsewhere. In Italy, there has been abundant documentation of discrimination and degrading treatment affecting the Roma population. Available information indicates that in Bulgaria many Roma have limited access to the health care system because they lack identity documents and health insurance. Problems in the area of education for Roma children have been recorded, for example, in the Czech Republic”.⁶⁶

UNICEF *'Progress for Children'* report published in September addresses child-protection issues and is able to note some progress. "For example, in some countries where child marriage has been commonplace, girls are now getting married at a later age. Data also show that female genital mutilation/cutting has declined in recent decades"⁶⁷.

The UN marked [Human Rights Day on Non-discrimination](#) at 10 December 2009⁶⁸. GA [President Ali Treki](#) said: "Millions of human beings continue to fight a daily battle against discrimination to gain access to education, health services and decent work. The realization of all human rights, social, economic and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, is hampered by discrimination."⁶⁹

In the field of human rights and corporations there is the *"Report on Corporate Law Tools and Human Rights"*⁷⁰, *"Operationalising human rights: how hard are companies trying"*⁷¹ and two new [reports](#) on human rights reporting for business⁷². Also of note is the release of the [book](#) *"Civilising Globalisation: Human Rights and the Global Economy"*⁷³, and newer [commitments](#) to Clinton's Global Initiative⁷⁴.

Global Social Governance

The G8 has now, with the September Pittsburgh summit, given way to the G20 as the most important club of countries. Eurodad therefore provided *"From London to Pittsburgh: assessing G20 action for developing countries"*⁷⁵. Here you can find the [final statement](#) of G20 meeting⁷⁶ and [comments](#) from Eurodad⁷⁷.

However in terms of the global governance process [activists](#) still criticise the G20 group for not representing the world's poorest and developing countries⁷⁸. This criticism has been raised as well by [African Ministers](#)⁷⁹ and [others](#)⁸⁰. So for now the future of international economic governance and financial reform continues to be debated separately at the United Nations and the G20, but [little progress is being made](#)⁸¹.

The Centre for Global Development [comments](#) that "insiders can only be disappointed about the contrast between the ascendancy of the more inclusive and representative although not perfect G-20 and the timidity of planned reforms at the Bretton Woods institutions to make them more inclusive and representative. First the G-20 heads of government let stand the antiquated and embarrassing quota formula at the IMF. At the World Bank, the promised three percentage point increase in voting power for developing countries fails to go to the heart of the matter, which is about overall influence and sense of ownership"⁸².

Civil society positions on IMF reform are summarised in a [Report](#) on civil society consultations with the IMF⁸³. A report of the High-Level Commission on Modernization of World Bank Group Governance *Repowering the World Bank for the 21st Century* has been released naming three important shortcomings of the Bank's, namely its strategy formulation, voice and participation and accountability⁸⁴.

In terms of the role of the UN in Global governance the outgoing UNGA president's address asked for a [complete overhaul of the UN](#)⁸⁵ and the new GA president called for the [strengthening of the 192-member body](#)⁸⁶. Sarkozy warning that [time is running out](#) for governance reform⁸⁷ and Obama address to UNGA promising a [new chapter of international cooperation](#)⁸⁸. Of note was the [speech](#) from the President of the People's Republic of China⁸⁹. [North African leaders call for wide-scale UN reform](#) to ensure the voices of developing countries, including a strengthening of the ECOSOC and GA⁹⁰.

Concretely in a step towards one-UN it is to establish single [new agency to deal with rights of women](#)⁹¹. The resolution means the UN Development Fund for Women ([UNIFEM](#))⁹², the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ([UN-INSTRAW](#))⁹³ will be merged. And at the level of within country cooperation Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro opened a [gathering](#) in the Rwandan capital that brought together the eight pilot countries taking part in the United Nations initiative that seeks to better coordinate development activities at the country level and avoid duplication. Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam volunteered in 2006 to participate in the "One UN" programme, which aims to speed up development operations to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals⁹⁴.

The final [Report of the \(Stiglitz\) Commission of Experts on Reforms of the International Financial System](#) which was trailed in GSP Digest 9.2 and 9.3 was published in September.. This report ranges broadly -- from system-related causes of the crisis to the lack of political accountability in the global response. The report proposes a structural change in the financial system in order to regulate the post-crisis global economy⁹⁵.

The [IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings](#) took place in Istanbul(October 6-7)⁹⁶ to develop a [recovery](#) strategy⁹⁷ but although 2009 will be probably remembered as the year of International Financial Institutions' resurgence, the Spring and Annual meetings have been uneventful. According to Eurodad "the G20 leaders' meetings in London and in Pittsburgh before the Bank/Fund gatherings set the boundaries of political agreements with the latter reduced to a follow-up role. The communiques agreed by ministers in Istanbul are mainly a [confirmation](#) of the agreements made by the G20 leaders in Pittsburgh"⁹⁸. The Bretton Woods Project has also [covered](#) the event⁹⁹.

The French Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress gave its [report](#) in September 2009. The focus of the report was on GDP, quality of life and sustainable development and environment. The report is interesting in terms of its recommendations as in contrast to many other efforts emphasising economic growth, food or development, the focus of attention is on how progress is measured instead in terms of quality of life issues and aspects of well-being and the sustainability of the environment. .¹⁰⁰

International Actors and Social Policy

HEALTH

On 25 September, [world leaders gathered for a High-Level Event on the MDGs](#). Amongst other things, it was jointly pledged to intensify efforts on MDG5 to improve maternal health¹⁰¹. Also the [UN GA was concerned with maternal health and reproductive services](#), backing goals of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development¹⁰² (see also <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10869.doc.htm>, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sgsm12539.doc.htm>). Efforts to finance and tackle women's and children's health in the developing world were further the target of a [series of new financing measures](#) worth US\$5.3 billion from governments and business leaders¹⁰³. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [remarked](#) at the launch of the report of the Task Force on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems, New York 23 September: "A health system that delivers for women when women are ready to deliver is a strong health system that will benefit all people."¹⁰⁴ The WHO released a report on [Women and Health](#) calling "for primary health care reforms to be implemented in ways that ensure that health systems better meet the needs of girls and women"¹⁰⁵. The Center for Global Development contributed to the debate with "[Start with a Girl](#)"¹⁰⁶.

On the health MDGs and the current crisis more generally, the Global Fund together with a number of other organisations organised the [Global Health Challenges Event](#) at the European Development Days in Stockholm, 22 October. This event addressed the questions whether the health MDGs can still be met in times of crisis¹⁰⁷. The ILO hosted a meeting in Düsseldorf, Germany, dealing with [Occupational safety and health in times of crisis](#)¹⁰⁸.

The [World Health Summit 2009](#) took place in Berlin, 18 October. Over 1000 delegates from more than 70 countries gathered, representing all sectors and branches involved in health care and the development of healthcare's future. The vision statement calls health and health care fundamental human rights, and a public good that "must be achieved equitably and to the highest attainable standard"¹⁰⁹. The Summit was accompanied by protest events, such as an alternative conference "[Public Eye on Berlin](#)" initiated by Medico International. Reason for this was the notion that the conference aims were not really addressed – instead of tackling questions of rights to health and safe working conditions, the conference's main focus was indeed on health research and privatisation¹¹⁰.

The [Global Forum for Health Research](#) convened a conference "Innovating for the health of all" in Havana, Cuba, 16-20 November bringing together about 800 leaders and experts from around the world to share ideas and forge new partnerships. Participants included stakeholders from health and science ministries, research agencies, development agencies, foundations, NGOs, civil society, the private sector and the media¹¹¹.

On 1 December, at the occasion of the [World AIDS Day Universal Access and Human Rights](#), the major global organisations in the fight against HIV/AIDS issued statements and declared their strategies¹¹². The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and PEPFAR [announced](#) that the two programmes are supporting antiretroviral treatment for about 3.7 million (out of estimated 4 million) individuals living with HIV/AIDS¹¹³. UNAIDS provides data in its [09 AIDS epidemic update](#)¹¹⁴. World Bank activities for the Day are summarised [here](#)¹¹⁵; amongst other things the World Bank convened a meeting entitled [Keeping the Promise, Investing in the Future. Linking HIV/AIDS, Food Security and Maternal and Child Health](#)¹¹⁶. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has developed a new [Five-Year Strategy](#), expressing the aim to “transitioning from an emergency response to promoting sustainable country programs” and “renewing its emphasis on a “whole of government” response”. This includes, amongst other things, the integration and coordination of HIV/AIDS programs with broader global health and development programs to maximize impact on health systems”¹¹⁷.

Concerning health systems, the [September Update of the IHP+](#) reports progress on the establishment of ‘a health systems funding platform for the Global Fund, GAVI Alliance, World Bank and others to coordinate, mobilise, streamline and channel the flow of existing and new international resources to support national health strategies.’¹¹⁸ The [Providing 4 Health](#) (P4H) held meetings in September and October, focusing on operational issues relating to the P4H Social Health Protection framework, draft communication strategy, ongoing and future country work, links with IHP+ and other partners etc¹¹⁹. The WHO released [Systems thinking for health systems strengthening](#) that argues “we must know the system in order to strengthen it – and from that base we can design better interventions and evaluations, for both health systems strengthening interventions and for interventions targeting specific diseases or conditions but with the potential of having system-wide effects.” In order to achieve this, the report proposes “Ten Steps to Systems Thinking for real-world guidance in applying such an approach to the health system.”¹²⁰ Another contribution by the WHO, [Priorities for Research on Equity and Health. Implications for global and national priority setting and the role of WHO to take the health equity research agenda forward](#), commissioned by the Equity Analysis and Research Unit of the WHO, “aims to stimulate further thinking, debate and refinement of strategic approaches focussing WHO support and collaborations to advance global research on equity and health”.¹²¹ At the same time, a World Bank paper discusses how [Trade in Health Services](#) can help improve country's health systems¹²².

Regarding health provision, the Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored Initiative on the Role of the Private Sector in Health Systems in Developing Countries released its synthesis report [‘Public Stewardship of Private Providers in Mixed Health Systems’](#). The report concludes, amongst other things, that “effective government stewardship is crucial for achieving broader health objectives” and pays particular attention to how governments can improve their stewardship role. It calls for mixed health system stewardship mechanisms that can build reinforcing incentives for private health actors to focus on the major health system goals,

resulting in better outcomes, financial protection, higher quality and more equitable private health service delivery; and makes suggestions as to how to achieve this¹²³. Similarly, the Center for Global Development issued a report '[Partnerships with the Private Sector in Health. What the International Community Can Do to Strengthen Health Systems in Developing Countries](#)'. This report proposes a new facility – to be housed at the World Bank-IFC, or possibly the Global Fund or the WHO – to address the “profound need for technical assistance on how to engage the private health sector”¹²⁴. A World Bank Policy Research Working Paper [Governance in Health Care Delivery](#) argues that “good governance is central to raising performance in health care delivery. Crucial to high performance are standards, information, incentives and accountability.”¹²⁵ Finally, the OECD published [Achieving Better Value for Money in Health Care](#) examining a range of policy instruments such as the role of competition in health markets; better pharmaceutical pricing policies; and increased cost sharing¹²⁶ (the OECD also released its [Health at a Glance 2009](#)¹²⁷).

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) published [Financing Global Health 2009: Tracking Development Assistance for Health](#)¹²⁸, and the OECD Task Team on Health as a Tracer Sector released a report entitled [Aid for Better Health – What are we learning about what works and what we still have to do?](#)¹²⁹.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

An issue addressed at the UNRISD [Conference on the Social and Political Dimensions of the Global Economic Crisis](#)¹³⁰ was whether the crisis had encouraged a retreat to a residual and targeted approach to social protection, had enhanced the calls for a more universal global social protection floor or rekindled the case for a state lead broader social investment strategy. Largely unreformed IMF practice seemed to point to the first, the UN Chief Executive Boards' endorsement of the global floor the second and on the UN fringe UNCTAD and UNRISD pointed to the third.

In relation to the global social floor, the new *Dialogue on Globalization Briefing Paper N°14* has been published: [Strengthening Social Security in Economic Crises - The Need for a Social Protection Floor](#) by Ellen Ehmke, Mara Skaletz (FES Briefing Paper 14-2009, FES Geneva, October 2009). The paper argues that a long-term investment in basic packages pays in fact off and helps to alleviate the negative impacts of the economic crisis in a considerable way¹³¹.

The global social floor (ILO/WHO (2009) [The Social Protection Floor: A joint Crisis Initiative of the UN Chief Executives Board for Co-ordination on the Social Protection Floor, Geneva](#)¹³² was discussed on November 4th 2009 at the [second committee of the General Assembly](#)¹³³ at which it was reported that collaborating agencies and a group of supporting

donor agencies had met in the ILO Training Centre in Turin in October to develop a blueprint of a [manual](#) for joint country activities on the Social Protection Floor. The inter-agency meeting was attended by FAO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WB, WFP, WHO, World Bank and UNDP, HABITAT, IMF, UNCEB and the following observers: ADB, BMZ, DFID, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GTZ, HelpAge, Save the Children¹³⁴.

In terms of the first option there is the evidence on IMF lending practice (See GSP Digest 9.3). In terms of the third option the [UNCTAD Least Developed Countries Report 2009](#) argues the case¹³⁵. In terms of the Social Protection Floor Helen Clark, new UNDP Administrator in a [speech](#) at the G20 meeting of Ministers in Pittsburg paid lip service to this new ONE-UN policy on the global social protection floor¹³⁶.

It is hard to determine if the World Bank's formal membership of the UNCEB and its formal participation in the Global Social Protection Floor UN initiative is changing its policies and practices on social protection. The Bank did sign up to the [joint statement](#) with UNICEF and a host of other UN agencies and INGOs on Advancing Child Sensitive Social Protection¹³⁷. Interestingly in the wake of the negative impact of the global financial crisis on the sustainability and utility of private defined contribution pension schemes the Bank's current work is focused on social pensions. Its recent publication on [Closing the Coverage Gap: The role of Social Pensions and other Retirement Income Transfers](#) captures well the reasons why a reliance on contributory schemes of either the defined benefit or defined contribution kind have their limitations: (Holzmann etc al 2009:18); "Many of the problems behind low coverage rates in low- and middle- income countries are structural, cannot be resolved overnight, and fall outside the scope of social protection policy. A sustained expansion of the contributory system in the average low- or middle- income country would require fundamental changes in the productive structure of the economy and the functioning of its product and labor markets.....Against this background, social pensions and other retirement transfers emerge as an important instrument for bridging the coverage gap—at least for the time being—by focusing on individuals with no or limited saving capacity, who are more likely to be outside the contributory system"¹³⁸.

However the World Bank's position on social protection as revealed in its Doing Business Report has been [condemned by trade unions](#). The latest edition of the Bank's highest circulation publication discourages countries from adopting social protection schemes by designating governments that do so as anti-business. Doing Business 2010, launched on 9th September 2009 by the World Bank, also recommends that countries should reduce severance pay for dismissed workers and reduce or eliminate requirements for prior notice about job cuts.¹³⁹

In a [World Bank Policy Research Working Paper](#) Martin Ravallion asks "Do Poorer Countries Have Less Capacity for Redistribution?" and finds "Most countries fall into one of two groups: those with little or no realistic prospect of addressing extreme poverty through

redistribution from the "rich" and those that would appear to have ample scope for such redistribution. Economic growth tends to move countries from the first group to the second. Thus the appropriate balance between growth and redistribution strategies can be seen to depend on the level economic development¹⁴⁰. Oxfam Duncan Green discusses this in a [blog](#)¹⁴¹.

Governments must urgently reassess and adapt their labour market and social policies in order to prevent people from falling into the trap of long-term unemployment, says [OECD Employment Outlook 2009](#)¹⁴². In a similar vein is the ILO published in October its Global Jobs Pact [policy document](#) agreed earlier at this year's conference. It promotes a productive recovery centred on investments, employment and social protection¹⁴³.

The OECD published [Doing Better for Children](#) analysing different indicators of child well-being including material well-being, housing, education, health and quality of school life¹⁴⁴.

The OECD have also published [OECD Pension Markets in Focus](#)¹⁴⁵ and [Pensions at a Glance 2009: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD Countries](#). This third edition of Pensions at a Glance updates in-depth information on the key features of mandatory pension systems both public and private in the 30 OECD countries, including projections of retirement income for today's workers¹⁴⁶.

Rising unemployment marks the [third wave of the crisis](#)¹⁴⁷ while Strauss Kahn of IMF stresses social risks ahead¹⁴⁸. Similarly concerns are raised in ["Crisis and unemployment in Latin American and the Caribbean"](#)¹⁴⁹

Recent UNRISD work published in book form focuses on raising revenues for social protection and social policy and social investment generally. [Financing Social Policy: Mobilizing Resources for Social Development](#)¹⁵⁰ and [Social Policy in Mineral-rich countries](#)¹⁵¹

EDUCATION

From 1-4 December, UNESCO and its Institute for Lifelong Learning organized the 6th [International Conference for Adult Education](#) (Conference Internationale pour L'education des adultes, CONFINTEA) in Brazil. The conference's main theme was the realization of lifelong learning across countries with an emphasis on literacy and basic education for adults. This was explicitly seen as part of a future and sustainable development process.¹⁵² The conference decided upon the ['Belem framework for action'](#) to foster governmental efforts in implementing lifelong learning and literacy policies.¹⁵³ Linked to CONFINTEA, a comprehensive reporting on adult education and lifelong learning has been initiated. A [monitoring report on adult education](#) (GRALE) is online, covering all regions of the world.¹⁵⁴

On 5th October was [World Teachers' day](#)¹⁵⁵. Education international launched a [campaign](#) that seeks more investments in teachers, reflecting the fear that the financial crisis leads to budget cuts in education.¹⁵⁶ Also the OECD perceives education as a [necessity for the emerging economy](#) following the crisis, although with a particular emphasis on industrialized countries.¹⁵⁷

With the beginning WTO trade negotiations, Education International issued several statements against the [commodification](#)¹⁵⁸ of education and its definition as a [service](#).¹⁵⁹ The organization will continue lobbying for [excluding education services](#)¹⁶⁰ in multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, defining [education as a human right](#).¹⁶¹

The World Bank has organized a [forum](#)¹⁶² on the role of [private and public providers](#)¹⁶³ in education, including several [publications](#), in which several kinds of organizations have been assessed with a view to educational provision.¹⁶⁴

The Bank, together with the World Food Programme, also published a [book](#) on school feeding.¹⁶⁵ In particular against the background of the financial crisis and raising food prices, school feeding can be a direct and effective social assistance to avoid malnutrition.

A campaign has been started in the US to put pressure on the Obama administration in supporting basic education for all across countries, including raising awareness through professional and scholarly associations. The [petition](#) can be submitted online.¹⁶⁶ EFA and related activities are documented on the webpage of the [Campaign for Education](#).¹⁶⁷

In January 2010, the [Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#) will be published. The new version puts emphasis on assessing the campaign's progress with a view to disadvantaged and marginalized children and adults.¹⁶⁸

The OECD has issued a [report on child well-being](#), underlining the necessity to invest in early childhood and emphasizing the social benefits of the child and the community.¹⁶⁹

HABITAT

The [Habitat Scroll of Honour](#) award was launched by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in 1989. It is currently the most prestigious human settlements award in the world. Its aim is to acknowledge initiatives which have made outstanding contributions in various fields such as shelter provision, highlighting the plight of the homeless, leadership in post conflict reconstruction, and developing and improving the human settlements and the quality of urban life. The call for nominations begins in May 2010 for the awards in October – see [timeframe for 2009](#)¹⁷⁰ and the [winners for 2009](#)¹⁷¹.

In an [article](#) from the Independent, Andrew Buncombe draws attention to the fact that the UN is concerned of rising tensions as refugees move to cities. He notes that “from the slums of Kabul to the shanties of Damascus, more than half of the world's refugees are now scraping by on tiny strips of land in increasingly overcrowded, overburdened cities. Rather than living in rows of neatly pegged white canvas UN tents set up in fields as the public might imagine it, aid officials have revealed that more than 50 percent of the planet's 10.5 million refugees are now battling to get by in urban areas. Cities also contain more than 20 million internal refugees and displaced people.”¹⁷²

The cities alliance has agreed to [co-fund a national slum upgrading](#) policy in Indonesia and to fund slum upgrading and sanitation initiatives in India¹⁷³.

The [5th Africa Cities summit](#) was held in Marrakesh, Morocco from 16-20 December. Its theme was to explore ‘African Regional and Local Governments’ Response to the Global Crisis and the Promotion of Sustainable Local Development and Employment’¹⁷⁴.

UN-HABITAT has launched its [Global Report on Human Settlements 2009](#), entitled Planning Sustainable Cities. On its website it notes that the report ‘... reviews recent urban planning practices and approaches, discusses constraints and conflicts therein, and identifies innovative approaches that are more responsive to current challenges of urbanization. It notes that traditional approaches to urban planning (particularly in developing countries) have largely failed to promote equitable, efficient and sustainable human settlements and to address twenty-first century challenges, including rapid urbanization, shrinking cities and ageing, climate change and related disasters, urban sprawl and unplanned peri-urbanization, as well as urbanization of poverty and informality. It concludes that new approaches to planning can only be meaningful, and have a greater chance of succeeding, if they effectively address all of these challenges, are participatory and inclusive, as well as linked to contextual socio-political processes’¹⁷⁵.

The [‘future of cities’](#) conference will be held at Chatham House from 8-9 February 2010¹⁷⁶.

FOOD POLICY

The number of hungry people has again increased over the last months, now reaching more than 1 billion. From 16-18 November, countries, international organizations and civil society met in Rome for the [World Summit on Food Security](#).¹⁷⁷ The conference was opened by a broad [statement](#) on the need to eradicate hunger, on reinforcing the millennium development goals, including principles how food security can be ensured.¹⁷⁸ However, the conference ended [without concrete implementation goals or deadlines](#).¹⁷⁹ FAO General Secretary Jaques Diouf has also launched an online petition where people can sign to support the [food campaign](#).¹⁸⁰ The FAO has also published a [methodological toolbox](#) on the right to food.¹⁸¹

The lack of specific targets and the growing number of hungry people stand in sharp contrast to the different networks that are all involved in the issue of food security: The summit was prepared by a [high level expert forum](#) in October, dealing with how to secure food in 2050¹⁸², as well as by the Committee on World Food Security, aiming at becoming the new international platform for the [Global Partnership on Food Security](#).¹⁸³ Before the summit, the High Level Taskforce has published a comprehensive [report](#) on the food crisis and international activities that took place since its inception in April 2008.¹⁸⁴ (*For school feeding, see World Bank and WFP in section on education*).

Trade and Social Policy

The WTO Ministerial Conference was held with a low profile at the end of November in Geneva. However, one of the issues discussed, on [intellectual property rights and non-violation](#) may have positive implications to pharmaceutical policies¹⁸⁵. According to WTO sources the Members agreed not to bring “non-violation” cases to the WTO dispute settlement process — “[non-violation](#)” is shorthand for the technical question of whether there can be legal grounds for complaint under the WTO’s intellectual property agreement, even when the agreement has not been violated¹⁸⁶. Accepting non-violation cases could have paved way for cases that challenge national pharmaceutical policies and measures that apply pricing of medicines or enhancing generic entry. [US special 301 report](#)¹⁸⁷ 2009 compiled by the office of trade representative, for example, has included Norway and Finland as result of their pharmaceutical policies, even though these measures do not violate TRIPS Agreement. The time for ratification of amendments with respect to importation of pharmaceuticals under so called para 6 solution was proposed by TRIPS council to be extended until 2011.

Ecuador has started a [broad programme](#) (in Spanish) on access to medicines, including declaring access to medicines for priority public health needs as a matter of public interest and establishing procedures for issuing compulsory licenses, which would authorize price-lowering competition with expensive patented drugs¹⁸⁸ (see NGO website with commentary, clarification and translation of key provisions in [English](#))¹⁸⁹. The South Centre bulletin covers further [recent disputes](#) IPR rights and wrongs, including aspects that relate to access to generic medicines¹⁹⁰.

The South Centre has also provided a [brief](#) on the state of negotiations, including GATS as well as a brief on issues that are of importance with respect to domestic regulation provisions for developing countries¹⁹¹. The new [special rapporteur](#) on right to food has also taken up the importance of global trade negotiations to reflect the global consensus on hunger¹⁹².

In the field of bilateral trade agreements the European Union has sought more extensive bilateral agreements with a variety of countries resulting in particular [concerns by nongovernmental organisations](#) over implications of these for access to medicines¹⁹³ As a result of the Lisbon Treaty approval the division of work between Commission and Member States will change with a stronger role for European Commission in trade policy negotiations, including matters concerning health and social services.

UNCTAD has published [World Investment report](#)¹⁹⁴ and [Trade and Development Report](#) 2009¹⁹⁵. The University of Oxford Global Economic Governance -programme has published

a new book on WTO Reform and global economic governance as well as launched a new [expert taskforce on global knowledge governance](#) in November 2009¹⁹⁶.

The G20 Pittsburgh meeting in September 2009 (See Governance) articulated some "[fundamental core values](#)", amongst which was a responsibility to invest in people by providing education, job training, decent work conditions, health care and social safety net support, and to fight poverty, discrimination, and all forms of social exclusion¹⁹⁷.. In addition to values the meeting established a framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth. These seem to be closely linked to of the promotion of the Charter for Sustainable Economic Activity, by Angela Merkel, which has also been [supported by the Director General of the WTO](#), Pascal Lamy, as "a commendable effort to provide a “new global economic contract”, to anchor economic globalization on a bedrock of ethical principles and values which would renew the trust that citizens need to have that globalization can indeed work for them"¹⁹⁸.

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³ <http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?sf1=identifiers&st1=9789264075528>

⁴ http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdr2009_en.pdf

⁵ <http://ent.groundspring.org/EmailNow/pub.php?module=URLTracker&cmd=track&j=291522768&u=3222287>

⁶ <http://www.odi.org.uk/events/default.asp>

⁷ http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_50299.html

⁸ http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Ortiz_Recovery_with_human_face_London.ppt

⁹ www.unesco.org/shs/most.igc

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wess2009files/wess09/wess2009.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31910&Cr=develop&Cr1=climate+change>

¹² <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/107.pdf>

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¹⁴ <http://www.globalpolicy.org/social-and-economic-policy/global-taxes-1-79/currency-transaction-taxes/48185.html>

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¹⁷ <http://www.leadinggroup.org/article48.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.ips.org/TV/copenhagen/the-many-lives-of-the-tobin-tax/>

¹⁹ http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Gap_%20Task_Force_%20Report_2009.pdf

²⁰ <http://www.globalhealth.org/news/article/11503/newsletter>

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