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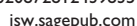
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The SAGE logo features a stylized 'S' inside a circle, followed by the word 'SAGE' in a bold, sans-serif font.

This issue of *International Social Work* will be released a few months before the Joint World Conference of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). This will be the second time this century the three organisations have combined their knowledge and memberships to hold a joint conference. The first in 2010 was successful through the extraordinary work of the Hong Kong hosts and the willingness of IASSW, ICSW and IFSW to work together to achieve common goals.

The conference this year in Stockholm has attracted a similar number of abstracts to Hong Kong – about 2000. This provides a challenge to the Swedish hosts and the Programme Committee to assess each abstract and decide who will present papers.

Over the many years of my work I have found more can be achieved by organisations taking the time and effort to find the policies that are shared. Once our organisations have developed common policies and directions it is easier to convince governments that they should adopt the policies.

While in Stockholm IASSW, ICSW and IFSW will have their own meetings of members. At these meetings each organisation will set its agenda for the next years. ICSW members will deliberate on a new four year programme. The path to this new programme started in Paris in early 2012. ICSW invited experts in social policy and development to advise ICSW on their perceptions of the global economic and social circumstances which should shape the ICSW programme. In light of our work together IASSW and IFSW were invited to contribute. In addition the International Association for Community Development participated. The results were rich.

Four areas emerged: the post Millennium Development Goal (MDG) decision making process; developments in the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI); changes in global governance; and the combined climate, food and land crisis.

The MDGs are due to conclude in 2015. It is likely the post 2015 agenda would be influenced by some of the criticisms that had been levelled at the initial MDG formulation as well as by the partial failure to meet the MDGs.

These criticisms included: a) the focus on poverty rather than a more inclusive approach to equitable social development for all within which the middle class could see the need for revenue raising as their needs would be met too, b) the focus on poverty de-linked from social structural causes of poverty and inequity, c) the weakness in the follow through on Millennium Development Goal 8: *Develop a global partnership for development*, d) the partial retreat from the outcomes of the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development that the MDGs represented. In summary the MDGs were a mechanistic approach to poverty that did not recognise the interconnections of social, economic and environmental policies and did not stress the importance of institutional development and associated policies to foster inclusive and equitable development central to reducing poverty and vulnerability.

The post 2015 MDG discussion is in danger of being shaped largely by the climate and ecological crisis in the context of the Rio+20 process that emphasises environmental sustainability only. However the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Global Sustainability chaired by Finland and South Africa argues for a new development paradigm which would be couched in terms of economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability with people at the centre of the vision of sustainable development¹. If this is to happen, ICSW and other organisations will have to argue the case. The poor of the world cannot afford for the MDGs to be replaced by vacuous sustainable development objectives. We need to re-inject the "social" into the debate.

The UN and International Labour Organisation (ILO) Social Protection Floor Initiative has grown in importance and prominence. ICSW is part of an international agency group which includes in its membership ICSW, ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, World Bank and others. We expect the ILO at its annual meeting in June 2012² will recommend all countries develop Social Protection Floors that guarantee: a) access to health care, b) access of children to a minimum income, c) access of people of working age to minimum income, d) access of elderly to minimum income. The ILO recommendation would leave it to countries to choose how they define and secure these guarantees, whether through assistance in cash or kind, whether through insurance or other means.

ICSW will continue to support the development and implementation of the SPFI stressing the importance of a universal approach to social protection which covers all social groups across the life span. Such a universal approach would encourage the raising of revenues nationally to support a SPF in ways which an approach targeted on the poor does not.

Among the global social governance changes are: a) the decline in official development assistance (ODA) and the wish of donor recipient governments to raise their own revenues and be less dependent on project-based aid, b) the

coincidental renewed calls for global taxes for global public goods, and c) the shift in power from the UN to the G20 Development Working Group and the increased role of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in global policy formation. ICSW needs to be sensitive to these changes in its global social governance.

ICSW will engage in the climate change, land and food crisis policy debates to argue for the importance of the social dimension of these issues. We will make the case that universal social protection floors for all including those who are displaced within and across borders would help mitigate the consequences of displacement. Funds available for climate change mitigation should be used for these social protection purposes.

ICSW is not short of challenges for its next global programme. It will need to rise to the challenges at global, regional and national level. We will work with our colleagues to achieve inclusive and equitable development.

Denys Correll
ICSW

Notes

1. United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012). *Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A future worth choosing*. New York: United Nations http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSPReport_unformatted_30Jan.pdf Accessed 1 February 2012.
2. <http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/lang--en/index.htm#a2>