

## Global Social Policy Digest 14.1

(August – November 2013)

The Global Social Policy (GSP) Digest has been produced under the editorship of Alexandra Kaasch with support from the University of Bremen Centre for Social Policy Research and the Balsillie School of International Affairs. It has been compiled by a new team consisting of Robert Akparibo, Julie Balen, Amy Barnes (all University of Sheffield), James Canonge (Columbia University), Kevin Farnsworth (University of Sheffield), Alexandra Kaasch (University of Bremen), Branka Marijan (Wilfrid Laurier University), Sony Pellisery (National Law School of India University, Bangalore), Muhammad Saddiq, Henock Taddese (both University of Sheffield), Antoni Verger (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona). This version of the Digest is available on <http://www.gsp-observatory.org>, <http://www.icsw.org>, <http://www.crop.org>, and <http://www.ilo.org> (a shorter version can be found as part of the journal Global Social Policy issue 14.1). All the web sites referenced were accessible in January 2014. This edition of the Digest covers the period mid-August to November 2013.

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## Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

### REDISTRIBUTION

Various economic outlooks attest that the world economy is stabilising and that the recession is overcome in most places; however, the process is slow and still uncertain. In the words of the OECD's Secretary-General Angel Gurría, presenting the 'OECD's Economic Outlook': "The recovery is real, but at a slow speed, and there may be turbulence on the horizon". The IMF's 'World Economic Outlook' and 'Global Financial Stability Report' both suggest that we are still in the middle of a transition process. The implications for developing countries, and how this links with major ongoing debates about future development policies, though, remain an open question. UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries (LDC) Report 2013 'Growth with employment for inclusive and sustainable development', notes (though not directly related to the crisis): "Growth in the LDCs has not been inclusive and its contribution to poverty reduction has been limited."

The IMF's 'Fiscal Monitor' engages with questions on "whether and how tax reform can help strengthen public finances." Regarding advanced economies, it says that "tax ratios are already high, [therefore] the bulk of necessary adjustment will have to fall on spending," but it sees substantial potential in emerging market economies and low-income countries to "improve compliance". How developing countries, in particular, should manage to better mobilise domestic resources was highlighted at the Fourth Plenary Meeting of the OECD Task Force on Tax and Development. The summary of the meeting's outcomes is not yet available from the website, but the co-chair's statement reports that the "Task Force agreed that tax policy design is also key to better ensure the mobilisation of domestic resources and noted complementary action that would help to address base erosion and profit shifting." Overall, though, the statement focuses more on the achievements regarding key OECD initiatives on taxation (such as the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting, and Tax Inspectors Without Borders) than on the question posed to the meeting (for other OECD taxation policies, see Regulation section). In addition, part of the problem is deferred to the UN: "We urged the UN to continue to highlight the importance of taxation in the development of the post 2015 replacement framework for the MDGs. Again we offered our support in this endeavour" (a discussion by ITUC is also available).

Meanwhile, there is not much progress on global taxation in the sense of global redistribution (instead on how states can better tax, and share information), an issue that is particularly important, though, in development contexts. Particularly regarding the financial transaction tax, it is unclear if we are actually regressing. Things are slightly different regarding

the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (see Health section), but there seems to be little progress on the Global Fund for Social Protection.

Related to the issue of how to tax more fairly, are concepts and measures of (in)equality (for a more detailed discussion of this issue see GSP Digest 13.1 and 13.2). At the Center for Global Development, experts engaged with 'Filling the gap: Inequality Indicators for Post-2015', while the Bretton Wood's Project discusses inequality with a focus on IMF policies – arguing that the IMF does not listen to its own experts. Meanwhile, the World Bank focused on financial inclusion in its latest 'Global Financial Development Report 2014'. Similarly, the ILO addresses the issue in its report on 'Tackling Inequalities Beyond 2015'. As a result, a ministerial panel discussed social protection policies as a solution, and claimed social protection must be a key issue in the post-2015 development agenda (see also Social Protection section). An ODI blog by Susan Nicolai, reflects some concerns about the future process, though overlooking the Social Protection Floors.

The key event under the period of review was the UN (United Nations) GA (General Assembly) Special Event towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2013, the outcome of which was then adopted by the UN GA. It concludes that there needs to be work towards

*a single framework and set of Goals – universal in nature and applicable to all countries, while taking account of differing national circumstances and respecting national policies and priorities. It should also promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all.*

Another document (A/68/L.4) discusses means for scaling up action to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and details the UN process for negotiating a post-2015 development agenda. The central background document has been the Report of the Secretary-General 'A Life of Dignity for All' (see also Social Protection section), and further contributions come from the World Bank, and in the form of the 2013 Cambridge International Development Report 'Working Out Our Future Together'. Furthermore, an edited book 'Alternative Development Strategies for the Post-2015 Era' was released by the UN, and finds the need for increased coherence in the distribution of development opportunities. Other voices on the topic come in the form of a Development Dialogue Paper is 'Putting the development agenda right' (Roberto Bissio) and 'Investments to End Poverty' by Development Initiatives.

Apart from numerous side events, further, thematically related events took place in the form of the 2013 Switzerland High-Level Symposium on 'Development Cooperation in a Post-

2015 Era: Sustainable Development for all, and the 2013 UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit (see also Regulation section). Later on, the Fifth Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals took place (25-27 November 2013), discussing sustained and inclusive growth, macroeconomic policy questions (including trade and debt issues), infrastructure development and industrialisation. Upcoming sessions will address means of implementation and global partnership, human rights, the right to development and global governance, issues of habitat and climate change; and the topics of equality (e.g. social equity, gender equality, women's empowerment). In September 2013, also the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development, began meeting.

Despite all the events and reports, a lasting problem is how to finance development. Some of the aforementioned reports suggest a focus on domestic resources. As transnational taxation stagnates it does appear that the burden will fall on domestic sources. Related data comes from the Center for Global Development's 'Commitment to Development Index', and AidData 3.0, an upgraded version of the development finance data portal. An important event was the Sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The OECD contributed its 'Development Co-operation Report 2013: Ending Poverty'.

## **REGULATION**

The developments on taxation, reported above in the Redistribution section, provide evidence for increasing recognition that governments need to coordinate action on tax evasion and tax avoidance in order to increase their own revenues in the wake of the global economic crisis. Some governments, though, have also been keen to protect their relatively favourable tax environments in order to continue to attract mobile capital. According to a new report by the World Bank (in collaboration with Price Waterhouse Coopers) entitled 'Paying Taxes', corporate taxation has continued to fall, although at a lower rate, but the burden has also shifted from corporate income taxes to towards labour taxes borne by employers (primarily employers' national insurance contributions). The report also confirms that, overall, since 2004, the tax burden has shifted away from companies and towards citizens. Labour taxes now make up the largest proportion of tax revenues, and the largest increase since 2004 has been on consumption taxes.

In September 2013, the G20 released a 'Tax Annex' to the 'Saint Petersburg Leaders Declaration', which reaffirmed the commitment to "establish a more effective, efficient and fair

international tax system” and in which they “declared the era of bank secrecy over”. What is being advocated is a “multilateral and bilateral automatic exchange of information for tax purposes and declared their commitment to automatic exchange of information as the new global standard.” Ensuring global standards for tax information and transparency means ultimately tackling the issue in domestic contexts. The [OECD’s Global Forum on Taxation](#) met in Jakarta in November 2013 and released new data that assessed country progress on the automatic exchange of tax information and transparency.

Labour regulations and standards also received some attention. For example, a [landmark treaty for domestic workers](#) came into force in September 2013, which gives domestic workers the same rights as other workers, and seeks to improve the working and living conditions of an estimated 50 million domestic workers worldwide; although it has only been ratified by a handful of states. The link between international labour standards and human rights was also prominent as part of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development ‘Making Migration Work’, at the 68th Session of the UN GA. A [declaration](#) further expressing the need for respecting of human rights and labour standards was unanimously adopted by Member States. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), pointed out that more must be done still to address the issues of modern day slavery and human trafficking.

In regards to trade issues, the WTO talks on streamlining trade have been given a strong boost by pledges of support for a “trade facilitation” agreement from the World Bank, IMF and four regional development banks, [WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo](#) said on 13 October 2013. The WTO had earlier (in September) [argued](#) that trade talks needed to continue apace in order to facilitate stronger growth and undermine creeping protectionism that had accompanied the crisis.

At their [summit](#) in September 2013, UN Global Compact Leaders emerged as “Architects for a Better World” (the related report '[Corporate Sustainability and the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)' had already been submitted in June 2013). The [Guardian](#) provided detailed coverage. A key goal is to outline how the Global Compact might be strengthened in the post-2015 period. It sought to establish a post-2015 [Business Engagement Architecture Report](#) which, according to Georg Kell, executive director of the Global Compact, would offer new opportunities of business engagement. [Kell stated](#) that “[f]or the first time in the history of United Nations, UN goals, sustainability development priorities, are directly linked to long term corporate goals.”

## **RIGHTS**

Much of the focus in the field of social rights was concentrated on highlighting a call for a human rights-based post-2015 development agenda. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh, presented his report 'Right to Education and Post-2015 Development Agenda', and stressed that the right to education should be foundational to the new agenda. Moreover, the UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity, Virginia Dandan, expressed the need for international solidarity to be at the heart of the agenda. Given the importance and interconnectedness of many issues the shapers of the post-2015 agenda have a difficult task ahead.

Rising inequalities between and within states as a result of the global economic crisis remain a key concern (see also Redistribution section). The Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development, Tamara Kunanayakam, has warned about the dramatic increase of inequalities in her latest report. She urged governments worldwide to implement the Declaration on the Right to Development, calling it “an instrument that provides a framework for building a human society based on justice, equality, non-discrimination and solidarity.” Importantly, she highlighted that the greatest obstacle in facing these challenges is the lack of political will.

Also crucial given this reality and the uncertainty facing the global economy is the need for dialogue on business and human rights. The Second UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, was held in Geneva (2 - 4 December 2013). The three-day Forum is important as it brings together both representatives of corporations from fields such as manufacturing, mining, oil and energy, as well as the individuals affected. It is a chance to examine the implementation of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. A Civil Society Dialogue was held as part of the Forum, and side events offered a comprehensive discussion of the various aspects of the issues and the potential impacts of the Forum. Also important is that UNICEF has released a toolkit aimed at integrating the rights of children into business operations. At the Third Global Conference on Child Labour, UNICEF points out that the root causes of child labour need to be tackled for a successful response.

Labour rights of women and in particular unpaid care work have also gained some prominence. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona highlighted unpaid care work and women's human rights in her report. Thalia Kidder, Oxfam's Senior Adviser on Women's Economic Rights, welcomed the report particularly as it linked unpaid care work, poverty, inequality and women's rights. Calling for a context-specific

focus on women's experiences was the 2013 World Conference of Indigenous Women 'Progress and Challenges Regarding the Future we Want' (October 28-30 2013), in Lima, Peru.

Yet, women continue to face many gender specific challenges. On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women the impact of violence on women was recognized. In addition, Helen Clark from UNDP states that,

*In responding to gender-based violence, the financial costs to health systems, social services, the justice sector and indirect costs, such as those of lost productivity, burden countries around the world.*

Clark also identifies the lack of women's voices in governance issues that OXFAM's project "Raising Her Voice" project has assessed. The 2013 independent final evaluation of the project has been released and contains important lessons about the need for long-term support for women's organizations and coalitions. An interesting point is that women's empowerment is dependent on change in the personal sphere and this is where women's organizations have most to contribute.

An issue facing a significant portion of the world's population, the right to sanitation, has come under increased attention given the recognition of its alarming situation. The UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, has warned that the sanitation target set by the MDGs is today the most off-track of all.

## **Global Social Governance**

In September 2013, the G20 Leaders' Summit was held in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The G20's Leaders' Declaration includes the need to "reinforcing the open and rules-based global economic system". Again, the issue of youth unemployment was particularly in focus, but the summit also addressed tax evasion and corruption. Furthermore the declaration states:

*[T]oo many of our citizens have yet to participate in the economic global recovery that is underway. The G20 must strive not only for strong, sustainable and balanced growth but also for more inclusive patterns of growth that will better mobilize the talents of our entire populations.*

Indeed, here we also find reference to the SPFs (see also Social Protection section).

In parallel, the G20 Civil Society Summit (Civil20) took place – took place – major points of what came out of the Civil20 found their way into the Leaders' Declaration, but Transparency International criticised the Russian government's handling of CSOs and stressed "The Civil 20 process must not be a substitute – or perceived to be a substitute – for

genuine and committed engagement with civil society.” Other CSO Observers noted some progress on tax issues, but also testified there was a lot of unfinished business. From ITUC came:

*The leaders have strengthened engagement in social dialogue with business and labour at the G20 level. There is also now a recognition of the need to increase recovery momentum and reduce inequality through wage bargaining, including national wage setting mechanisms. This has yet to be translated into a change of policy at national level and by the IMF and OECD.*

At the same time, on the social protection floor, CSOs have been given an important role at the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) meeting in Berlin in November ‘Preparing the Floor: A Civil Society Roadmap to Social Protection’.

At the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings in October 2013, World Bank president Jim Yong Kim said with regard to the down-turning crisis,

*this breathing space doesn't mean policymakers should relax. Instead, policymakers should take advantage of this small window to build their economies' resilience through appropriate macroeconomic management, to strengthen balance sheets, and to move their financial system onto sounder footing.*

Still, ITUC urged the IFIs to reverse austerity policies in the face of continued high joblessness. Nonetheless, Kim makes the case for his own organization:

*for too long, the World Bank itself has not followed its own advice. [...] We are taking our own medicine. We're strengthening our financial discipline to become more efficient and grow our revenues. Just as we tell finance ministers, we also need to plan for the longer term, shore up our revenue base, seek ways to save, and build a stronger foundation for years to come. ... If we have high aspirations for the poor, if our work is to be aligned with our goals, we must be as efficient and focused as possible. In our search for savings, we'll aim to cut costs annually by at least \$400 million dollars in three years' time. We'll accomplish this by taking a fresh look at all of our policies and processes. This includes reducing costs from our travel and facilities, as well as simplifying our bureaucracy and strategically reviewing our staffing. These savings will directly benefit our clients, as we will reprogram these resources towards new loans.*

How this will impact the role of the World Bank as a global social policy actor, remains to be seen.

## International Actors and Social Policy

### HEALTH

There has been renewed global momentum towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and what EQUINET Africa call a 'crescendo of talk' about how to achieve this development goal in global policy circles. As Kruk indicates in a recent BMJ editorial, it is certainly 'a policy whose time has come'. At the UN GA in September, and the associated side-event on 'The Road Forward: What's next for Global Health', UHC was a central element of discussions about the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Various reports on UHC were published to coincide with the UN GA in an apparent effort to secure maximum global attention. Commitment to UHC has been furthered through discussion at other policy fora, including the Third Global Forum on Human Resources for Health. While there is widespread agreement about the importance of UHC as a development goal, the 'devil' is in the detail; that is to say, in how UHC is interpreted, financed and operationalised. Financing options have proved particularly controversial given the apparent promotion of health insurance programs by donors and developing country governments (as opposed to tax-based systems). It is argued that insurance schemes tend to offer a limited package of services for the poor, promote private investment in healthcare and are effectively leaving the poor behind. While the WHO has been key in promoting UHC, the World Bank and also Japan have had an important role in furthering recent debates. There are questions, however, as to what types of financing approaches to UHC the Bank will support, and the extent to which equity and the right to health will be priority concerns. In a recent editorial of the WHO Bulletin, issues were raised about the extent to which the right to health features in UHC debates more broadly, particularly as it applies to non-nationals, who may be vulnerable, marginalised and with little access to health system benefits.

Financing issues have not only been central to UHC debates, but have also been of concern due to the global economic crisis. As the OECD highlighted, there has been a major brake in the growth of health spending as governments cut budgets during this crisis. These issues became visible on the fourth replenishment process of the Global Fund in December, with donor governments demonstrating continued commitment despite budgetary constraints. The Global Fund has published an overview of the amounts pledged on their website. This is less than hoped for and \$1 billion less a year than is needed (see KFF article): Jeffrey Sachs has reacted to the pledges, calling them 'shocking' and illustrative of a wilful neglect of the poor.

Still, new pledges of financial support were announced at GAVI's Mid-Term Review meeting in October, in advance of the Alliance's next funding cycle. These pledges coincided

with reports that more children than ever are benefitting from vaccines provided through GAVI. Continued financial support for GAVI contributed to the recent announcement by the Alliance Board that it will start providing support for the inactivated poliovirus vaccine as part of routine immunisation programmes, in the world's 73 poorest countries. This announcement was particularly timely given the recent reports of polio cases in Syria, which have been fuelled by conflict. As a recent piece in the Lancet highlights however, financial support for technical immunisation efforts are insufficient - the political and social context for disease tends to be paid little attention and must be tackled more seriously. The way in which politics can influence global health was clearly evident at the recent COP19 climate change talks in Warsaw (see also Habitat, Land, Housing section). While health actors spoke out on the links between climate change and global health issues, these topics were on the margins of discussions. As a result, there appears to be emerging agreement that health, nutrition and climate communities need to engage more in order to make more progress in addressing this fundamentally political issue.

## **SOCIAL PROTECTION**

We have begun to see how social protection has fared so far amid the jockeying between competing interests for a global development agenda that will eventually succeed the MDGs. There are several highly iterative and sometimes overlapping processes designed to shape the agenda, including the Secretary-General-led Post-2015 consultations and the Rio+20-mandated Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (see also Redistribution section).

At its 68th session, the UN GA held a series of high-level meetings taking up the discussion, as well, including a meeting on progress made toward achieving and succeeding the MDGs—the most promising for guidance on social protection. The event served to launch the Secretary-General's report, 'A Life of Dignity for All,' which calls very clearly for the strengthening and expansion of social protection in the post-MDG framework. It is interesting to note, however, that the outcome document includes no such reference.

In anticipation of the meeting, the ILO had co-sponsored a side event with a focus on social protection as a way to combat rising inequalities, which are largely seen as a failure of the previous MDG framework.

In the UN GA's regular committee work, a promising new draft resolution featuring social protection quite prominently, was tabled by Peru under the social development agenda item. The draft resolution, "calls upon Member States to [ensure] social protection floors for those who are in vulnerable or marginalized groups or situations, as defined by each country in accordance with its individual circumstances."

Another draft resolution on the follow up to the World Summit on Social Development retains the same references to ILO Recommendation 202 on SPFs as the previous resolution adopted by the 67th session. Social protection, without mentions of national floors or systems, is also found in several other draft resolutions of the 68th session related to women migrants and women in rural areas.

A number of reports aimed at influencing the post-MDG discussion have appeared since the last review. The one by the UN Non-governmental Liaison Service calls upon member states to:

*agree to a stand-alone goal on universal social protection in the post-2015 agenda, emphasizing the need to introduce social protection floors in countries where social security is minimal, but with the aim to secure universal access to social services and basic income security for all, based on ILO Recommendation 202.*

Although published back in May 2013, it is important to note that the HLP report, whose most prominent proposal is a set of “transformative shifts,” also has a more familiar-looking set of “illustrative goals” in its annexes, which proposes a target specifically to measure the breadth of coverage of “social protection systems” (p. 30) under the aim of ending poverty.

In addition to the flurry of global advocacy activities surrounding the UN GA, global cooperation on social protection continues to advance within the UN and the international donor system. The fourth meeting of the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) took place on 29 October in Brussels. Its agenda included a two-part section dedicated to assessment tools and data harmonization, which have in the past complicated efforts to begin concrete cooperation activities originating at the global level. Country-led cooperation on social protection projects is already underway among agencies in several places.

As reported in the minutes, the group agreed on several significant reforms to the SPARCS assessment framework, which had come to be seen by some Board members as a Bank-owned rather than simply Bank-led instrument. The changes include a new name, the Inter-agency Social Protection Assessment (decidedly with no acronym), and several additional modules on SPFs and social dialogue, among others, which are now being led by the ILO. Just following the fourth SPIAC-B, a second meeting of the social protection statistics and indicators inter-agency working group also took place in Paris, 4 - 5 November 2013.

The third and final session of an ILO-UNITAR seminar series on advancing SPFs and targeted at country delegations to the UN took place on 13 September. Previously, sessions had focused on social protection financing and macroeconomic linkages, while this session brought field experts from the ILO and their counterparts from relevant ministries in Cambodia and Mozambique to present national experiences in implementing SPFs in those countries.

The instalment benefited from discussions held at the previous day's inter-agency workshop hosted in New York and an ILO-UNOSSC side event on SPFs on the occasion of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation at UN Headquarters. One of the more noteworthy developments was the presentation of a new 'Assessment-Based National Dialogue' (ABND) model, a nicely packaged, replicable and teachable methodology emerging from ILO SPF experiences in Southeast Asia. There are now plans to develop an instructional guide and to expand ABND exercises into Myanmar, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands in 2014.

The final meeting of the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) under the Russian Presidency, where social protection work had continued under the Growth and Resilience pillar, was held 23-24 October 2013. The chair's summary of the seminar on 'Comprehensive Social Protection Systems for Food Security and Human Resources Development,' includes references to SPFs and further inter-agency cooperation on social protection, which were reported to the DWG.

*Further efforts could be pursued by the international community to support the implementation of nationally defined social protection floors in LICs as part of their comprehensive social protection and sustainable development strategies including through interagency cooperation, technical assistance, knowledge sharing and South - South and Triangular cooperation.*

Australia, who assumed the G20 Presidency in December, is expected to focus future G20 development work primarily on private sector-led growth and job creation. Entry points for continued discussions on social protection are expected to be rather limited. The macroeconomic and "business" case for social protection investment will have to be expanded. Also of note in the world of social protection are the World Social Security Forum organized by ISSA and the launch of its new online Centre for Excellence.

## **EDUCATION**

More than 190 Member States gathered at UNESCO Headquarters on the occasion of the 37th Session of the General Conference to debate the future of education - its content, scope and articulation with the post 2015 development agenda. It was agreed that the new education agenda should build on what has been achieved in Education for All (EFA) since 2000, complete what remains to be done, and integrate the lessons learned from national assessments of EFA and the education-related MDG experience.

Another important outcome of the meeting was Member States' commitment to promoting a single overarching goal on education in the future development agenda, based on the principles of access, equity, and quality, with a perspective on lifelong learning for all. Qian Tang, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, emphasised, however, that

“UNESCO is not suggesting ending the EFA agenda. Quite the contrary - UNESCO is supporting a broadened EFA vision within the international development framework”.

With these words, Mr. Tang was responding to one of the main requests included in the public statement ‘Toward an Equitable Quality Education For All Framework’ which circulated broadly in the context of the UNESCO General Conference. This statement, which to date has been signed by more than 300 scholars and educationists from all world regions, also claims that an essential way of strengthening the post-2015 education framework, and EFA in particular, is to take equity more seriously.

On its part, the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda published the report ‘Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda’ which collects the main debates and results of the ongoing consultations on the role of education in the post-2015 scenario. In parallel, the final recommendations from the Learning Metrics task force were presented in the report ‘Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force’. The report outlines how the measurement of learning outcomes can help to ensure quality education for all. It presents key indicators for tracking progress in foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, as well as in knowledge and skills that go beyond these traditional indicators.<sup>1</sup>

Responding to the urgent need for additional efforts to achieve the six Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015, UNESCO and the Government of Angola organized the 2nd workshop in support of the Big Push: EFA Acceleration Initiative in Luanda, Angola, between 18 – 22 October 2013. The Big Push Initiative supports governments to accelerate progress towards the internationally agreed education goals to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults. It targets the 32 countries in sub-Saharan Africa which are unlikely to achieve all six EFA goals and the 12 countries close to achieving EFA, out of the 45 for which data is available. The Initiative aims to build the capacity of sub-Saharan countries to develop and implement EFA Acceleration frameworks through re-focusing investments, collective responsibility and action, and effective partnerships with civil society, local communities and the private sector.

On 1 October, the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls’ rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world, was celebrated. This year, the theme for the day was ‘Innovating for Girls’ Education’, and one of the main purposes was to highlight that millions of girls are still being denied their right to education. Precisely in the context of the International Day of the Girl Child, UNESCO and the Global Education First Initiative, released

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<sup>1</sup> The EFA process will culminate in a Global Education Conference to be hosted by the Republic of Korea in spring 2015, which will produce a common position on education to be integrated in the global development agenda post-2015 that will be adopted by the New York Heads of State and Governments Summit in September 2015.

the advocacy brochure 'The Global Learning Crisis: Why every child deserves a quality education'. While calling for action to address the multiple barriers that keep children, in particular girls, out of school, the brochure puts the spotlight on the millions of children who are in school but failing to learn the most basic reading, writing and numeracy skills.

On 23 September 2013, representatives from governments, international organizations and civil society met in the UNICEF headquarters concerned by the fact that 28.5 million children in countries affected by conflict are still being denied access to education. Recognizing this, leaders at the event made the united call for action 'Education Cannot Wait'.

On 25 September 2013, the first year anniversary of the Global Education First Initiative, the five-year campaign launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to deliver on the promise of Education for All, was celebrated. The meeting focused on how to leverage the leadership, financing and delivery needed to achieve the 2015 goals.

Education Aid Watch, a major new report from the Global Campaign for Education, shows that support to basic education in low-income countries is falling deeper and faster than in other areas of aid. The report analyses donor progress on aid to education, with a particular focus on basic education. Similar results can be found in a recent paper by the Global Monitoring Report team, which concludes that:

*In recent years, not only have bilateral donors reduced the share of their total aid [...] to education, but the amount of their aid to education channelled through recipient governments has also declined, while increasing the amount given as unearmarked aid to multilateral organizations. General budget support is rapidly losing its share in total aid. This means that some of the biggest achievements in the period since 2000, notably the focus on alignment behind national education plans backed by the use of pooled financing mechanisms, are in danger of being reversed. The aid effectiveness agenda which has been championed in conjunction with the focus on the MDGs not only needs to be revitalized, but also needs to be a more specific aspect of any post-2015 development framework.*

On 19 November 2013, the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education approved US\$549 million in grants to 14 developing countries, providing critical funding and momentum toward quality education for all children. This new financing reflects the GPE's top priorities: increasing access to basic education in fragile states, improving the quality of education, improving teachers' effectiveness, generating measurable results and championing girls' education. The Board of Directors also confirmed that the GPE's next replenishment pledging conference will be held in Brussels on 26 June 2014.

A framework for business to engage in education was launched in September the 20 by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at a CEO summit in New York. Developed by UNESCO, UNICEF, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, and the UN Global Compact, 'The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education' makes the case that education is not only good for society but also "good for business". The Framework charts the

means to realize business benefits while advancing education goals. The Framework sets out a three-part process for engagement: helping businesses to make the case internally about why they should engage in education; selecting appropriate activities; and acting in a responsible manner.

Furthermore, there is a huge need for well-trained and well-supported teachers, UN officials warned on the World Teachers' Day (5 October 2013). Some 5.2 million teachers need to be hired worldwide to reach the MDG of achieving universal primary education by 2015. However, “the challenge goes beyond numbers – more teachers must mean better quality learning, through appropriate training and support,” the heads of four major UN agencies and Education International, said in a joint message for World Teachers' Day.

*Far too often, teachers remain under-qualified and poorly paid, with low status, and excluded from education policy matters and decisions that concern and affect them,” the officials added, calling for effective international action in support of national efforts to bolster teachers and education institutions, and improve education opportunities.*

## **FOOD**

Similar to the global economic and financial crisis (see Redistribution section), food commodity markets “have become more balanced and less price volatile” according to the FAO’s Biannual report on Global Food Markets. Over the past few months, the prices for most basic food commodities have declined, and there is also projected to be more abundant supplies and higher stocks. This is good news for global food security (at least in the short term), as it has increasingly become the focus of international conferences and policy discussions. Not only did the Committee on World Food Security meet from 7-10 October for its 40th session, but the topic also emerged as a key priority research theme for future years from the 20<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Nutrition. It is within this context that UN Rapporteur Olivier de Shutter highlighted the centrality of the right to food in the food security agenda. He indicated that the right to food is “widely recognized as a key to the success of food security strategies”. The main focus of de Shutter’s report, however, was broader. It took stock of the progress made since the 1996 World Food Summit and highlighted, what Duncan Green called, fascinating examples’ of emerging best practice in terms of national food framework laws; participatory, rights-based national strategies; and innovative systems of accountability and grievance redress that all support the right to food.

While impressive progress was highlighted in this report, this was tempered somewhat by the FAO’s State of Food Security in the World Report 2013, which highlighted that while progress has been made it is ‘insufficient overall’ to achieve the hunger reduction MDGs. To achieve hunger reduction, even where poverty is widespread, the FAO report highlighted

(amongst many other measures) the importance of policies aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and increasing food availability, especially when targeted towards smallholders. Highlighting the important role of smallholders is timely given the recent launch event for the 2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF-2014), which seeks to raise the profile of linkages between small scale farming, food systems and nutrition. Such linkages were a feature on the agenda of the recent preparatory technical meeting for the high profile Second International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2) to be held in 2014. They were also a feature in Oxfam's recent and somewhat critical briefing about The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which the G8 intended as a means to reduce poverty by increasing private investment and agriculture-led growth in specific African countries. The briefing argues that the New Alliance 'risks harming rather than helping small-scale producers'. The role that agriculture plays in global food security and nutrition also proved to be somewhat controversial at the recent climate talks in Warsaw. Not only was agriculture omitted from the programme of work, but critics also argued that global leaders were not taking the problem of food security under climate change seriously enough. These issues of climate change, agriculture and food security are the focus of a recently published book series by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The issue of how climate change will impact on food and nutrition is a particularly timely issue for consideration given the recent typhoon in the Philippines, issues relating to food aid in this disaster context and evident uncertainties about the greater risk of such extreme events in an era of global climatic change.

#### HABITAT, LAND, HOUSING

Climate change discussions were central as a result of the COP-19, UN Climate Change Conference 2013 held in Warsaw (11-23 November 2013). During the conference decision was taken to advance REDD Plus, and to sign the new global treaty replacing the existing Kyoto Protocol. Despite that, little political will seems to exist by the developed world to commit to more stringent targets and to ensure support for those countries most affected. Similarly, climate change has been recognized at the 68<sup>th</sup> UN GA as one of the crucial issues for the post-2015 development agenda, but still, the voices of LDCs, where the climate change impacts are most felt, have remained out of view in the post-2015 discussions. LDCs themselves have though been engaging in innovative ways to address issues of climate change.

As 2013 is the UN International Year of Water Cooperation, a major consultation of stakeholders took place at Stockholm in the beginning of September, which recognised water security as the key to sustainable development and poverty eradication. At its conclusion, the year

was seen as making key advances in developing a post-2015 framework on water cooperation (spearheaded by UNICEF and the WHO). In the month of October 2013 UN Habitat released its flagship 'Global Report on Human Settlements (GRHS)'. Though prior to 2000 there were only two GRHS were published, since 2001 it is prepared in alternate years with thematic focus. The focus of 2013 report is on urban transportation. The report argues for the mixed land-use of city which will increase access. Particularly for the poor people who depend on walking, the report recommends, creating pathways and public transportation system which will ensure access to city. In a related event, a group of experts met in Paris in early November for the drafting of the 'International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning' (IG-UTP). The meeting aimed to translate UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 24/3 on 'Inclusive and sustainable urban planning and elaboration of international guidelines on urban and territorial planning'.

Policy push against land grab continue to receive attention, thanks to the constant pressure Oxfam has put through its campaign 'Nothing Sweet About It'. One of the significant achievements of this campaign was to get Coca Cola company to commit for 'zero-tolerance' for land grab in its supply chain processes. Once this policy is translated into practice, it will have huge impact in the countries of Brazil, India, South Africa, Thailand, Philippines, Colombia and Guatemala, where the market share of Coca Cola is very high. The commitment of Coca Cola is also expected to have spiralling impact on other beverage companies such as Pepsico.