

Global Social Policy Digest 13.1

The GSP Digest has been produced and edited by Bob Deacon, Alexandra Kaasch (University of Sheffield), Branka Marijan (Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada) and Antoni Verger (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), with support from the University of Sheffield and the Balsillie School of International Relations. 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>. All the web sites referenced were accessible in December 2012. This edition of the Digest covers the period mid-August 2012 to mid-December 2012.

Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

REDISTRIBUTION

Within the context of the continuing global financial crisis there has been a hardening of [opinion](#) that austerity measures adopted by most developed countries favour the rich. Unsurprisingly, the question of taxation of wealthy companies and individuals has been a key theme in domestic politics particularly across Europe and the Americas. Some of these debates are about the need for increased international collaboration to reduce the use of tax havens and transfer pricing by multi-nationals (see Regulation section). While others are about the need for both new/innovative taxes on global activities and for new global funds to provide global public goods financed from these innovative sources or from traditional donations. Among the contribution to the new global funds debate was the UN Human Rights Council's [Briefing Note](#): 'Underwriting the Poor: A Global Fund for Social Protection'. The note suggests: "the creation of a Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP), to provide States the financial support needed to make social protection viable" (more details in Social Protection Section). A call for a new global fund or institution to gather monies to pay to poor countries to compensate them for the damage caused by climate change was tabled at the Climate Change [meeting](#) in Doha. In the end, a much weaker formulation was agreed which involves traditional aid from richer to poorer countries for this purpose.

The long standing debate on the need for a financial transaction tax (FTT) continued to be focused upon but only within the European context. The European Commission moved to introduce a form of FTT which was criticized for being an attempt to 'fill its own coffers'

as a substitute for government contributions. So far, the EU Commission has secured the backing of 10 euro zone states' to introduce the [financial transaction tax](#). Subsequently, at the November EU Heads of State meeting, a [paper](#) was tabled by EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy which would have deducted FTT revenues from national contributions to the annual EU budget. Decisions on this were postponed until 2013.

Looking beyond Europe, the UK's Institute for Policy Studies sent a [letter](#) signed by 58 organisations to World Bank president Jim Kim, urging him to champion financial transaction taxes. The letter was sent in anticipation of the World Bank's annual October meeting in Tokyo at which the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development held a [symposium](#) highlighting the role of FTT in meeting the funding gap for climate and development left by the global economic crisis. This side event seems to have had no impact on the IMF/Bank Development Committee Report. For an analysis of this see the [report](#) by the Bretton Woods Project.

Hence we are stuck with ODA and other traditional ways in which richer countries might help the development of poorer ones. The [Commitment to Development Index \(CDI\)](#) ranks 27 of the world's richest countries on their dedication to policies that benefit the 5.5 billion people living in poorer nations. The CDI measures policies that impact poor people in developing countries including aid and openness to exports, migration and environmental policies. Currently, in 2012, Denmark is highest at 7, USA lower at 4.8, and trailing is Korea at 2.7. Linked to this is the forthcoming OECD '[Aid for Trade Policy Dialogue](#)' to be held in January 2013 to which the World Bank adds its [argument](#) that 'Africa Can Help Feed Africa: Removing Barriers to Regional trade in Food Staples'.

Following this current fashion to argue that developing countries want to/should get out from under aid dependency and raise their own resources and establish their own social contracts UNRISD is working on the possibility of exploiting mineral wealth for these purposes. Their first [report](#) argues, "What constrains development lies not in what countries have, but rather in what they lack: institutions, financial leverage, human capital, appropriate policies and a favourable global context."

Related is the ILO argument in, '[What financial cooperatives can teach the big banks](#)', that we need to find alternatives to the broken system of financings development through traditional banks and invest more in cooperative and mutual assurance forms of banking which have grown in recent years. On a similar theme, UNRISD has argued that the multiple global crises and heightened concerns about the social, environmental and developmental consequences of market- and corporate-led development have reignited

interest in "alternative" production and consumption patterns, and ways of organizing enterprise activities. A new UNRISD [inquiry](#) seeks to explore the potential and limits of social and solidarity economy (SSE) as a distinctive approach to development and for promoting gender equality, decent work and food and livelihood security. Exploring connected themes is the [publication](#) on 'Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development'.

Inequality has become a central theme in many examinations of the current global socio-economic climate. UNRISD published a [policy brief](#) on 'Inequalities and the Post-2015 Development Agenda' which highlights the fact that income inequalities between and within countries have worsened in the recent decades. It also states that the current social discontent and distrust of government shows the urgency of dealing with inequality. Related is Branko Milanovic's [paper](#) on inequality, 'Global income inequality by the numbers: in history and now'. Duncan Green provides an interesting [discussion](#) of the paper and its implications. Inequality has also been pointed to by the World Bank's new chief economist, Kaushik Basu, who was in London in late November at a meeting with several representatives of NGOs. Duncan Green's [blog post](#) explains how Mr. Basu differs from his predecessor Justin Lin. He states in particular that Basu is more focused on governance, inequality, taxation and growth. According to Duncan Green, Mr. Basu also expressed his concern that climate change and environmentalism are insufficiently promoted at the Bank. This new wave of thought is evident in the new World Bank president Kim's strategy though the [Bretton Woods Project](#) remains sceptical about the sincerity of the new strategy and they are questioning if it is not little more than a "PR exercise".

REGULATION

Echoing the concerns about taxation reviewed in the redistribution section there were calls for more responsible taxation from the OECD 5th '[Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes](#)' which took place in Cape Town, South Africa, 26-27 October 2012. Its [Statement of Outcomes](#) states that:

Transparency is improving, strict bank secrecy for tax purposes is disappearing and bearer shares are being eliminated or measures put in place to identify their owners. Further, the possibilities for exchanging information have increased dramatically, with more than 800 bilateral information exchange agreements signed since 2009 and more countries signing the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, which is now open to a potentially worldwide membership.

The Global Forum welcomed 10 new members and two new observers, and it was agreed that its mandate would be extended until the end of 2015. The seven key outcomes of the meeting have been summarized [here](#). Meanwhile the US Department of the Treasury has [disclosed](#) that it is engaged with more than 50 countries and jurisdictions around the world to implement the information reporting and withholding tax provisions arising out of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). The UK and Germany have also recently [agreed](#) to a crackdown on tax loopholes for multinational companies such as Starbucks, which according to the UK business secretary are “taking from the British economy and putting very little back.”

Continuing the focus on corporations and in time for the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly, the UN Global Compact released ‘[Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Overview and Outcomes](#)’, which outlines leading corporate practices in key sustainability areas and the wide spectrum of ideas presented at the Forum on innovations, collaborations and public policy recommendations. At the Sustainia Action Forum, a meeting of international leaders hosted by the [Sustainia](#) initiative to discuss action strategies for implementing the world’s top sustainable solutions, there were [calls](#) for making corporate sustainability a transformative force.

Focusing on the human rights side of business the [3rd session](#) of the ‘Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises’ took place from 26th to 30th November 2012. No open consultation were held during the third session, as the Working Group wanted to engage with stakeholders the following week throughout the [Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) which took place 3rd to 5th December 2012. Ms. Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in her opening remarks nicely encapsulated the challenges:

The Guiding Principles [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights] aim to address the widening gap between the scope and impact of economic and financial actors, and the capacity of society to manage their adverse impacts including on human rights. They are a response to demands from people across the globe for higher levels of accountability — from their governments, from international institutions, and from the private sector. People are demanding freedom: freedom from fear and freedom from want—as the principal responsibilities of those who exercise power. They are demanding that the rule of law apply to all — including in the economic sphere. They are demanding dignity—as the central purpose of our economic and political systems.

‘[Doing Business 2013: Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises](#)’ was published on 23rd October 2012. Mike Waghorne at the Public World [website](#) discusses

the World Bank's Doing Business Report and the latest World Development Report in a comparative perspective. Sharan Burrow from the International Trade Union Confederation [welcomed](#) the report because of its focus on employment creation. The ILO, on 5 November 2012, [published](#) a 'Handbook of procedures relating to international labour Conventions and Recommendations'.

Picking up on the rights of workers the Government of Mauritius hosted this year's '[Global Forum on Migration and Development](#)' (21-22 November 2012) which focused on the protection of migrant domestic workers. In his opening statement, Secretary-General of the ACP Group of States, H.E. Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, said:

one of the paradoxes of our era is that the liberalisation of world markets and capital is taking place against the backdrop of more restrictions on the movement of people ... I find it rather illogical that we strive to promote free trade and the free movement of ideas while at the same time most countries continue to place such heavy restrictions on the movement of people – especially the movement of people from young and vigorous societies to those that are ageing and declining in demographic terms.

UN Women and the ILO organised a 'Roundtable on Protecting Migrant Domestic Workers: Enhancing their Development Potential' (a connected '[checklist](#)' is also available). The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, [expressed](#) his regret that migrants' rights are not yet a central pillar of the Forum. In a related [speech](#) to the UN General Assembly, he was more explicit:

Migration at its heart involves our constant movements, as human beings, on the finite territory of this planet. Migrants, just as all other individuals, have human rights that must be respected. They have the same agency that we recognise to ourselves, in defining the kind of future they wish for themselves and for their children. They courageously face the unknown, as our parents or grand-parents have done as we would do if we were in their shoes. Thus, human rights must be the underlying framework which informs all discussions about migration. Adopting such a human rights framework will only strengthen any decisions made regarding all the other important aspects of migration, which of course includes economic growth and development.

From 26 to 30 November 2012, the [World Social Forum on Migrations](#) took place in Manila, Philippines.

For the WTO, however trade is still not open enough. The 'WTO report on G-20 Trade Measures' [reports](#) a "slowdown in the imposition of new trade restrictive measures [...] Nevertheless, the new measures are adding to the stock of restrictions put in place since the outbreak of the global crisis, most of which remain in effect."

The World Bank has [published](#) the 'Global Financial Development Report 2013: Rethinking the Role of the State in Finance'. The report provides a balanced view on the role

of the state in finance. On the one hand, the report recognizes that states have an important role to play in the financial systems. On the other, it notes that there are practical reasons to be wary of the state playing too active a role. There is evidence the report suggests that as the crisis subsides the state should have a less direct involvement though still remain an overseer of the financial transactions by providing supervision, ensuring healthy competition, and ensuring stronger financial infrastructure. Five key messages emerge from the report: incentives are crucial in the financial sector, a solid and transparent institutional framework is important, that rather than restricting competition it is necessary to address distorted competition, the record of state bank lending is unimpressive and governance should be improved, and that individual states can promote transparency of information and reduce counterparty risk.

RIGHTS

The Human Rights Council met for its 21st [session](#), 10-28 September 2012, in Geneva; and addressed a number of global social rights. From 1st to 3rd October, the 2012 [Social Forum](#) followed. It focused on the topic of ‘People-centred development and globalisation’, including issues of social transformation, inclusive and equitable economic growth, hunger and poverty eradication and sources of financing for development.

On the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development there were calls to ensure that the right to development is recognized particularly given the levels of inequality across the globe. The High Commissioner for Human Rights [noted](#) that,

Today’s world-wide upheavals calling for change provide ample testimony that the pursuit of progress without regard to human rights premised on human dignity cannot be sustained. Human rights enshrine the intrinsic worth of human beings, born free and equal in dignity and rights.

A joint statement by the various UN agencies can be found [here](#). They note that the Declaration provides the normative underpinnings for a human rights approach to development and are committed to carrying forward this vision. Contribution of the UN system as a whole to the advancement of the business and human rights agenda and the dissemination and implementation of the [Guiding Principles](#) on Business and Human Rights

The first [International Day of the Girl Child](#) was celebrated. A related report ‘Because I am a Girl. The State of the World’s Girls 2012. Learning for life’ has been [published](#) by [Plan International](#). Related information and opinion can also be accessed through the UK DfID’s [website](#). Also the UN Global Compact released a [statement](#) on the day. On 1 October

was the International Day of Older Persons. UN Secretary General [remarked](#) that, “As we embark on shaping the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, we must envision a new paradigm that aligns demographic ageing with economic and social growth and protects the human rights of older persons.”

On 10 December Human Rights Day the [theme](#) this year was ‘My Voice counts’. Statements by various officials can be found [here](#). Notably, the Director of UN Women for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet stated that women’s voices continue to be underrepresented “Only 21 women are Heads of State or Government, only 1 in 5 parliamentarians is a woman, and less than 10 percent of peace negotiators are women.” The UN Human Rights Office also launched the Arabic language version of the Office website on Human Rights Day.

The financial crisis and its impact on the housing sector have been highlighted recently particularly at the [World Habitat Day](#). Raquel Rolnik, UN Special Rapporteur on housing [noted](#) that, “in many cases, housing finance policies have resulted in increasing inequalities in access to housing, increased tenure insecurity, poor location and low habitability, social segregation and, sometimes, increased homelessness.” She called for a human rights approach to housing rather than the current “financialization” approach which discriminates against lower income households. She pointed to the view that credit for housing ownership is often seen as a solution when in reality it has largely failed to increase access to adequate housing in developing countries.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, [warned](#) of the threat of ‘ocean-grabbing’ to food security, and urged world governments and international bodies to halt the depletion of fish stocks, and take urgent steps to protect, sustain, and share the benefits of fisheries and marine environments. His report can be accessed [here](#).

On 19 November, [World Toilet Day](#), once again showed that human rights is more than just rhetoric. “Eliminating inequalities can start in the most unlikely of places: a toilet,” [said](#) the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, on World Toilet Day. “Access to sanitation facilities around the world, more than any other service, provides a window into the vast difference between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots.’” She also called for prioritization of hand washing and hygiene in the post-2015 development agenda. Also, related to the right to sanitation and safe drinking water European Union for the first time recognizing the human right to water and sanitation as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living. The United Kingdom also recognized the right to sanitation.

By ratifying the ILO [Convention 189](#) on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, the Philippines became the second country to ratify the convention thereby allowing the first global standard for domestic workers to come into force in twelve months' time. ILO estimates that the global number of domestic workers is about 53 million given the often hidden and unregistered nature of the work the actual estimates are double that amount. Once the Convention 189 comes into force it is [expected](#) to improve the lives of millions of people in this profession. An ILO-EU [study](#) discovered that many Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon continue to find jobs despite legal and administrative hurdles but do face [exploitation](#).

GOVERNANCE

The World Bank – IMF annual [meetings](#) 2012 took place in Tokyo, Japan, 9 to 14 October 2012. Related to the topic of the most recent World Development Report, there was a focus on jobs. The final communiqué of the Development Committee says:

Recent financial crises mean fewer jobs where millions are needed. Jobs are engines of poverty reduction and empower people, especially women and young adults. Jobs have the potential to drive the transformation that leads to sustainable development and social cohesion. The WBG 2013 World Development Report on Jobs highlights that there is no magic formula for creating jobs and the mix of job enabling policies will differ between countries. The private sector generates most jobs, but the public sector also has an important role to play. The WBG must continue to help countries strengthen the enabling environment for job creation given their specific challenges, and the role of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency will be especially crucial in supporting the private sector, including through innovative initiatives. We encourage the WBG, in partnership with member countries and other stakeholders, to build on its cross/cutting analytical and policy work around jobs and to share this knowledge.

Views from the Bretton Woods Project can be found [here](#). It concluded that:

there was comparatively little to show for all the effort of gathering the world's finance ministers, central bankers, officials, journalists, bankers, and civil society organisations in East Asia. The official meetings themselves produced little concrete in terms of how the World Bank and IMF will conduct their work for the foreseeable future. The most talked about issues were the IMF's admissions of [errors](#) in economic forecasting and the speech by World Bank president Jim Yong Kim which set out his vision for the Bank.

However, “while Kim stressed his credentials as coming from civil society all week, few would have left the annual meetings feeling as if he was aiming for deep reform at the Bank.”

Thematically connected is also the Thirteenth Jacques Polak Annual Research Conference at

the IMF headquarters in Washington D.C. (8-9 November 2012), themed [Labour Markets through the Lens of the Great Recession](#).

In a symbolic act, former ILO head Juan Somavia has handed over [three keys](#) to the new Director-General Guy Ryder (from 1 October 2012). “When these three keys turn together, when governments, employers and workers are able to come together, doors open and social justice advances,” Ryder said. Given that Somavia had used his position as DG of the ILO to advance the case for global economic and social policy synergy between the several International Organizations it will be interesting to see if Ryder continues this trend. In his first budget review for the ILO he sets out 7 priority areas for funding 5 of which are focused upon the world of work, one on the social protection floor and the other on responses to the global crisis in which he [says](#) “Building on the Global Jobs Pact, the ILO will contribute to national and international strategies through active engagement with constituents and multilateral partners.”

At the G20 Finance and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Mexico City on 5 November 2012, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde [said](#):

The IMF remains committed to do its part, by actively seeking solutions to ensure that economic policies at the national and multilateral level promote stronger growth, create more jobs, and reduce poverty worldwide. We have also made significant headway, as we noted at our recent Annual Meetings in Tokyo, on supporting the world’s poorest countries through financing of our Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, a pool to finance concessional loans. We will also continue to work hand in hand with G-20 countries in the months ahead to complete important governance reforms that will help maintain the legitimacy of the IMF, particularly in the context of the evolving role globally of emerging and developing countries. In this context, we welcome the G-20 agreements on the principles of a new quota formula and the reaffirmed commitment to complete the next general review of quotas by January 2014.

The WTO published a document explaining ‘[10 things the WTO can do](#)’, among them: cut living costs and raise living standards, stimulate economic growth and employment, and support the environment and health.

While we all wait for the report of the High Level Panel on the Post MDG UN Development Agenda to report in May, the Global Policy Forum-Europe held a conference in Bonn with the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF) and the United Nations Association of Germany. The symposium [reflected](#) on the post-2015 development agenda, broadened the conversation and looked for alternatives to the MDGs. It explored the fundamental issue of what development will mean in an increasingly complex and differentiated world, and which new strategies and forms of cooperation must be developed at the global policy level in response to an increasingly diverse cast of actors and growing global interdependencies.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron, Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, of Indonesia, are co-chairs of this panel. Cameron has been rewarded for keeping the UK Commitment to reach the 0.7% of gross national income spent on development aid. Unfortunately his preoccupation is what he calls the "[golden thread](#)" of development. [Owen Barder](#), Europe director of the [Centre for Global Development](#) think tank, says the golden thread stresses [free markets](#), jobs and growth, but not other ways to encourage positive social and economic change, such as reducing inequality, tackling the power of elites, providing social protection, and ensuring a strong voice for civil society. Also see the Guardian [article](#) on the post-2015 agenda.

A working group is being set up following Rio+20 to work on sustainable development goals, so there are two parallel tracks on a post-2015 development agenda; the trick for the UN is to combine them into one. The UN's special adviser on post-2015 development planning, Amina Mohammed, [said](#) that both the high-level panel and the working group on sustainability share one secretariat, noting the end result will be "one development agenda."

HEALTH

The Second Global Symposium on [Health System Research](#) took place in Beijing, 31 October to 3 November. The [final document](#) lists the following actions points:

- *In our endeavour to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), we must ensure the centrality of social and gender equity. UHC is not only a health system's task but a societal goal that requires inclusion of diverse actors, different types of knowledge and innovation across local, district, national, regional and global contexts.*
- *Effective inclusion recognises the paramount priority of the collective development of indicators that can be used to monitor countries' progress towards the goal of UHC, as well as being used by civil society to hold governments accountable. Such measures must be relevant to local and national contexts, first and foremost, and amenable to global comparisons.*
- *Most urgently, local capacities for critical health systems' analysis is required for individual countries to understand what aspects of their health systems (in terms of service delivery, financing and governance) require change so as to make real progress to UHC with equity.*
- *The social, methodological and technical innovations shared in this Symposium provide a well-spring of knowledge and an enormous opportunity, provided they can be appropriately integrated to bring about systemic change to accelerate progress towards UHC.*

At the event, the WHO [launched](#) the first global strategy on health policy and systems research (HPSR) in a document entitled ‘[Changing Mindsets](#)’ (related is already a [Bulletin of the WHO](#)).

In his [speech](#) to the Every Women, Every Child [event](#) (UN General Assembly, 25 September 2012), World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said:

Poor health and high out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure are among the leading causes of poverty. And access to quality, affordable healthcare is not only about making people healthier, but is also a necessary underpinning for creating productive opportunities and decent jobs, and ultimately for sustaining economic development. [...] I am announcing that the World Bank will establish a special funding mechanism to enable donors to scale up their funding to meet the urgent needs related to the Millennium Development Goals 4 &5. We hope to do this by leveraging the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank’s fund for the poorest. We are committed to finding the financial and human resources needed to address these incredibly important issues. We will be talking with our IDA shareholders and other interested donors and partners in the coming weeks to agree on the best way to do this, together. [...] And a strong health system requires investments beyond the health sector. We also need to think about infrastructure, water and sanitation, education systems, and labour markets: All play a role in delivering health.

However, the Bretton Woods [project points](#) to the US NGO Gender Action’s October report Banking on health which examines the financial institutions commitment to addressing gender issues in health-related projects. The study, assessing evidence from 2006 to 2012 in Sub-Saharan Africa, found that many World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB) funded projects paid little attention to gender roles and failed to track the impacts of specific investment for women, whilst promoting user fees. The report argues that the “World Bank and AfDB risk undermining their own health-related goals by overlooking women’s rights and needs.” The study highlights the absence of gender from project evaluation frameworks.

On 15 November 2012, Mark R. Dybul was [appointed](#) as the new Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. At the same time, the Global Fund also announced a “new funding model”. Amanda Glassmann, Centre for Global Development, [suggests](#) “these changes have won back the confidence of many of the Fund’s donors and stakeholders,” but she also points to four reforms essentially connected to the Global Fund’s future, none of which is about strengthening health systems more generally.

The US government [released](#) the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Pepfar) ‘Pepfar Blueprint: Creating an Aids-free Generation’. President Obama states that, “this is a global fight, and it’s one that America must continue to lead [...] Looking back at the history of HIV/AIDS, you’ll see that no other country has done more than this country,

and that's testament to our leadership as a country. But we can't be complacent." The Center for Global Development [examines](#) the limits of the PEPFAR commitment and states that, "There are still 7 million eligible people who don't receive treatment, 2.5 million new infections every year, and a \$7 billion funding gap." A recent report by the ONE Campaign, titled 'The Beginning of the End? Tracking Global Commitments on AIDS' [highlights](#) that we are off-track to meet the 2015 goals unless commitments by countries are scaled up tremendously. Oxfam's Mogha Kamal Yanni, Senior Health and HIV Policy Adviser [reviews](#) what is needed for an AIDS free generation

OECD [health data](#) ('Health at a Glance: Europe 2012') illustrates the first fall in health spending in decades for EU countries; which is associated with "cash-strapped governments curbed outlays to help cut budgetary deficits." The World We Want 2015 [website](#) contains a [section](#) on health for the discussion of the role of health in the post 2015 development agenda, co-convened by the WHO, UNICEF, the Government of Sweden and the Government of Botswana. On 29th October 2012, the WHO and the World Meteorological Organisation launched an [Atlas of health and climate](#).

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Making sense of the several parallel steps currently being taken to advance the case for turning the ILO Recommendation on the Social Protection Floor (see GSP Digest 12.3) into reality in countries has been confusing over the past few months. On the one hand, the work of the UN's UN Social Protection Floor Initiative continues to be reported on the Global Extension of Social Security [web](#) managed from the ILO Social Security Department in Geneva. At the same time, the ILO New York office acting as the Secretariat of the G20's Social Protection Inter Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) announced the agenda for the second meeting of the Board in Hyderabad on October 29th 2012. Its agenda excluded any reference to the SPF given the view of the World Bank that this Cooperation Board, of which it is joint chair, should address social protection systems more generally.

The SPIAC-B agenda noted that a) the UNDP was to introduce the new Social Protection [Gateway](#) (which however has not been updated since it was established by the G20), while b) the ILO would present the social protection capacity building training courses and [online platform](#) being developed by the International Training Centre (Turin). It is noteworthy that the UNICEF-driven UNSPF-I web based [gateway](#) has not been updated since June 2012.

Which web-site/knowledge platform will prevail; the UNDP initiated one flowing from the G20 (unlikely), the UNICEF driven one flowing from the UNCEB and the UNSPF-I (unlikely) or indeed the original ILO extension of social security one (maybe). All of this is due in part to job changes at the top: Michael Cichon (ex Head of ILO Social Security) has left the ILO and become President of the ICSW, Isabel Ortiz (keen supporter of the UNSPF-I) has left UNICEF, and Vinicius Pinheiro, former member of Somavia's Cabinet who drove the SPF through the G20 is now in ILO New York, not Geneva. Somavia has left the ILO. At the time of writing (December 2012) the new Head of Social Security had yet to be appointed.

Despite the World Bank's Social Protection Strategy [formally](#) paying lip service to the Social Protection Floor concept its South-South learning event, held in Hyderabad after the SPIAC-B Board promoted only its safety net policies. In attendance at this Bank funded [event](#) among about 150 representatives of 'target' countries were 43 (!) Bank staff, 3 from the ILO, 1 from UNICEF, and 1 from UNDP.

The ILO itself, however, does have an official strategy [publication](#) out concerning the SPF or Recommendation 202 as it is now known. It re-affirms ILO's two dimensional strategy. That is,

Its horizontal dimension aims at establishing and maintaining social protection floors as a fundamental element of national social security systems. The vertical dimension aims at pursuing strategies for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible, guided by ILO social security standards.

The Social Security Department prepared an [action plan](#) to support its implementation which was approved by the ILO Governing Body which includes the view that,

The Office will continue to actively collaborate with other relevant agencies and partners at global, regional and national levels to promote the implementation of the Recommendation, including through the Social Protection Floor Initiative adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (UNCEB SPF Initiative) (under joint leadership of the ILO and the WHO) and the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, which was created upon the request of the G20 (under joint leadership of the ILO and the World Bank).

Also in the new DG's (Guy Ryder) [preview](#) of ILO programme and budget for the next few years, support for the implementation of the social protection floors was selected as one of the seven priority areas where resources of the ILO will be concentrated. Within this context the ILO has collaborated with the EU on an inter-regional [conference](#) on social protection.

Suddenly un-trailed by any of the main players in the ILO or the UNSPF-I, on October 9th 2012 came the publication by Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and Magdalena Sepulveda, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty (Schutter and Sepulveda 2013) of the UN Human Rights Council's [Briefing Note: Underwriting the Poor: A Global Fund for Social Protection](#). The Paper suggested (ibid 3): "the creation of a Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP), to provide States the financial support needed to make social protection viable." The briefing paper argued that the first task of the GFSP would be used to fill the gap between the cost of the social protection floor and the maximum available resources of States. Filling the gap would cost less than 2 per cent of global GDP. The origins of this call date from June 22nd 2012, exactly when the ILO was agreeing to its Recommendation on the SPFs, when the High Level Panel on Food Security produced its [report](#) on Social Protection for Food Security (FAO 2012). Chaired by Steve Devereaux of the IDS in Sussex its first recommendation was (ibid: 6) that:

Every country should strive to design and put in place a comprehensive and nationally owned social protection system that contributes to ensuring the realisation of the right to adequate food for all [...]. One possible model for the social protection portfolio is the 'Food Security Floor' as proposed for consideration in this report, which would identify a minimum set of appropriate social protection and other interventions that would realise the right to food in each country.

Devereux, in his presentation to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at the annual session held in Rome in October 2012 strongly [supported](#) the idea of an international mechanism in support of the social protection floor (as proposed by the GFSP, which he welcomed), so did the representative of the ILO. This proposal for a Global Fund for Social Protection came too late for inclusion on the SPIAC-B October 29th 2012 Hyderabad agenda. However, Olivier De Schutter, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, did have a meeting at the ILO representation to the UN in New York and it has been provisionally agreed that the issue of the GFSP shall be discussed within the Inter Agency framework.

Meanwhile the ILO has continued with its more general work on other aspects of social security by [publishing](#) a) 'The Protection of the Right to Social Security in European Constitutions', b) Its biennial '[World Social Security Report](#)' which says that while social security measures have played a critical role in reducing the social impact of economic crises both now and in the past, basic social security coverage remains out of reach for most of the world, especially in low-income countries and furthermore that more than 70 per cent of workers worldwide have no statutory access to [unemployment insurance](#) or any type of unemployment assistance.

The provision of social protection for migrants is often overlooked even in Recommendation 202 where it is left to countries to determine who is a resident. Caritas [urges](#) governments to fight the exploitation of migrants by offering decent work, social protection and greater opportunities for human development. The ILO [suggests](#) that micro-insurance can step in to help in a situation where international migrants send home over US\$ 400 billion a year, yet they and their families often lack basic social protection.

EDUCATION

On September 27th, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the '[Education First](#)' initiative to put every child in school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship. This initiative is launched at a moment in which seems clear that we are not going to achieve the EFA goals by 2015 and has the intention to “re-energize the global community to deliver on the promise of universal education and create opportunities for ordinary citizens to make a difference” ([Education First Report](#)). Ban Ki-moon announced that he had secured \$1.5 billion in commitments to develop the initiative.

The 2012 UNESCO EFA '[Global Monitoring Report](#)' has been officially launched in October. The 2012 edition is dedicated to 'Youth and Skills'. The main message in the report is that “Many young people around the world — especially the disadvantaged — are leaving school without the skills they need to thrive in society and find decent jobs”. Accordingly, the report examines how skills development programmes can be improved to boost young people's opportunities for decent jobs and better lives.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report Team at UNESCO has produced a new interactive website called the World Inequality Database on Education ([WIDE](#)). The website provides data for over 50 countries, allowing visitors to zoom in on selected countries and indicators, and so to compare disparities such as gender, wealth and location across and within countries. In relation to this new resource, [Pauline Rose](#), director of the EFA GMR report, stated that:

Our hope is that WIDE will make a visual impact highlighting the extent of disadvantage that policymakers can no longer ignore. From governments to activists, you can use WIDE to identify the problems countries are facing in promoting equitable access to education, and act on that information to promote Education for All.

Governments, international organizations and civil society met on September 24th, 2012 at the United Nations General Assembly demanding attention to [children's education](#) in

crisis and [conflict countries](#). They urged immediate action for the 28 million children – nearly half of all children not in primary school – who live in countries scarred by war and conflict, as well as millions more struck by humanitarian emergencies such as flooding, food shortages, earthquakes and other disasters. Following the meeting, they produced a call for action, under the title, '[Education Cannot Wait](#)'.

The '[Education at a Glance 2012](#)' report has been released by OECD. Education at a Glance aims to help educators and policy makers see how their education systems perform compared to other countries and reviews their efforts to reform and improve their policies. Among other themes, the report addresses: public and private spending on education; its social and economic benefits for people and countries; adult participation in education; class sizes, teacher salaries and decision-making powers of schools; and analysis of national exam systems and the criteria for attending tertiary education. The report analyses the education systems of the 34 OECD member countries, as well as those of Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. One of the [highlights](#) of the 2012 edition is that it reveals stark differences between countries in the opportunities they offer young people to enter higher education, notably for children of poor families or whose parents have had a limited education.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Education International (EI) have launched a new campaign, '[Every Child Needs a Teacher](#)', to make governments and the international community aware that to give all children a chance to realise their right to education we need to make sure that all of them have access to a trained teacher. These civil society organizations have launched this campaign because are strongly concerned with severe primary teacher gaps in 114 countries, stymieing efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goal of education for all by 2015. The 'Every Child Needs a Teacher' report, produced by GCE and EI in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#). More information about teachers' shortages from the Global Campaign for Education can be found [here](#).

The latest edition of the [Global Education Digest](#) reveals the urgent need to address the high numbers of children repeating grades and leaving school before completing primary or lower secondary education. New data from the UNESCO [Institute for Statistics](#) (UIS) show that about 32.2 million primary pupils were held back a grade in 2010, and 31.2 million dropped out of school and may never return.

Last November, Government ministers, United Nations organizations, civil society partners and donor groups evaluated progress towards the provision of quality Education for All (EFA), at the first ‘Global EFA Meeting’ celebrated at UNESCO’s Paris Headquarters. The participants were tasked with exploring new strategies to address EFA challenges and to seek commitments towards and beyond 2015, the target date set for achieving the six Education For All goals established by over 160 nations in 2000. The concept note of the meeting is available from [here](#).

In November also, UNESCO organized a three-day high-level expert [meeting](#) on ‘Beyond 2015 - Rethinking Learning in a Changing World’ in Bangkok, Thailand. This meeting, organized with support from the Japanese Ministry of Education, discussed about a new vision of education and the development of a post-2015 education agenda. The presentations are accessible from [here](#).

FOOD

On 16 October 2012 was [World Food Day](#). It was themed ‘Agricultural cooperatives’, and ILO Director-General Guy Ryder [stressed](#) the value “of the cooperative model – and of agricultural cooperatives in particular – in ensuring that all can enjoy the right to food and as vehicles for decent lives, decent work and sustainable development.”

A [publication](#) ‘Cobwebbed. International Food Price Crisis and National Food Prices’ by Action Aid (13 October 2012) addresses issues concerning the impact of global food prices on national food prices, and recommends “that governments support a shift towards sustainable agriculture, invest in storage facilities and grain reserves, and eliminate tax on food items in an effort to improve food security.”

The FAO [published](#) ‘The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012’ in October which showed that hunger is falling (see also FAO [Food Price Index](#)), but that “the number of people suffering from chronic undernourishment is still unacceptably high, and eradication of hunger remains a major global challenge.” Also, Action Aid [thinks](#) that “the fact still remains that in recent years progress in fighting hunger has slowed alarmingly”. Indeed Richard King for Oxfam commenting critically upon the methodology of the report [says](#)

the picture in the Near East and Africa both north and south of the Sahara is seriously concerning; in sub-Saharan Africa the prevalence was slowly improving, but has slowed, and the absolute number of hungry people in all of Africa and the Near East continues to march relentlessly upwards.

[Russia](#) is taking over G20 and G8 presidency in 2013 and 2014 and “is committed to keeping food and nutrition security high on the international agenda.”

HABITAT, LAND, HOUSING

If this commitment to food security is to be kept access to agricultural land has to be ensured. Oxfam has called on the World Bank to declare a freeze on big land deals in its briefing [entitled](#), ‘Our Land, Our Lives: Time out on the global land rush’. The briefing states that, “More than 60 per cent of investments in agricultural land by foreign investors between 2000 and 2010 were in developing countries with serious hunger problems. However, two-thirds of those investors plan to export everything they produce on that land.” Duncan Green [summarizes](#) the issue and points to the World Bank to lead on addressing this issue. The World Bank has issued a [statement](#) arguing that they “disagree with Oxfam’s call for a moratorium on World Bank Group (“Bank Group”) investments in land intensive large-scale agricultural enterprises, especially during a time of rapidly rising global food prices.” The World Bank stresses that, “The Bank Group does not support speculative land investments or acquisitions which take advantage of weak institutions in developing countries or which disregard principles of responsible agricultural investment.” The Vice President of Sustainable Development at the World Bank, Rachel Kyte, [states](#) that after attending the Oxfam session at the annual Bank meeting, “It was reassuring to hear from Oxfam directly that the Bank is not the primary target of their efforts. That's good because the vast majority of our agricultural investments [help poor farmers](#) grow food and involve no land purchase.” However, all recognize that speculative land investments are hurting the most vulnerable.

A focus on cities has certainly dominated much of the work of UN Habitat in recent months. International celebrations for [World Habitat Day](#) were held in Embu, Kenya on 1 October. UN Habitat chose the theme ‘Changing Cities, Building Opportunities’ and focus on cities as “engines of growth.” It also released the ‘State of the World's Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities’ [report](#). In this report, UN Habitat suggests examining other factors beside economic ones in relation to the state of the world’s cities and recommends a focus on quality of life, adequate infrastructures, equity and environmental sustainability. They also propose new tools for policy that is the ‘City Prosperity Index’ and a conceptual matrix, the ‘Wheel of Prosperity’. UN-Habitat also [announced](#) its City Resilience Profiling Programme and is “seeking city partners to pilot a new integrated urban planning and management model to help cities build resilience against disaster such as the recent superstorm Sandy which crashed through coastlines from the Caribbean and north America's Atlantic seaboard, or

tsunamis and earthquakes.” [Related](#) is the ‘Making Cities Resilient Report 2012. A global snapshot of how local governments reduce disaster risk’. UN-Habitat along with Plan International and Women in Cities International at the World Urban Forum this launched a [new programme](#) at making cities safer for girls. Looking at the link between urbanisations and economic prosperity, and drawing on World Bank’s latest World Development Report, [The Economist](#) features a chart comparing urbanisation and income in East Asia and Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. Though moving to cities for work brings about economic growth in the Asian countries in African countries size of the urban population is not equated with growth.

Turning to the issue of water, The UN Global Compact Office [announced](#) that 63 projects have been posted on the CEO Water Mandate’s ‘[Water Action Hub](#)’ since it was launched in August 2012. Also related to water was the [publication](#) ‘The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue’. UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) released its bimonthly publications [review](#). The first annual World Water Development Report (WWDR) will be published in 2014 and will address the theme ‘[Water and Energy](#)’.

Climate change was a central topic because of the focus on the [UN Climate Change Conference](#) held in Doha, Qatar from 26 November to 8 December. The UN Secretary General has [said](#) that the conference “had provided what is needed to keep the international community on track for a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on the issue by 2015.” However, Lord Nicholas Stern, former World Bank chief economist, has aptly summarized the issue for the Guardian. He points out that that poorer countries like India and China must step up their responsibilities because of the “brutal arithmetic” of climate change. He [says](#), “I am not pointing the finger at the developing world, just looking at what is necessary. I am not accusing or proposing, just calculating what is needed (to meet scientific estimates of the emissions cuts needed to avoid dangerous levels of climate change).” Prior to the conference the World Bank released a [report](#), ‘Turn down the heat: Why a 4°C warmer world must be avoided’. The [report](#) points out that all is not lost as 4°C world is not inevitable and that, “with sustained policy action warming can still be held below 2°C, which is the goal adopted by the international community and one that already brings some serious damages and risks to the environment and human populations.” For an [analysis](#) of the Banks own record see the Bretton Woods Project Assessment. All in all few have seen the Doha Conference as helping to lead the way on climate change.