SOCIAL WATCH REPORT 2008

A CITIZENS' GLOBAL PROGRESS REPORT
ON POVERTY ERADICATION AND GENDER EQUITY

SOCIAL WATCH
REPORT 2008

Rights is the answer

THE WORLD FACES A GLOBAL EMERGENCY CREATED BY THE CONFLUENCE OF AN UNPRECEDENTED FINANCIAL CRISIS, RISING FOOD PRICES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND GROWING INEQUITIES.

CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD SHOW IN THIS REPORT HOW HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BEING VIOLATED AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE SAME GLOBAL ECONOMIC ORDER THAT CREATED THIS CHAOS.

AFTER THE FAILURE OF MAINSTREAM STRATEGIES, THE ABANDONED PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT ARE AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF ANY SOLUTION.

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UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Dignity and justice for all of us

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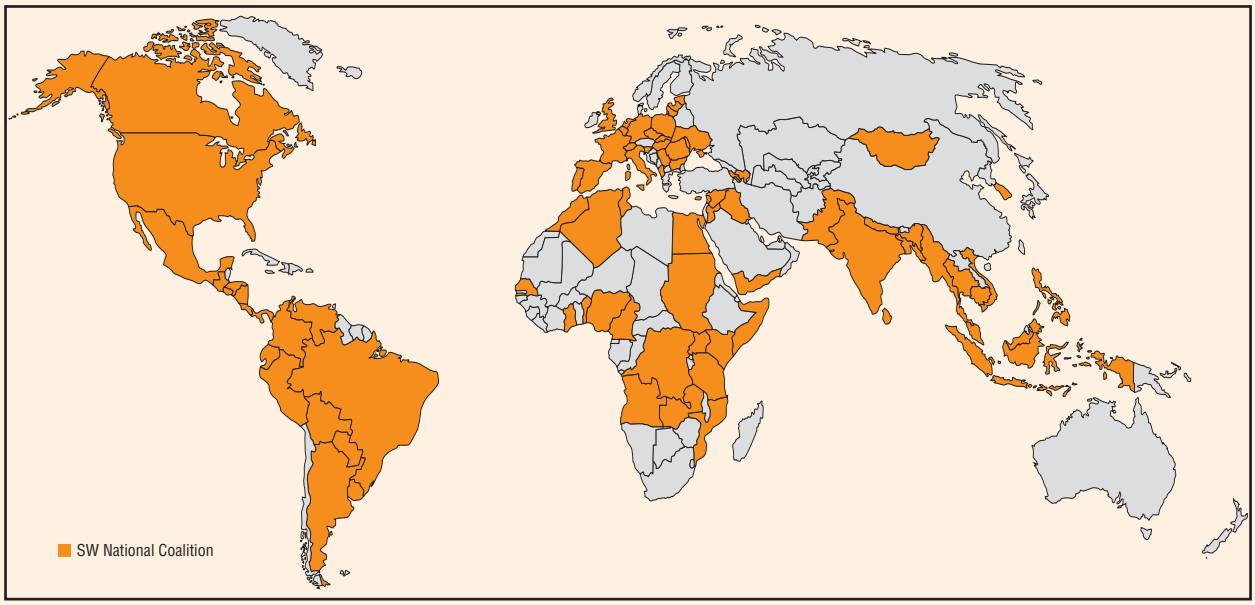

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Social Watch: promoting accountability

Social Watch, a network that today has members in over 60 countries around the world, was created in 1995 as a "meeting place for non-governmental organizations concerned with social development and gender discrimination" responding to the need to promote the political will required for making the United Nations promises come true. Since then, this network, which is continually growing both qualitatively and quantitatively, has published 13 yearly reports on progress and setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality, which have been used as tools for advocacy on a local, regional, and international level.

From its number 0, published in 1996, to this present issue, the 13th, the *Social Watch Report* has brought into light more than 550 reports from civil society organizations, all of them sharing the aim of reminding governments of their commitments and tracking their implementation, both country by country and at the international level.

The present issue, featuring contributions from 59 national organizations -a record figure so far- sustains the flame that brought the network into existence in 1995: the need to generate tools and strategies to rectify the lack of accountability mechanisms and ensure compliance with international commitments related to social policies and development goals.

In the decade Social Watch was created, a series of high-level United Nations conferences, starting with the 'Children's Summit' in 1990 and ending with the Millennium Summit in 2000, redefined the global social agenda. In 1995, the Social Summit (Copenhagen) and the Women's Conference (Beijing) defined, for the first time, the eradication of poverty and gender equality as common universal objectives, setting concrete targets and timelines to achieve the goal vaguely formulated in 1946 in the UN Charter as "dignity for all". To promote the political will needed for those promises to become a reality, the Social Watch network was created as a "meeting place for non-governmental organizations concerned with social development and gender discrimination" (*Social Watch No. 0*, 1996), by a group of civil society organizations.

Thus, the *Social Watch Report* was formulated as a powerful tool for the presentation of internationally available statistical information and for reporting on qualitative aspects of the issues addressed through analyses by social organizations working at a national level. A yearly publication, the Report is devoted to progress and setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality, two largely overlapping objectives, since the absolute majority of the persons living in poverty are women.

The Social Watch yearly reports, while adding an international dimension to local efforts and campaigns, became the first sustained monitoring initiative on social development and gender equity at a national level, and the first to combine both in one international overview.

The report No. 0, published in 1996, featured contributions from 13 organizations; since then, the network has been steadily rising. Currently, Social Watch has members ('watchers') in over 60 countries around the world, and membership grows each year.

A flexible network

As the "meeting place" has grown, several aspects of it have evolved, but the founding ideas and objectives remain. In preparing for their participation in the Copenhagen Social Summit, civil society organizations adopted flexible and ad hoc ways of organizing as a network. No formal governing structure or steering committee was created and no stable coordinating group was established. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) preferred to inform each other and coordinate activities in horizontal open spaces, an approach that some analysts regard as a forerunner of the organizational format later adopted by the World Social Forum. Many of the NGOs that took part in the Social Summit later formed the backbone of Social Watch. As a result, the structure and functioning of the network preserves much of original flexibility and openness.

In addition to national coalitions, the network is structured around three bodies: the General Assembly, the Coordinating Committee and the International Secretariat. In recent years, some regional and sub-regional coordination structures were established as a space for articulation – not as a necessary intermediate body to link the national with the global.

The Social Watch network is not an incorporated entity and it did not start by drafting its governing bylaws. Instead, a short Memorandum of Understanding between national groups and the network became the basic framework establishing mutual expectations, respecting both the autonomy of national coalitions and democratic horizontal decision-making. A key principle that distinguishes Social Watch from other international civil society networks is that no central body provides funds for its members. These operational principles help avoid the tensions associated with donor/recipient relationships within the network – since there aren't any – and also the loss of energy that could result from lengthy discussions about money, budgeting and reporting, as well as procedural matters. It has also resulted in members' strong sense of tenure over the network.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NATIONAL GROUPS AND THE SOCIAL WATCH NETWORK

1. Coalitions must be based in the country and be active in social development issues in that country (not exclusively as academics or consultants).
2. Their basic commitment to the international network is to provide a national report, with their own conclusions and determination of priorities, to be included in the annual publication.
3. They are expected to use their national report and the global report in lobbying activities at a national level.
4. They must be open to the incorporation of other organizations, work actively to broaden awareness of Social Watch and encourage the participation of other organizations.
5. They are responsible for raising funds for their activities. National coalitions are not dependent for funds on, or financially accountable to, the Secretariat or any other international Social Watch entity.
6. Each coalition determines its own organizational structure.
7. Social Watch membership and the exercise of governmental functions are absolutely incompatible.
8. Cooperation with other national platforms should be encouraged at sub-regional, regional and global levels.

NOTA: The Memorandum of Understanding was adopted during the 1st General Assembly, Rome, 2000. Available from: <www.socialwatch.org/en/acercaDe/asambleaRoma.htm>.

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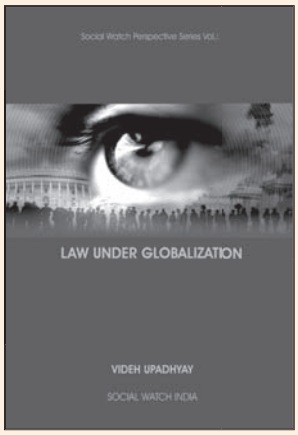

National coalitions organize the way they want – or can – according to the conditions in each country. The membership of Social Watch coalitions is very diverse, including research institutes or centres, NGOs, grassroots organizations, trade unions, women's groups, rural organizations and others. Since the international Social Watch report can only devote a couple of pages to each country and is only available in English and Spanish, the local coalitions publish more extensive national reports in national languages in Benin, Brazil, Germany, India, Italy, the Philippines, and the Arab region.

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the Social Watch network's highest directive body. Policy discussion and medium- to long-term strategic planning happens in its realm, which serves as a decision-making forum. However, it is also a space for reinforcing the sense of belonging and strengthening the network's identity and unity. It takes place every three years and up to now has been held three times: in Rome 2000, Beirut 2003 and Sofia 2006.[1] In addition to setting medium- and long-term priorities and identifying potential alliances in advocacy strategy, the Assembly elects members of the Coordinating Committee to whom coordination and political leadership between assemblies are delegated.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee (CC) is the key political body for the 'daily' work of the network, with an organizational structure which requires fluid communications, facilitated principally through an email list, plus biannual face-to-face meetings and regular telephone conferences to discuss specific issues.

As the CC's task is to "ensure the political visibility and participation of the network in relevant spaces and processes,"[2] its composition endeavours to represent a geographical and gender balance, as well as considering the contribution, in terms of experience and capabilities, that members can provide to the whole network. In general, the CC's decisions are adopted by consensus, and every single decision (and discussion) is communicated to the watchers in a timely manner. The constant participation of two Secretariat members as ad hoc members of the CC ensures coordination between the two bodies, the function of the Secretariat being to support and implement the strategic decisions made.

International Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main executive body of Social Watch. The first external evaluation of the network (1995-2000) noted that, "Of the various roles in the Social Watch network, that of the secretariat has changed the most" (Hessini and Nayar, 2000). Originally the Secretariat's function was limited to responsibility for the production of the Report, but due to the network's growth it has subsequently incorporated a series of new functions, including research, capacity building, promotion of the network and its representation in international forums.

The local, the global and the Report

Every year Social Watch chooses to analyze a different subject in depth through its Report, usually focusing on topics under discussion on the international agenda that can be addressed from a local perspective. Experts from diverse origins and disciplines contribute alternative views on the issues through thematic articles. This international perspective is complemented with national and regional reports through which member organizations contribute a local perspective, reporting on the state of affairs in their countries in relation to each year's specific theme.

In addition, Social Watch has produced indexes and tables with comparable international information, presenting a macro-perspective of the situation related to certain dimensions of development while also providing national level readings. Social Watch has developed alternative indicators to measure progress or setbacks in gender equity and the meeting of basic human capacities, which are now used as reference points for both civil society and international institutions.

Although members use the document for advocacy work in diverse situations, Report launches are key opportunities for dissemination of its contents, taking place both in relevant spaces of international and national debate and decision-making. Launches are high-profile spaces for the local coalitions to address the media on national issues and to discuss their findings and alternative proposals with policymakers.

Occasional Papers are published, mainly to help build the capacity of member coalitions,[3] regional training workshops have been organized, and position papers have been produced. On several occasions, Social Watch spokespersons have addressed the UN General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies on behalf of the network or wider civil society constituencies. ■

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1 Final reports, working papers and other materials from these three Assemblies available at: <www.socialwatch.org>

2 The document describing the nature and mandate of the Coordinating Committee was agreed at the 2nd General Assembly, Beirut 2003. Available from: <www.socialwatch.org/en/acercaDe/beirut/documentos/SW_PrinciplesCC.doc>

3 The first Occasional Paper by Mirjam Van Reisen, *The Lion's Teeth*, examines the political context in which Social Watch was created. The second, by Ana María Arteaga, *Control Ciudadano desde la base*, analyzes the democratization of international human rights instruments experience in Chile in 1997. The third, a compilation by Patricia Garcé and Roberto Bissio, introduces the experience of monitoring Copenhagen goals through the concrete example of Social Watch. Papers 4 and 5, coordinated by the Social Watch Social Sciences Research Team, address poverty and inequality in Latin America and the links between poverty and human rights. Occasional Papers available at: <www.socialwatch.org/en/informeImpreso/cuadernosOcasionales.htm>.

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Rights in the time of crisis

This Social Watch report goes to print in the middle of October 2008 in a moment of unprecedented global crisis and uncertainties.

Sixty years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights solemnly proclaimed that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1) and that "everyone (...) is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity" (Article 22).

The realization of this right to 'dignity for all' has remained, however, an unmet aspiration. In 1995, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the leaders of the world met in Copenhagen and committed themselves publicly "to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind." Five years after, the Millennium Summit in New York made a time bound target out of this commitment: "We resolve to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water."

Together with other time-bound targets, those commitments were summarized by the UN in an 8-point list known as the Millennium Development Goals that has since gained universal political acceptance.

The MDGs were criticized when initially launched as being too modest. In fact, as one of the key participants in the technical formulation of the list later acknowledged, the different targets to be achieved by 2015 were devised basically projecting into the future the progress rates of the social indicators registered in the 1990s and 1980s. No additional effort or acceleration was actually requested; just keeping the momentum would be enough to achieve them.

Yet, the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) computed and published by Social Watch in 2008 as well as several other official and independent sources now largely acknowledge that meeting those goals will be impossible with a "business as usual attitude".

The World Bank remained the only optimistic scorekeeper. In spite of all evidence cumulating, in August 2008 its official position was that the MDGs, and in particular the Goal number one on poverty reduction could be met, on global average, by 2015. That position was announced in a paper titled *The developing world is poorer than we thought but no less successful in the fight against poverty*. But the authors of that paper (Martin Ravallion, director of the World Bank's Development Research Group and senior World Bank statistician Shaohua Chen) had published already in May 2008 a study called *China is poorer than we thought but no less successful in the fight against poverty*.

It does not require much examination to conclude that the world average is being highly influenced by China's performance and it is obvious that fast economic growth in China is reducing income poverty in that country. But what the global averaging done by the Bank hides is that poverty and inequalities are increasing everywhere else. And the 2005 data on which the Bank bases its optimistic view do not take into account the "food crisis" (a combination of food scarcity and sky rocketing prices) that has recently started and is submerging millions of people below the poverty line every week.

In fact during the last decade of the 20th century and the first years of this century, the rate of progress on all social indicators has slowed down and the targets that seemed easily achievable if only the previous trends had been kept are now harder and harder to reach.

What happened in the early 1990s that slowed down or reverted social progress all around the word? The answer is simple: deregulation of finances, privatization of social service delivery previously in the hands of governments, liberalization of international trade, opening up of the national economies to capital flows and investments. In one word: globalization.

Globalization – or at least some of its key economic components, like the deregulation of the banking sector and the lifting of all barriers to capital flows – is now being identified as the cause of the crisis that started in the financial sector of the US and is currently engulfing real economies around the world.

A failed architecture

Alan Greenspan, who was chairman of the Federal Reserve (US central bank) for 18 years until 2006, told the House Oversight Committee last October that his antiregulatory approach was "a mistake" and may have contributed to the crisis. "Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholders' equity, myself especially, are in a state of shocked disbelief," Mr. Greenspan told committee members.

The specialists are still discussing if those words mean that he was taking at least part of the blame. The "nobody could possibly have foreseen the crisis" attitude, implicit

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in the "shocked disbelief" of the neoliberal gurus was satirized by a cartoonist as "who could have predicted that mixing gasoline and matches would lead to a fire?" In fact, the Social Watch report 2006 on the global financial architecture stated in its introduction that "capital flight, tax evasion, fraudulent intra-firm trading and the very governance of the international financial institutions (...) form part of a package, an architecture that badly needs to be redesigned". Social Watch called the financial architecture *impossible* "both in the sense of impractical and in the sense of intolerable".

The collapse of that architecture – or the timing of that collapse – may have been a surprise, but the negative impact of globalized finances on the wellbeing of the people was already obvious two years ago for the national coalitions that authored Social Watch reports in 50 countries.

In the first days of December 2008 the world will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Doha, Qatar, the world leaders will gather for a Summit on Financing for Development. That coincidence gives us an opportunity to explore the relation between human rights, development, and the globalized economy.

Have the deregulation of the banking industry, the dismantling of the welfare state, the privatization of public services and the opening of the borders to an unrestricted flow of goods, services and capital had a positive effect on human rights and democracy, as prophesized two decades ago at the times of the fall of the Berlin Wall? Or was that rise to power of "market fundamentalism" (a term used in the last weeks by financier George Soros, Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman and even by John Williamson, the economist that coined the term "Washington consensus") an obstacle for the consolidation of democracy, the strengthening of human rights and the realization of dignity for all?

Each national Social Watch coalition, looking at its own country, has found a variety of ways in which the macroeconomic frameworks affect human rights. Those findings are the heart of this report and they provide the bottom-up perspective of the people working with and from the grassroots.

This is not a commissioned report. Each national Social Watch chapter is made up by organizations and movements that are active year-round on social development issues. Their findings are not intended as pure research. They are used to draw the attention of the authorities to issues of concern and they thus help shape better pro-poor and pro-women policies.

Asked to explore the links between human rights and the economy, they decided on their own priorities and emphasis. To make the report possible, each group raises its own funds and defines its own ways to consult with the grassroots to gather evidence and validate their findings. They do not shy away from criticizing national authorities, policies, elites or governance systems whenever they feel it is necessary. And the voicing of critical views helps strengthen democratic processes. But even when the reports find that much can (and needs to) improve at home, they also point to international constraints that cannot be solved at the country level.

In October 2008, when the crisis hit the financial institutions and stock markets of the OECD member countries, their governments started a massive and unprecedented programme of government intervention, nationalizing banks, injecting massive subsidies into ailing institutions and re-regulating their financial sectors.

This response sits in direct contrast to the austere neoliberal policies pressed on developing countries by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and developed countries for the past 30 years. Governments in the South, as abundantly documented in this report, have been pushed to liberalize trade barriers, deregulate financial and labour markets, privatize national industries, abolish subsidies, and reduce social and economic spending. The State saw its role severely reduced.

This double standard is unacceptable. The international financial system, its architecture and its institutions have been completely overwhelmed by the scale of the current financial and economic crisis. The financial system, its architecture and its institutions must be completely rethought.

In recent weeks, leaders worldwide have recognized the deficiencies of the existing system and the need to meet to address a broader set of proposals to reform the global financial system and its institutions. It is of course imperative to agree on measures to address the crisis, and priority must be given to responses to the impacts on ordinary employees and workers, low-income households, pensioners and other extremely vulnerable sectors. But no lasting and viable solutions can come from meetings where only a few countries are represented, are carried out in a rushed and non-inclusive manner, and as a result, do not address the comprehensive range of changes needed, or fairly allocate the burden of responsibility.

Though the crisis originated in northern countries, as it grows and deepens the impacts are starting to be felt in developing countries. The crisis has jeopardised everything

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HOW IS CHINA REALLY DOING?

The BCI 2008 includes 23 countries for which we know the current BCI values but lack the data to compute backwards a value for 2000 and thus establish a trend. China is one of these countries, and the total population of the countries without enough data is 1.6 billion people. Meanwhile, according to the new World Bank tables, China is the country that brings poverty figures down in the world, with 650 million less people in extreme poverty in 2005 than in 1980. Since those tables also say that the total number of extremely poor people in the world decreased by 600 million, in reality, according to the World Bank, the absolute number of the extremely poor (but not its proportion to the growing total population) actually increased in the rest of the world.

In fact, only one point in that evolution is known for China: the income poverty figures for 2005 and the previous values are estimates.

In fact, one of the conceptual weaknesses of the income poverty estimates is that, throughout the transition to a market economy, income may grow without peoples' life changing. Think of the commune system where millions of peasants were self-sufficient. They now receive a salary and have an income, but they also have to pay for the food they used to get free.

Should Social Watch similarly attempt to provide a guess for the recent evolution of the Chinese BCI? We think not. On the one hand the reliability of our index is based on its data being verifiable against those published by trusted international sources. On the other, the index should be used to deduct a trend and not the other way around. It could be assumed that the recent economic growth in China has been followed by a similar improvement in education and health statistics. But in an historical perspective there is also evidence for the opposite: Chinese economic growth seems to have started AFTER a basic improvement in health and education for all had been achieved.

We will have to wait for reliable statistics to be compiled to be able to determine a recent trend for China.

the United Nations has done to help the world's poor, warned UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon at a meeting of the UN's top officials: "It threatens to undermine all our achievements and all our progress," he said. "Our progress in eradicating poverty and disease. Our efforts to fight climate change and promote development. To ensure that people have enough to eat (…) It could be the final blow that many of the poorest of the world's poor simply cannot survive."

The developing countries have been affected by the falling prices of their export commodities, the devaluation of their currencies against the dollar, the rising interest rates on their debts, outflow of foreign investments and lack of credit. If the world is plunging into a global recession the result will be unemployment and with it an erosion of the rights and the standard of living of workers everywhere. It also should be remembered that during the financial crises a decade ago in South East Asia and the Southern Cone of South America, women had to carry an even heavier burden, forced to accept lower quality jobs, obliged to compensate for the deteriorating public social services and suffering from a rise in domestic violence. Poverty doubled in a few weeks and it took years for it to recede to pre-crisis levels.

It is therefore critical that all countries have a say in the process to change the international financial architecture. No equitable and sustainable solutions to transform the current system will come out of gatherings that are rapidly-prepared and exclude many developing countries as well as civil society. Such efforts are in fact more likely to further undermine public trust and confidence, and to further disenfranchise countries that are already opting for regional solutions over a stronger, more coherent and fairer international financial system.

Only an inclusive international conference convened by the UN to review the international financial and monetary architecture, its institutions and its governance, can be comprehensive in scope, and capable of tackling the full array of issues and institutions and transparent in its procedures. Many difficult issues will have to be addressed and agreed upon in the transition from the current system – which has fostered instability and inequity – towards a just, sustainable and accountable one, which yields benefits for the majority of the world's people. In such a system human rights must be the starting point and not some distant goal in the future, and a rights-based approach to development (with gender equality, decent work and human rights at its core) must be the main guiding principle. ■

Roberto Bissio
Social Watch International Secretariat

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THE MDGs, EASIER SAID THAN MEASURED

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 and setting out a series of targets that were later organized in a list of eight Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has highlighted, as many others did before him that "the MDGs set time-bound targets, by which progress in reducing income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability – can be measured."

The measurability of the MDGs is key to their success. Same as the Olympic Games (or any other tournament, for the matter) base their appeal in the simple notion that all players abide by the same rule and a set of impartial referees and scorekeepers guard the integrity of "fair play", the MDGs derive their capacity to motivate decision-makers and mobilize public support in their being time-bound and measurable.

In order to monitor progress towards the MDGs at a global level and country by country, the goals were subdivided in 48 indicators, ranging from the proportion of the population below USD 1 a day (adjusted by the purchasing power parity of their income) to the percentage of internet users. Since January 15, 2008 the list of indicators has been officially expanded to more than 60, so as to be able to include data on issues like employment that were not counted before.

In real life, though, for most of the developing countries there are no accurate or updated data for many, if not most, of those 60 indicators, and the set is too complicated for non-experts. Thus, the World Bank defined poverty line of USD 1 a day became the de facto yardstick with which progress was being measured. In 2000 the figure of 1.2 billion people living in poverty was massively circulated and quoted indirectly by the heads of state themselves in the Millennium Declaration: "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected."

By October 2007 the number of people living in extreme poverty had been reduced substantially: "Nearly one billion people live on just USD 1 a day" said World Bank President Robert B. Zoelick in his address to the Board of Governors of his institution. "Globalization must not leave this 'bottom billion' behind", he added. By June 2008, the draft Accra Action Agenda on aid, authored mainly by donor governments and the secretariats of the World Bank and the OECD stated that "progress has been made. Fifteen years ago, one of every three people lived on less than one dollar a day; today, that figure has been reduced to one in five. Yet one billion people still live in extreme poverty".

All of a sudden, in August 26, 2008 the World Bank announced that poverty estimates had been revised and the number of extremely poor people was actually 1.4 billion in 2005. An overnight increase of almost 50%! How does that leave the affirmation that "progress has been made" (and therefore some adjustments might be needed, but not a major change in course)? Do not worry, says the World Bank. According to Martin Ravallion, director of the Bank's Development Research Group, "the developing world is poorer than we thought but no less successful in the fight against poverty". In order to substantiate such an optimistic view, the team led by Ravallion and Shaohua Chen revised the poverty figures all the way back to 1981 in order to claim that previous estimates were mistaken and that the proportion of poor people has been cut to half in the last 25 years and can therefore still be reduced enough to meet the MDG number 1 by 2015.

It took the researchers of the Bank eight months since the publication of the new Purchasing Power Parity tables in December 2007 to compute the new total of the poor of the world and they did not reveal the new number until the whole series back to 1981 was recalculated. Why? Because the World Bank is not just a scorekeeper, responsible for producing the measures of how the fight against poverty is going but also the major player, an institution with a budget several times higher than that of the whole United Nations based on its claim to work "for a World Free of Poverty". And in that regard, the **trend** is what ultimately matters. We can admit having produced dramatically wrong estimates in the past, so inaccurate in fact that the new tables decree that ten thousand academic papers on poverty produced in the last decade are wrong because they were based on false data. But we cannot admit an error in the trend, because the logical conclusion would then be that the course needs to be changed.

If a Central Bank realized that inflation forecasts had to be increased by 50%, say from 4 to 6%, drastic measures would be taken immediately. If the unemployment rates had been underestimated by 50%, a political scandal would ensue. But poverty estimates can be increased by 50% without any of the multiple multilateral organizations dealing with the problem calling for emergency measures, not even a reassessment of their policies.

Social Watch has argued repeatedly that the USD 1 a day indicator is the wrong indicator. But even if the concept behind that indicator had been right, we know now that the estimates were wrong. And even if the new estimates and their recalculated history are right, the trend of the last years is not a forecast of the future, among other things because, as the Bank itself recognizes, "the new estimates do not yet reflect the potentially large adverse effects on poor people of rising food and fuel prices since 2005".

Using three simple indicators available for most countries in the world and averaging them in a way that any secondary school student can repeat, the national and international trends in the fight against poverty can easily and convincingly be assessed. The resulting picture is not rosy. Policy makers need to understand that the credibility of their commitments relies, like in the Olympic Games, in honest scorekeeping, independent referees and rules that do not change in the middle of the game. An adverse half time result might be bad news for the coach, but it allows to change strategies for the second half.

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Human rights and the economic system

Roberto Bissio
Social Watch International Secretariat

ARAB REGION

"Poor and politically weak Arab governments are presented with the choice of either honouring human rights accords or complying with the commands of international economic institutions. They often prefer to violate human rights and face complaints or, at worst, international investigation rather than being cut off of millions of dollars in aid in case they reject trade and economic agreements."

BOLIVIA

"By now the country has vast experience in policies meant to harmonize aid for development. As an official of the Sub-Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing put it, Bolivia is the 'laboratory mouse of international institutions that try out new modalities for combating poverty'. So far, none of the modalities have achieved their goal. Poverty remains pervasive."

What is the relation between human rights and the economic and financial architecture? When that question was formulated to the national Social Watch coalitions, the answers they provided were extremely rich and diverse. Approaching them with an open mind, the reader of this report will be challenged to think out of the box and perhaps be inspired to draw creative links between distant extremes.

Thus, for example, there is growing consensus that the catastrophe in the financial markets of the US and Europe that is pushing the entire world into recession, unemployment and social disintegration had its origins in the deregulation of the banks in the early nineties and the lack of governmental supervision over greedy actors armed with risky investment "vehicles".

"The collapse of public institutions has battered the economy. The private sector initiatives and market mechanism struggle to survive without good governance. Bias and self-centred extremist ideology have prevented social political and economic progress", says one of the analysis in this report. It might apply well to global finances, but the authors are talking about Somalia, one of the world poorest countries, where the local Social Watch coalition has seen the national state collapse in the early 1990s and as a result there is now generalized crime, piracy, war among factions that do not hesitate to recruit child soldiers, rape young girls and assassinate journalists and civil society activists so as to leave no witness of the ordeal.

The Swiss social-watchers, reporting from one of the richest countries in the world, find it outrageous that "the country provides meagre development aid, does not take part in efforts to develop innovative global funding mechanisms and, while remaining a magnet for funds derived from tax evasion, it does not cooperate to formulate an international tax policy," and is therefore not honouring its commitments to promote development and human rights. Meanwhile, in El Salvador, socialwatchers estimate that large corporations evaded taxes for a total of USD 2.6 billion in 2006, a sum roughly equal to the 2007 national budget. Tax evasion since 1990 is estimated at USD 25 billion. That sum would have wiped out the total external debt, the repayment of which drains one out of every four dollars of government revenue.

Since globalization strengthens daily these links between very distant realities, the German Social Watch coalition is demanding that its Government recognize "Germany has human rights obligations to people in other countries where the State, its citizens, or companies engage in activities". This should explicitly include trade and investment policies, as well as decisions taken in multilateral development banks. The Netherlands has moved in that direction, announcing that human rights will be the "point of departure" of Dutch foreign policy, advocating freedom of expression, abolition of the death penalty, a ban on torture and the promotion of women's rights. The Government states that "where necessary it will be critical of its allies, and will be equally prepared to examine its own record". Yet the local watchers observe that the Government is still reluctant to admit the authority of the international human rights treaty bodies, and its trade policy frequently contradicts development objectives and human rights promotion.

While the Somalis hope for restored calm and "a future democratic Government able to reduce poverty and inequality", in the Democratic Republic of the Congo the electoral process of 2006 challenges the Government to guarantee "that the social dividends of democracy are quickly apparent". South-South cooperation and a revision of the terms of the concessions to extractive industries are among the strategies advocated by the Congolese civil society organizations. In Nepal, also among the poorest countries of the world, the overthrow of the monarchy and elections for a new Constituent Assembly provide grounds for hope for the local socialwatchers "that the long period of violent conflict is finally over". Trade liberalization, as a result of Nepal joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2003, fuelled the conflict by allowing for massive food imports that ruined local farmers. Agriculture employs three quarters of the population, while the tasks of planting, harvesting and seed production are largely performed by women. The destruction of their livelihoods is a violation of their right to food security.

It is very easy to associate violent conflict with impoverishment and human rights violations, but the analysis of the causes of conflict is less obvious. In the Kenyan report the Social Watch coalition does that by looking at the issues of land, access to resources and power. Civil society proposes a new concept of "restorative justice" that preserves the common good instead of the conventional "retributive adversarial justice" that has increased polarization. Lebanon is trying to prevent an unstable social and political situation from exploding in violent conflict. Yet the plans currently implemented by the Government and supported by international donors seem primarily designed to integrate the country into the international economy, rather than securing the basic socioeconomic rights of the Lebanese. In a study about community rights at the local level, the Social Watch Thailand report shows how violence can erupt when ecologically and culturally sustainable styles are disrupted.

Conflict is nowhere more dramatic then in Iraq, where "daily life has become a nightmare". The Iraqi Al-Amal Association that was already reporting for Social Watch on the sufferings of the Iraqis under Saddam Hussein, years ago, focuses this year on the fate of the millions of Iraqis that have been forced to abandon their homes in search of safer areas within the country or abroad: the largest and fastest migration in modern history affecting around five million people. While the process is still going on, Iraqi civil society is already planning on how to mitigate their sufferings in a framework of conflict resolution.

On the other end of the migration issue, 600 thousand people arrive each year to Spain as migrants. "The root cause is systematic infringement of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," argues the Spanish Social Watch platform. "Despite legal advances over the last few years that have made it easier to obtain work permits, foreigners are often shunted to occupations with harsher working conditions and poor wages,

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BURMA

"Forty-six years of military rule have ground Burma down into one of the poorest countries in the world. Rather than create an environment in which the people can fully participate in the decisions on how their country is run and enjoy growing prosperity, the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has imposed economic policies that enrich its supporters but impoverish most of the population. Around one-third of the country struggles to survive on less than USD 1 a day."

CAMBODIA

"With the deregulation of investments and imports, aimed at encouraging foreign investment, Cambodia has moved fast into land concessions and speculation. While the elite has benefited, the sustainability of the country's ethnic indigenous minority cultures, particularly in the northeast, is at risk. Rural land is being sold or appropriated to large businesses by powerful public officials, urban areas are rapidly growing and available land is exhausted, triggering large disparities between rich and poor."

while immigrant women face triple jeopardy, as immigrants, workers and women". Yet, the Government of Spain is credited by its civil society organization with having substantially increased development assistance and promoting an international treaty for the control of the arms trade.

The fate of migrants is also a strong concern for the socialwatchers in South Korea, where they suffer mistreatment and discrimination in spite of the fact that in 2001 a Constitutional Court sentenced that "foreigners are also entitled to human dignity, human rights and the right to pursue happiness as a human being". In Cyprus, Social Watch argues for better education as a way to achieve social justice, particularly for the increasing percentage of children whose mother tongue is not Greek. In Malta an otherwise excellent record on human rights is tarnished by episodes of racism and bad conditions in four administrative detention centres for asylum seekers.

More than one million people, mostly women, migrate out of the Philippines each year. They sustain with their remittances the economic growth in the Philippines, while a substantial part of government revenue goes to debt repayment. Poverty is increasing and the consequent social unrest is being repressed using provisions on a new anti-terrorism law.

To change an economic regime is a bet that may or may not result in gains, but always has costs. And those costs are very frequently borne by the weakest and vulnerable sectors of society. In the case of Hungary, the Roma (disdainfully called gypsies) were among those most negatively affected by the transition to a market economy and, on top of that, they have become scapegoats, as the majority of Hungarians have experienced a severe decline in living standards. The situation of the Roma is also of concern for the Social Watch coalitions in Serbia, Slovakia, Romania and the Czech Republic, while in Latvia the Russian speaking minority (one third of the population) has its rights curtailed.

The right to housing is a cornerstone in the struggle for the realization of the ESC rights. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that the notion of home is intimately related with that of family, which deserves protection in all cultures and constitutions. On the other, a government has to exert some positive action (as opposed to just abstaining from doing the condemnable act, like censoring or torturing) to guarantee housing for its population. In 2007, after a successful civil society campaign, France institutionalized the right to affordable housing, thereby making it an obligation of the State, which if not met can be subject to court action. However, given the paltry amount of resources allocated for housing in the budget, the State will only be able to guarantee the right to housing to about 10% of the three million people living in substandard housing or homeless. The report of the Argentine Social Watch platform concentrates this year on the right to housing, which is enshrined in the Constitution but left in the hands of the market. As a consequence, one fourth of households live in inadequate conditions.

In the United States, one of the larger human rights campaigns is the Living Wage Campaign, led by ACORN, demanding work for all, a fair minimum wage, as well as access to affordable housing. Gulf States, especially Mississippi and Louisiana, that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina, have become a battleground and a testing ground for a range of legal principles traditionally thought to belong in the international realm, ranging from the rights of internally displaced persons to the right to land and housing.

Sixty years after having actively campaigned for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US has distanced itself from the UN system it helped to create – a trend which undermines the potential for collective solutions to the critical problems we face today, such as climate change, rising food shortages, poverty and war. Since World War II, the US Government has promoted deregulated markets as a means to reduce conflict and support policy goals, both within and outside of its borders. This includes privatizing public service provision and relaxing labour and environmental regulations to promote investment and increase trade.

Privatizations have been carried out with a one-size-fits-all approach, irrespective of local conditions, history and political processes. In an extreme case, as reported by the Social Watch platform from Bahrain, the blueprint for reform of the whole economy of the country was drafted by the American private consultancy firm McKinsey & Co.

In Serbia, the Anti-corruption Council, a governmental advisory body, has denounced how the Law on Privatization, approved in 2001, has opened the door to extraordinary opportunities for "corruption and the creation of monopolies, money laundering and the 'robbery' of state-owned and socially-owned companies by 'tycoons' and 'a group of powerful people' who make laws to benefit their personal interests."

Corruption undermines the rule of law and violates the principle of equality of access to resources and basic services. It is therefore a permanent threat to human rights and is mentioned as a major concern in the Social Watch reports from Vietnam, Mozambique and many others. What the Romanian report describes can be applied to many other countries: "Property rights, strongly promoted after 1989 as a cornerstone of the new 'liberal democracy' have been flagrantly violated by manipulators who gambled with the privatization process. Some of them grew rich through their former affiliation to the *nomenklatura* or *Securitate.* Others pulled strings in the judicial system and used blackmail and fraud to seize most of the properties nationalized by the Communist regime. Still others have made fortunes with the help of former comrades now in key public offices, gaining preferential access to State assets being privatized or to Government contracts."

"Impunity for the powerful and connected is the single most important factor in the perpetuation of corruption, and indeed in all human rights violations." Romania's plight illustrates this perfectly.

Perhaps nowhere is the human rights impact of bad economic policies as dramatic as in the case of agriculture, where millions of people can be deprived almost overnight of their most basic right to food. In Bangladesh, where three fourths of the population live in rural areas, trade liberalization has resulted in a significant decline in food security. Succumbing

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to pressure from donors, who insisted that in a globalized economy any shortage of food grains could be made up for on the international market, Bangladesh ended its policy of building up large stockpiles. "This year the bill came due," reports the local Social Watch platform. "Floods and cyclones caused significant crop losses and Bangladesh had to buy rice on the international market at a time when supplies were down and prices had soared."

In Ghana, agriculture is hailed as the primary source of economic growth, yet a closer examination reveals a strong gender bias in this expansion. "Government investments have spurred a boom in export industries, primarily timber and cocoa production, where the workforce is predominantly male. At the same time, the Government has offered little support to basic food industries that are traditionally women's responsibility. As a result, crops for domestic consumption, livestock and fishing have all stagnated." When the food crisis became evident, President John Kuffour announced in May 2008 a programme to "mitigate the hardships Ghanaians are facing as a result of escalating food and fuel prices" by reducing import duties on food products and waiving levies on some petroleum products. The Ghanaian socialwatchers expressed support for the initiative, while also noting that it "will not benefit small scale producers, mainly women, who produce 80% of food in Ghana".

Similarly in Yemen, one of the countries ranking lowest in the Gender Equity Index computed by Social Watch, poor women, employed mainly in agriculture and shepherding more acutely suffer the impacts of trade liberalization and the rise in wheat prices. Local socialwatchers report that "most independent research institutions and organizations are in agreement that the Government does not follow standard economic principles in formulating its strategy. Instead, it develops and implements policies haphazardly for the benefit of a corrupt minority. These wealthy few siphon off the money and resources of the State and compel the poor majority of the population to shoulder the burden of so-called "economic reforms" that provide no visible benefits."

Corruption and ill-designed policies are not exclusive to developing countries. In the Czech Republic, former president Václav Havel characterized the privatization process as 'Mafioso capitalism' and the local socialwatchers remind us in a timely way in their report how "a large share of the losses from bankrupted banks and funds was recouped from taxpayers." The tax reform introduced in 2007 is described as "take from the poor, give to the rich". Similar words are used by the Canadian watchers: "Canada is among a small group of nations that has reduced taxation levels in such a way as to most benefit those who are already the most affluent." In Paraguay, where taxation is so unfair that income is not taxed at all, recent revenue reforms are recruiting new contributors from the middle and low sectors, while those with high income still do not make a significant contribution to the treasury. "Since those "who are taxed are those who have less (…) the expenses heighten inequality."

The "race to the bottom" in tax policy is a result of countries competing with each other to attract foreign investors. "Free trade zones" have been created exempt from national taxes (and sometimes also from laws and constitutional guarantees *à la*

INDONESIA

"Domestic violence, particularly assaults on wives by the husband or children by their parents, often erupts in times of growing economic stress. Adults, particularly men, who lose hope and are overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness, are much more likely to lash out against weak or vulnerable family members. At a time when the combined unemployment and underemployment rates have climbed above 39%, many more families are on the edge."

ITALY

"Although Italy committed to prioritize the goals of poverty reduction, achieving gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals within its development assistance policies, the quality and quantity of its funding to support universal access to health, water and education are still below European and international standards."

CAMEROON AND CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES: MANY COMMITMENTS, FEW RESULTS

Federation of Civil Society Organizations of Cameroon (FOSCAM)[1]

Sixty years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and nine after the declaration of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, the rights of persons with disabilities are still being ignored in Cameroon.

The country has signed and adopted most international agreements with regard to peace, safety and development. However, when in 2006 the Convention concerning a programme for worldwide action in favour of persons with disabilities, approved by the UN in 1981, was adopted, Cameroon did not sign the document, which came into force in April 2008.

In March 2000, a meeting of the National Steering Committee for the activities of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (ADPD 1999-2009) was organised in Cameroon, which resulted in the drafting of an Action Plan in 2002. A National Follow-Up Committee was announced for 2008 but it has not yet been formed. Nor are there any national strategies for putting the National Plan into practice.

Until now, in Cameroon the rights of persons with disabilities are, in the best of cases, only acknowledged on paper. Despite the international commitments which have been assumed, the absence of specific State policies reflects a lack of real commitment with regard to the rights of the people with disabilities. ■

1 ANACLAC, COSADER, UNAPHAC, Club UA-Cameroun, APICA, CIPI, IDF Bamenda, ADEID, CNJD, CANADEL, CAMNAFAW, CNJD, CIPI, CRADIF, APRIS, APSC, CERUT, CRADEC, DMJ and CGT-Libertés.

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MOLDOVA

"There is no effective legal remedy against gender discrimination. Lack of gender sensitivity within courts and among law enforcement authorities denies women access to justice, particularly in cases involving gender-based violence."

PORTUGAL

"Eighteen per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. This figure becomes even starker when it is taken into account that Portugal's poverty line corresponds to about 52% of the value for all 25 EU members (EU-25) and to less than half the value for the original 15 (EU-15). Moreover, Portugal is also one of the most unequal countries in the EU: in 2006, the income of the richest 20% of the population was 6.8 higher than the income of the poorest 20%."

SLOVENIA

"Poverty among the elderly and children grew over the previous decade... NGOs working with marginalized groups and the Human Rights Ombudsman have condemned the social discrimination that leads to high levels of poverty and homelessness among the old, the ill, the Roma, mothers with young children and other social groups with minimal assets."

TANZANIA

"Globalization has turned Tanzania into a market for fake pharmaceutical drugs, including counterfeit versions of antibiotics, hormones, steroids, and anti-malaria, anti-cancer and anti-viral drugs. In 2005, sales of fake drugs worldwide exceeded USD 3.5 billion per year, and could reach USD 75 billion by 2010 if action is not taken. Anti-malaria drugs are particularly deadly: a million people die from this disease each year; an estimated one-fifth of these deaths could be avoided, according to the World Health Organization, if drugs used to treat them were genuine."

Guantanamo). In Morocco "duty-free zones are often accused of violating workers' economic and social rights" and in Uganda the situation of workers' rights in the flower and hotel industries is "serious and deteriorating".

The provision of essential social services (education, health, drinking water) is a key component in any strategy to reduce poverty and realize ESC rights. Social Watch groups have been reporting on the quality of those services, and lately also studying how exactly they are being paid for and by whom. Studying the national budget in detail, Social Watch Brazil has come to the conclusion that "between indirect taxes, direct contributions to the social security system required for eligibility to its benefits and the diversion of some of that money to other purposes, the people who finance the programmes that promote ESC rights are the beneficiaries themselves." Or, in other words, there is no redistribution of wealth at all. In India, which together with Brazil is seen as one of the success stories in emerging economies, while the GDP climbs at a rate of 9% plus annually, "the question of whether the Government will provide basic services to the marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society remains unanswered."

By signing the North American Free Trade Agreement with the US and Canada, Mexico became the first developing country to enter into such kind of "partnership" with all the associated macroeconomic conditionalities. Mexico is officially committed to "guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights and struggle for their promotion and defence" but the Mexican socialwatchers conclude that "the economic model that the State refuses to review does not promote real development, but creates social injustice, environmental depredation and diverse violations to the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental human rights of the population."

In Costa Rica, a country where the state has traditionally guaranteed universal access to basic social services, the introduction of a Free Trade Agreement with the United States was a highly controversial issue. A referendum on the FTA was convened, but instead of stimulating a rational debate on the issues, the "freetraders" launched a campaign explicitly aimed at inducing "fear" among voters. The vice-president was forced to resign when multiple violations of the electoral laws were exposed, but the treaty remained in force, subsequently making the country more vulnerable to the impact of the crisis in late 2008 and creating a pending agenda of restoring faith in democratic institutions.

In Malaysia, meanwhile, the anti-FTA protests managed to ensure that the Malaysia-USA FTA was not signed before the expiration of fast-track authority in 2007. The local watchers argue that "the Government culture of secrecy must be loosened if the country is to create the openness, accountability and transparency needed for broad public participation in economic development".

Those ingredients are necessary for public participation, but they may not be enough. In Poland, "decision makers show little evidence of capacity to respond constructively to human rights campaigns and proposals; and mobilizing broad human rights campaigns remains difficult. Citizens have little confidence that their activity could lead to progress and are extremely reluctant to become involved in civil society initiatives".

Lithuanians also feel very sceptical about their ability to defend their rights. Three quarters of respondents in a 2006 poll reported that their rightshad been abused and they had not complained. Seventy-four per cent of respondents declared that they would not appeal to state institutions for redress, because they believed it would be futile. Even worse, Lithuanian socialwatchers report that "the public also seems to have given up on popular protests, which the authorities usually ignore".

Those findings contrast sharply with the experience of socialwatchers in Benin. Decentralization of government begun in 2003 in this African country, giving 77 communes (territorial communities) managerial and administrative autonomy to define their local priorities and the means necessary to respond to them. As a result, civil society organizations mobilized and pressed the State to increase its financial support of the so-called intercommunal solidarity funds and channel various subsidies to the communes, where citizens closely control the Government. This funding increased from USD 1.6 million in 2003, to USD 4.9 million in 2008.

In Colombia, in spite of the political violence, the last years have seen the intensification of social mobilizations by the rural population, the indigenous peoples, the unions, Afro-descendants, women, the

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victims of crimes committed by the State, gays and lesbians and human rights activists, against the constant violation of rights, the need for a negotiated peace in the political and social armed conflict and the serious humanitarian crisis.

The socialwatchers from Zambia express a generalized feeling when they argue that "both the State and the international community have been guilty of 'crimes against humanity', including the world's lowest life expectancy for people under 40, high rates of morbidity and maternal mortality, increasing levels of illiteracy, gender-based violence and extreme levels of poverty."

In Senegal, "structural adjustment policies, including privatization of most basic services (water, energy, transport) have not achieved their stated goal of revitalizing the economy. In fact, these policies have de-industrialized the country, with disastrous social consequences: the loss of thousands of jobs, extremely high unemployment, and massive migration to urban centres". In that context, "official mechanisms to promote and protect human rights have become weaker rather than stronger" and public opposition is being curtailed by frequent bans on protests, harassment of journalists and impunity for individuals who commit political crimes, embezzlement of public funds or torture. In such a context violations of the rights of women and children (even when not clearly "politically motivated") are also reaching "disturbing proportions, marked by cases of sexual harassment and abuse, rape, murder, forced marriages, genital mutilation and paedophilia".

In Sri Lanka, political leaders won the elections in 1994 and 2005 promising to halt privatization and other policies demanded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, once in power they blatantly violated their campaign promises and pursued the same policies they had denounced, attempting privatization of water, education and health, and allocating even more money to infrastructure investments designed to make the country attractive to foreign investors.

According to the national Social Watch platform, "preventing people from using their creativity to overcome hunger and poverty in order to please global economic powers that seek to extract the greatest possible profit is a violation of rights – the worst of all, since it is linked to violations of other rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to social security, the right to organize and the right to live in security." ■

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THEMATIC REPORTS

Waking up to the true story of tax

In November and December 2008 heads of state and of government from around the world will attend a United Nations-sponsored conference in Doha, Qatar, to discuss financing for development. Tax is the big new issue. Powerful financial interests, notably from Britain and the United States, are lobbying against reforms in international taxation. Non-governmental organizations and individuals concerned with poverty around the world must engage fast, and decisively, to help ensure success.

Nicholas Shaxson
John Christensen
Tax Justice Network

Historical background

Near the end of the Second World War the economists John Maynard Keynes from Britain and Harry Dexter White from the United States sketched how the world's financial architecture would emerge from the ashes of conflict. Their work led to the Bretton Woods agreements in July 1944, and the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Keynes and White were especially worried about capital flight out of Europe: if wealth was drained out of these countries, it would further destabilize the shattered European nations and possibly turn them towards the Soviet bloc. They knew well how difficult it would be to control capital flows across national borders, and they addressed this with a further proposal: transparency. They wanted the governments of countries receiving flight capital (such as the United States) to share information automatically with those European (and other) governments suffering the capital flight, so that the sending countries could 'see' the wealth their citizens had sent abroad. This would not only allow weak countries to tax their citizens' income appropriately, but it would also remove one of the great incentives for capital flight. Secrecy lets wealthy citizens and corporations shift their wealth outside the reach of taxation and escape their responsibilities to the democratic societies from which their wealth is derived.

The US financial community lobbied hard against transparency, and in the final IMF Articles of Agreement, Keynes' and White's proposals were watered down. International co-operation between countries was now no longer 'required', but merely 'permitted'. The impact of this successful lobbying went far beyond Europe, and it has since had nothing less than catastrophic consequences for ordinary people around the world, both in rich and poor countries.

Today very few countries benefit from information exchange treaties, and the limited number that do exchange information do it only 'on request'. As John Christensen and David Spencer of the Tax Justice Network argued recently in the *Financial Times*: "In other words, you must know what you are looking for before you request it. This is shockingly inadequate. We need the *automatic* exchange of tax information between jurisdictions, and all developing countries must be included."

> We can no longer focus so strongly on aid, without bringing tax into the core of the debate. Aid provides benefits, but perhaps its biggest drawback is that it makes governments and other recipients accountable to (and dependent on) donors, not citizens.

The scale of what has been unleashed is becoming clear. The World Bank reports that USD 1-1.6 *trillion* of illicit money crosses borders each year, about *half* (USD 500-800 billion) from developing and transitional economies. That compares to just USD 100 billion in foreign aid provided annually by all the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries to the world's poorest nations. Secrecy and low (or zero) taxes are the central incentives prompting illicit capital flows. International transparency in cross-border financial flows is clearly one of the most important global issues of our time. It is remarkable that the international development community has paid so little attention to these issues for so long.

If secrecy were removed, and capital taxed properly, it would transform the economies and public finances of developing (and rich) nations, and go a long way towards preventing elites from enriching themselves at the expense of ordinary citizens.

The road to Doha

There are currently no global, multilateral agreements or bodies that let developing countries know what income their residents' overseas assets earn in places like the United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Singapore or anywhere else, and that help them recover the taxes owed on that income.

The Doha conference from 29 November to 2 December 2008 (not to be confused with the Doha negotiations for a global trade deal under the auspices of the World Trade Organization) has the potential to lay the groundwork for putting right what Keynes and White were prevented from achieving – notably automatic exchange of tax and other information between countries, on a global, multilateral basis.

This is certainly not impossible: such a scheme already exists on a regional level within Europe: countries within the EU scheme automatically exchange information between each other regarding the incomes of each others' residents, allowing proper taxes to be paid.

However, the EU scheme contains loopholes. Although some are being fixed, one big gap is that Europeans wishing to hide their money from taxation still can simply deposit their money elsewhere – in Singapore, for instance. The solution requires this scheme to be applied on a global basis – and especially including developing nations.

Furthermore, more transparency is needed in other important aspects. About 60% of world trade consists of internal transfers within multinational companies, and the prices at which the internal transfers are recorded are manipulated by these companies to minimize their tax liabilities.

Raymond Baker, a world authority on illicit financial flows and author of the ground-breaking book *Capitalism's Achilles Heel*, estimates that mispricing and abusive transfer pricing alone (as these practices are known) are worth USD 500-750 billion annually. Tackling this is a complex task, and requires international co-operation; one of the simplest approaches would involve *country-by-country reporting*.

Country-by-country reporting is necessary since international regulations and accounting standards currently do not require multinationals to break down and publish their payments, profits and taxes for each jurisdiction they operate. Instead, they are allowed to scoop up data from several countries and put them into one number reflecting, say, a region ('Africa', for example). This makes it impossible for outsiders – be it individuals wishing to hold their rulers accountable for secretive payments from multinationals, or national tax authorities wanting to know if they are being cheated – to unpick the data for each country. We need rules that make multinationals publish this data automatically.

The preparations for Doha

No single measure can eliminate the problems associated with the fault lines in international taxation, and no country can achieve meaningful change alone. International co-operation between nations is the key.

The OECD, in the late 1990s, seriously attempted to build a coalition of developed countries to act together to require transparency in international banking. After some initial successes, however, the efforts foundered, partly because the United States defected following the 2000 election, when George W. Bush became president.

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What is more, an indelible problem for the OECD is being a regional institution – a so-called rich-man's club – that lacks the legitimacy to establish international norms applicable to all countries. There is one organization, however, with legitimacy to speak for the global community: the United Nations (UN). The Doha meeting it will host this year is a perfect chance for it to step up to the plate.

The UN has already laid solid foundations for addressing tax at Doha with the 2001 Report by the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development (also known as the Zedillo Report, after Chairman Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico). That report called for tax information to be shared on a multilateral basis, and for countries to be given technical assistance in tax administration and tax information sharing so as to allow flight capital to be taxed.

As financial interests again lobbied against change, it stalled; then, in 2002, the UN convened a meeting of heads of state at Monterrey, Mexico, to discuss plans for financing development in the developing world. The resulting Monterrey Consensus pushed the issue forward, and today it acts as a foundation document on many matters, including tax policy for development.

At the subsequent 2005 World Summit the UN resolved "to support efforts to reduce capital flight and [to support] measures to curb the illicit transfer of funds." Then, in December 2007, the UN General Assembly resolved to hold the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus – the official title for the Doha meeting this year.

Tax is the next big thing

Tax, under the theme "Mobilizing domestic financial resources for development", is one of six Doha conference chapters. But tax, and the closely related subject of international financial transparency, is so important that it must be at the centre of the Doha debates and outcomes.

People are beginning to wake up to the sheer scale of the financial resources drained out of some of the world's poorest countries. Astonishing new research from the University of Massachusets, Amherst, analyzing capital flight from 40 African countries, estimates:

> Real capital flight over the 35-year period amounted to about USD 420 billion (in 2004 dollars) for the 40 countries as a whole. Including imputed interest earnings, the accumulated stock of capital flight was about USD 607 billion as of end-2004.

Nearly all the money that flows out of Africa as capital flight stays out. Compare this figure to these countries' total external debt in 2004, which amounted to USD 227 billion. Indebted African countries have been forced to undertake painful economic adjustments and devote their scarce foreign exchange to debt-service payments while, at the same time, they have experienced massive outflows of private capital towards Western financial centres. These private assets surpass the continent's foreign liabilities, ironically making sub-Saharan Africa a 'net creditor' to the rest of the world.

> We are now seeing signs that world opinion is fast turning in support of action against the world's tax cheats and those who help them. As Mike McIntyre puts it: "A code of conduct can help create a climate of opinion where tax cheats cannot successfully pose as refugees from oppressive government but instead are seen for what they are – selfish, self-absorbed people who undermine good government and help keep two-thirds of the world locked in poverty."

There is one absolutely crucial difference between the assets and the liabilities: the private external assets belong to narrow and wealthy elites, while public external debts are borne by the people through their governments. Even worse, this capital flight flows, almost exclusively, into the world's secrecy jurisdictions. This not only encourages tax evasion, draining African nations of investment capital and billions of dollars of lost state tax revenues that must be replaced with aid, but encourages and fosters all sorts of nefarious activities – such as corruption. For those worried about the African debts and governance issues, this is the hidden side of the coin. Research like this should be a wake-up call.

The secrecy jurisdictions include not only the traditional tax havens of lore like the Cayman Islands, Jersey and Switzerland, but also the world's largest financial centres – especially New York and London. In May 2008 Reuters reported that former Liberian president Charles Taylor, whose forces routinely used mutilation and rape as weapons of war, stashed large quantities of money in a US bank – which apparently took his money happily and did not ask questions. This happens routinely.

However not everyone in America likes this. In May 2008, US Senators Barack Obama, Carl Levin and Norm Coleman in May introduced a bill trying to restrict financial secrecy in the United States. As Levin said:

> Each year, the States allow persons to form nearly two million corporations and limited liability companies (LLCs) in this country without knowing – or even asking – who the beneficial owners are behind those corporations. Right now, a person forming a US corporation or LLC provides less information to the State than is required to open a bank account or obtain a driver's license. Criminals are exploiting this weakness in our State incorporation practices. They are forming new US corporations and LLCs, and using these entities to commit crimes ranging from terrorism to drug trafficking, money laundering, tax evasion, financial fraud, and corruption (…) our law enforcement officials have too often had to stand silent when asked by their counterparts in other countries for information about who owns a US corporation committing crimes in their jurisdictions. The reality is that the United States is as bad as any offshore jurisdiction when it comes to responding to those requests.

Much of the money flowing into the United States comes, of course, from developing countries.

Britain has a similar effect, though it uses slightly different mechanisms. It is adept at using its offshore Crown Dependencies (like Jersey or Guernsey) and its Overseas Territories (like Cayman or Bermuda) as tentacles of the main London financial markets, using these to scoop up money from around the world. Both the United States and the United Kingdom run large fiscal and trade deficits; and by shrouding financial inflows in secrecy, and failing to tax them (and share the proceeds with the victim countries), they help attract inflows that finance these deficits. Britain's and America's efforts to look generous as aid contributors, while taking much larger volumes of dirty money under the table, look somewhat cynical.

Not just how much money is raised, but how money is raised

The scale of financial flows out of developing countries helps explain why tax is so crucial to them. Yet there is another dimension, which may be equally important. Tax, and especially direct taxation (as opposed to indirect taxes like VAT or import tariffs), is a powerful force for improving governance.

This is another emerging discipline in the field of international development. A new book, *Taxation and State-Building in Developing Countries: Capacity and Consent*, edited by Deborah Bräutigam,Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and Mick Moore, explains how tax

> (…) is the new frontier for those concerned with state-building in developing countries. The political importance of taxation extends beyond the raising of revenue (…) taxation may play the 'central' role in building and sustaining the power of states, and shaping their ties to society. The state-building role of taxation can be seen in two principal areas: the rise of a social contract based on bargaining around tax, and the institution-building stimulus provided by the revenue imperative. Progress in the first area may foster representative democracy. Progress in the second area strengthens state capacity. Both have the potential to bolster the legitimacy of the state and enhance accountability between the state and its citizens.

We can no longer focus so strongly on aid, without bringing tax into the core of the debate. Aid provides benefits, but perhaps its biggest drawback is that it makes governments and other recipients accountable to (and dependent on) donors, not citizens. Tax is different: tax is the most accountable, and sustainable, source of financing for development: it makes states accountable to its citizens, not donors. It mitigates aid dependency. As the Kenya Revenue Authority puts it, "Pay your taxes, and set your country free." Students of European and American history, familiar with the famous term "no taxation without

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representation" have long known this. For some reason, its relevance is only now starting to filter into the field of development. As Deborah Bräutigam explained in a recent paper:[1]

> Discussions on taxation's potential contributions to state-building are largely absent from the practical concerns of the aid community, which tends to focus on increasing aid (or cutting expenditures) rather than on raising revenues. The state-building role of taxation should be a far more central issue for those concerned with the problem of collapsed states, weak governments, and the lack of democracy across the developing world (…) high levels of aid can create incentives for donors and governments that make it more difficult to build a more capable and responsive state.

Participants and observers to the Doha conference risk spending too much time focusing on *how much* money is raised by taxation, and not enough on *how* that revenue is raised. Much more research must be done, including on the impact of international tax issues, tax havens and loopholes on developing countries' tax systems and the way they raise revenue.

The UN Tax Committee

Britain and the United States, in league with some of the world's other tax havens, have led the fight against improved transparency. The UN – and specifically the UN Tax Committee[2] – is one of the little-known forums where this struggle is being played out. This committee is a key player feeding input into the Doha conference, and it contains a mix of representatives from developed and developing nations. But unfortunately too many of the 'developing nations' representatives, as well as those from wealthy countries, are in fact tax havens, including Barbados, the Bahamas, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. While developing-nation tax havens like Barbados or Cayman are eager to preserve their revenues, comparing their populations (45,000 in the case of Caymans, for example) with that of other populations afflicted by tax havens (over 600 million, in Africa's case) must be the basis for judging where our priorities lie on tax havens.

Civil society urgently needs to take notice of this committee and its activities, and the broader context in which it is embedded, and to work hard to make sure that its voice is heard. Before now, civil society has been all but absent, allowing powerful vested interests to drive and distort the agenda.

Urgent: a code of conduct is needed

There are several crucial areas in which the UN, and the Doha meeting in particular, can help foster progress, with the potential to do at least as much good as all foreign aid combined. All of these areas need strong support from global civil society.

One area that will be profoundly important is the idea of a UN Code of Conduct on tax. In November 2006, the UN Tax Committee took a first step by voting to approve the principle that a Code of Conduct should be drawn up for co-operation on controlling capital flight and international tax evasion (which is, by definition, illegal) and tax avoidance (which is technically legal but, by definition, goes against the wishes of elected parliaments). It has asked the US tax expert Michael McIntyre to work on this. Nothing like this has ever been done before.

To have maximum impact, a Code of Conduct should be adopted by the UN General Assembly. But a series of steps are needed first – technical steps within the UN system, where powerful tax haven interests will attempt to twist the outcomes towards their own ends. Civil society needs to be vigilant in monitoring progress, and must complain loudly when things go wrong. The Doha meeting will play an important role in this. Things are already moving fast – and the time to act and engage is now.

Even adoption by the General Assembly will not be enough. It must also be promoted vigorously, once adopted, by signatory governments and also by private actors and members of civil society.

Codes of conduct are sometimes referred to as 'soft law' because they do not provide for explicit methods of enforcement. They are aspirational, not operational. They seek to mobilize public opinion (or at least the opinion of relevant actors); and they work through persuasion, not legal force.

For years, countries have treated international tax evasion and abusive tax avoidance with benign neglect. We are now seeing signs that world opinion is fast turning in support of action against the world's tax cheats and those who help them. As Mike McIntyre puts it: "A code of conduct can help create a climate of opinion where tax cheats cannot successfully pose as refugees from oppressive government but instead are seen for what they are – selfish, self-absorbed people who undermine good government and help keep two-thirds of the world locked in poverty."

Other crucial areas to address

In September 2007, the Tax Justice Network presented 18 recommendations to the UN Tax Committee, including the following:

- Ask the IMF to include in its Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes whether a jurisdiction that is a financial centre provides adequate information to foreign partners and looks at issues such as bank secrecy in tax matters and effective exchange of information.
- Consider if capital flight (and the resulting tax evasion) should constitute acts of corruption under the UN Convention Against Corruption – and all parties to it, including tax evaders, intermediaries who facilitate tax evasion, and the financial centres that handle and receive tax-evading funds.
- Consider capital flight and tax evasion as money laundering under the relevant conventions and institutions – such as the IMF's Financial Action Task Force.

> "…the accumulated stock of capital flight [out of Africa] was about USD 607 billion as of end-2004." Compare this figure to these countries' total external debt in 2004, which amounted to USD 227 billion. Indebted African countries have experienced massive outflows of private capital towards Western financial centres that surpass the continent's foreign liabilities, ironically making sub-Saharan Africa a 'net creditor' to the rest of the world.

- The IMF, the World Bank and the OECD should work together with financial centres to help developing countries tackle capital flight and lost taxes.

All these measures need to be tackled not just before and during the Doha process, but far into the future. International financial reform takes many years.

The mood is changing

Change has been blocked until now: the vested interests have been too strong, and civil society has been all but asleep on international taxation. Nevertheless, the global mood is turning. One reason is that there now exist civil society groups – notably the Tax Justice Network and Global Financial Integrity – that can provide high-level analysis and advice to help others to engage.

Also, in contrast to most issues on the 'development' agenda, the harm provoked by tax havens and abusive international taxation is felt not only in the developing world, but also in the wealthiest nations. For this reason, political action unites a diverse group of people with shared interests.

Events in financial markets are also now prompting change. A financial deregulation process that began in the 1970s provided the oxygen allowing secrecy jurisdictions and the abusive tax practices they facilitate to flourish and metastasize through the global financial architecture. The credit crisis that began in 2007 has shattered confidence in the self-regulating powers of markets, and thrown deregulation into reverse, ushering in a period where international co-operation is now actively being pushed at a high level. As Lawrence Summers, a former US Treasury Secretary, said in May 2008:

> There has been a race to the bottom in the taxation of corporate income as nations lower their rates to entice business to issue more debt and invest in their jurisdictions. Closely related is the problem of tax havens that seek to lure wealthy citizens with promises that they can avoid paying taxes altogether on large parts of their fortunes. It might be inevitable that globalization leads to some increases in inequality; it is not necessary that it also compromise the possibility of progressive taxation. The US should take the lead in promoting global co-operation in the international tax arena.

1 "Taxation and Governance in Africa", available at: <www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27798/pub_detail.asp>.

2 Its full title is the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

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The Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act introduced recently by US presidential candidate Barack Obama, in partnership with a Democrat and a Republican Senator, amid a flurry of newspaper investigations into the tax-dodging activities of private defence contractors, is sharply changing the political mood in the United States.

Europe, notwithstanding spoilers in its midst like Austria, Belgium, Britain, Luxembourg and Switzerland, will be a somewhat willing partner. Revelations from a paid whistleblower about secret accounts held by many wealthy Europeans in Liechtenstein have helped spur a new political will to tackle the problem of tax havens and tax abuse.

In Britain and the Netherlands, newspaper articles are now prompting parliamentary debates about whether democratic societies should accept aggressive tax avoidance by retail giants or by banana companies and others, or whether Britain's 'domicile' rule allowing the wealthiest members of British society to escape much of their tax bills, can be tolerated. Trade Unions in Britain are now aggressively starting to push tax justice onto the agenda. A Norwegian-led task force, supported by civil society, is starting to target capital flight and tax evasion. The Tax Justice Network and the Washington-based Global Financial Integrity Program are now undertaking a new multi-year research project, funded by the Ford Foundation, which will for the first time properly expose and describe the full extent of global infrastructure of secrecy jurisdictions.

Many of the world's tax havens, particularly the British-linked ones, emerged or spread their wings as part of the process of decolonization, as Britain's overseas empire crumbled after the Second World War and Britain looked for ways to fill the gaps. The time has come now to start clearing up these relics.

An awakening in civil society, particularly in Europe, about the pernicious and very powerful role of tax havens in development, is now starting to get underway at last. The Doha process needs to be instrumental in broadening this awakening. ■

Further reading

Tax Justice Network: <www.taxjustice.net>.

Tax Justice blog: <taxjustice.blogspot.com/>.

Tax Justice Focus, First quarter 2008, The Doha Edition: <www.taxjustice.net/cms/upload/pdf/TJF_4-1_Doha.pdf>.

UN Financing for Development web site: <www.un.org/esa/ffd/>.

For general tax analysis: <www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/>.

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The EU's legal and financial structure: implications for basic human rights

The objective of the European Commission's development policy is poverty eradication. Since 1992, respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law have been included as essential elements in all agreements with third countries or regional groupings. At the same time, the global trend towards liberalisation and deregulation, which is also at the centre of the Union's development cooperation, is not evaluated in terms of its impact on poverty eradication. This results in aid to social sectors and basic human rights – such as education, health and women's empowerment – being neglected and underfunded.

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Simon Stocker[1]
Eurostep

The overarching objective of the European Commission's (EC) development policy is poverty eradication, with an outspoken focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and human rights. The definition of human rights can be very broad. Within development cooperation, it involves aspects such as social, political, economic and women's rights as well as governance and local ownership. However, in its broadest sense, it can be seen as the right not to live in poverty: wherever there is poverty, there are multiple violations of the rights and dignity of human beings.

Although the EC agrees with this concept in theory, several analyses point to a lack of consistency between the approach used and the stated objective: with its focus on the promotion of European competitiveness abroad, the European Union (EU) is using aid to support a trend towards liberalisation and deregulation. This may be at the root of negative trends in poverty: recent reports show that despite high economic growth in most of the 49 Least Developed Countries, the number of people living in poverty is increasing.[2]

The budget, the priorities and the instruments used by the EU for its development assistance all have an impact on the promotion of human rights – directly or indirectly. When assessing the EC's different budget instruments, it becomes apparent that they fail to promote basic human rights in a number of areas.[3]

Financing structure

The EC currently manages around one fifth of the EU's Official Development Assistance (ODA). For the period 2007 to 2013, the aid to developing countries managed by the EC will total approximately EUR 52 billion.

At present, three main legal instruments provide the basis for the EU's funding of its cooperation with developing countries: the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).

The EDF constitutes the principal funding instrument for the EU's development cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. It provides the resources for the Cotonou Agreement and covers development cooperation, political dialogue and trade. The EDF is not part of the EU's regular budget and is financed separately by direct payments from the EU's Member States. For the period 2008-2013, the 10th EDF amounts to approximately EUR 22.6 billion.

The ENPI is the financial instrument for countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The ENP is responsible for the EU's cooperation with neighbouring countries to the south and east.

The DCI, created in 2006, covers developing countries not included in the other two instruments – principally countries in Asia and Latin America. The DCI also covers the financing of a set of thematic programmes applicable to developing countries in all parts of the world.

One of the key objectives in the establishment of the DCI in 2007 was to implant the EU's development policy as the principal policy framework for the EU's cooperation with all developing countries. The provisions of the Union's Treaties set out the broad objectives for this policy, the principal being the eradication of poverty. Addressing gender inequality is stated to be fundamental to achieving this objective. An emphasis is also given to prioritising investment in the provision of social services as a fundamental basis for development. This was underlined with the inclusion of a requirement for at least 20% of the EC's aid to be used for this purpose. Over the period 2007-2013 approximately EUR 16.9 billion will be disbursed under the DCI.[4]

Programming priorities at the national and regional level

In the context of the EC's external cooperation, programming is an essential decision-making process aimed at defining the EC strategy for countries receiving external assistance. The resulting strategy, which is laid down in country strategy papers (CSPs), regional strategy papers (RSPs) and thematic programmes, should reflect the EU's policies and fundamental principles. Moreover, the decision-making process for these strategy papers should involve consultation with both the government and civil society organisations in the partner countries, as well as with EU Member States and other donors. Unfortunately, there is no strategy for the systematic involvement of civil society in such consultation processes, to ensure their involvement in policy-setting and implementation at country level.

The EC's principal instruments for the promotion of human rights in development cooperation are support systems for technical guidance in implementation. For instance, the EC contributes to the promotion of basic social and human rights in its development aid by developing toolkits and programming guidelines on mainstreaming issues such as health, HIV/AIDS and gender equality, and by preparing National (NIPs) and Regional (RIPs) Indicative Programmes as well as Financing Agreements that include strong indicators on social issues.

However, little real progress has been made in systematically implementing these guidelines. Indicators in the Indicative Programmes and Financing Agreements, which set out the financial contribution to each partner country, often fail to include gender equality, poverty and hunger comprehensively.

Unfortunately, this is too often the result of the priorities set out in the strategy programmes not being agreed with the comprehensive involvement of the partner governments. There is a lack of involvement of national parliaments, as well as a lack of consultation of civil society in partner countries. A comparison of the nationally produced Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) with the EU CSPs shows that the priorities often differ substantially.[5] There is evidence that social sector departments of ACP governments are often not included in the process of preparation of the CSPs, while other departments, such as on trade and transport, are consulted regularly and extensively. Such evidence would suggest that in reality only parts of governments of developing countries decide the priority sectors. In that sense, the principle of ownership, agreed in the Paris Declaration, to which the EC pays ample lip service, is largely ignored in practice. This results in

1 The authors are grateful to Ann-Charlotte Sallmann for her collaboration.

2 UNCTAD, "Growth, Poverty and the Terms of Development Partnership", Least Developed Countries Report 2008, New York and Geneva 2008.

3 Eurostep, "Europe's global responsibility", Briefing paper, Brussels, February 2008.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Alliance2015,"The EC's response to HIV&AIDS: Lost between ownership, division of labour and mainstreaming", editor: EEPA, Brussels, October 2007.

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aid to social sectors and basic human rights – such as education, health and women empowerment – being neglected and underfunded.

In the implementation of the latest financing period 2007-2013, priority has been given to areas such as transport, infrastructure and trade. While the country programmes for Asia and Latin America reflect an attempt to comply with the stated objective of contributing to basic social rights, this is not the case for the ACP countries. Despite international studies concluding that Africa is furthest away from achieving the MDGs, provisional information on 70 draft ACP-EU CSPs shows that health has been included as a priority for just eight countries, and education for nine.[6]

When it comes to governance, the criteria used for deciding on additional incentive financing relate as much to issues rooted in the EU's own interests – such as migration, counterterrorism, and trade liberalisation – as to the universally agreed core concepts of democratic governance, public finance management and the promotion of human rights.[7] Equally, while the liberalisation of procurement is often specifically agreed as a condition in financing agreements for General Budget Support programmes, funding to, for instance, the strengthening of democratic institutions remains largely underfunded.

In the current RSPs, priority is given to support for trade at the expense of other regional programmes, despite assurances that aid for trade measures would come as additional funding to compensate for estimated losses under the EU's trade arrangements with partner countries. In the regional programmes with groups of ACP countries, there appears to be very little place for the inclusion of focal sectors other than activities related to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently negotiated between the EC and the ACP. This not only undermines the continuation of cooperation activities undertaken under previous EDFs, it also diverts resources away from other development objectives. The promise that support to trade for the necessary adjustment to the EPAs be financed separately from, and in addition to the current 10th EDF, has not been fulfilled as yet.

Budget support

The EC has committed itself to the ambitious target of channelling 50% of government-to-government assistance through country systems, i.e. offering General and Sector Budget Support. NGOs have different views on the benefits of budget support, but generally approve the idea of guaranteeing long-term predictable financing for recurrent costs such as salaries for teachers and health workers. However, using budget support requires carefully selected indicators.

In November 2005, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, assured representatives of the Alliance2015 Stop Child Labour campaign that the EC would never provide budget support to partner countries that are not committed to tackling child labour. However, none of the financing agreements analysed for this study included any indicators on child labour.[8]

Similarly, despite the EC's stated commitment to the promotion of gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, research conducted in autumn 2007 showed that indicators on these issues are almost entirely absent from the EC's financing agreements with its partner countries.[9]

The budget support programmes are inconsistent regarding conditionalities. Although the EC has made moves towards outcome-based conditionality, as a response to the failure of past policy conditionalities, it still requires the recipient country to have an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and thus to be bound by IMF policy conditions. A second problem is the inconsistency between the stated aim of European Community development cooperation, which is 'poverty reduction and eradication', and the impact of IMF programmes that often include policy prescriptions which undermine poverty reduction strategies. For example, by imposing stringent targets for inflation and reserve levels the budgetary space for government spending on social sectors is reduced.[10]

Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

EPAs are trade arrangements being negotiated between the EU as a whole and groups of ACP countries. The EC, mandated by the Member States to handle the negotiations, views aid and trade as being closely linked.

For the ACP countries, the scope for negotiating EPAs was embodied in the Cotonou Agreement. The trade negotiations have been subject to great controversy and heated debate. Many consider the EPAs to pose a threat, not only to government revenue, local producers and industries, food sovereignty, essential public services, and the regional integration of African countries, but also to the right and capacity of African countries to develop their economies according to the needs of their people and their own national, regional and continental priorities.

The pressure for ACP countries to drop their tariffs under the EPAs will remove the only protection that African governments can offer their own farmers, as they cannot subsidise due to conditionalities on loans and aid. The rules concerning market access, tariffs and subsidies severely limit the government's ability to protect domestic agricultural production, where women are predominant. Within the context of current gender relations in Africa and past experiences in trade liberalisation, it is clear that women end up paying the costs of social welfare issues for their families and communities.[11]

Due to substantial criticism during the negotiations, the EU promised to provide aid for trade to support the adjustment costs of the EPAs, once they are in place. Although the importance of such compensation is beyond question, it is still to be seen how this will be provided.[12]

In 2007, the EC indicated that it would increase its funding of EPA-related support activities by reallocating funds under various RIPs in support of those activities. There is concern that this will reduce the amount of funding under the RIPs for other activities, notably support for social sectors, and that, given its link to the EPA negotiations, it will only be available to those ACP countries which sign trade agreements with the EU.

The Treaty of Lisbon: the way forward

When, as part of the preparations for the current financial perspectives, the legal instruments governing the use of the EU's funding were revised, significant moves were made towards ensuring that the EU's development cooperation was implemented as part of a global development policy.

NGOs that have followed the initiatives to amend the EU Treaties since the Council's 2002 launch of the process that ended up in the Lisbon Treaty have consistently argued that the EU's development policy and its objectives should define the framework for the EU's relations with all developing countries (as defined by the OECD/DAC), without any regional discrimination.

The EU's development policy has become central to the regulations covering the use of EU development funds in Asia and Latin America in particular, and to a lesser extent in countries of the southern Mediterranean, southern Caucuses and Eastern Europe covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. As a result, there has been an increased consistency in the implementation of EU development policy towards all parts of the developing world.[13]

To advance on the provisions in the new Treaty – which still needs to be ratified – it is seen as vital that the EDF should also be brought within the framework of the EU's overall budget. This will allow for proper democratic scrutiny, and will ensure a policy focused on poverty eradication without regional discrimination. In its role as one of the co-legislators for establishing the revised legal instruments, the EP ensures that the funds provided through the DCI must finance legitimate development activities. The EP's powers should be extended to cover the ACP regions, to ensure full democratic scrutiny and the identification of any gaps in the EU's promotion of the right not to live in poverty. ■

6 Eurostep, "Democratic scrutiny of EU aid: Benchmarks for scrutiny of the joint EU programme to ACP countries", Briefing paper, Brussels, September 2007.

7 EEPA, "Administering aid differently: A review of the European Commission's general budget support", EEPA occasional report, Brussels, March 2008.

8 Alliance2015, "The European Commission's commitment to education and the elimination of child labour", p. 37, editor: EEPA, Brussels 2007.

9 EEPA "Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health indicators in the EU Development Aid", briefing paper 8, Brussels, December 2007. Eurostep, International Women's Day: "Time to indicate progress towards gender justice Gender Equality Indicators in EU Development Cooperation Strategy", position paper, Brussels, March 2008.

10 See footnote 7.

11 ACORD, (2006) "EPAs, an assault on Africa's food sovereignty: - Why a gender and women's rights analysis is important for Africa", January 2007.

12 EEPA, "The development cooperation aspects of EU trade negotiations with developing countries", briefing paper, Brussels, October 2007.

13 See footnote 3.

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Liberalization curtails social and economic rights in the Arab region

The Arab region has been trying to cope with the rules of global governance, currently moulded by economic globalization and the trade liberalization model. Arab countries face the dilemma of responding either to economic and social rights or to political and civil rights, disregarding the fact that both sets of rights are entangled. Furthermore, while the sponsors of liberalization argue that freer trade leads to democratization, the opposite is happening in the Arab region: liberalization thwarts democracy.

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Arab NGO Network for Development

Global governance and its incidence on regional and national policymaking

Some critics stress that decision-making does not take place any longer at the nation-state level and, thus, promote a retreat in the state's role and institutions. Yet, others see that the globalization process has only repositioned the state, which has to play a stronger role in stabilizing and balancing policies towards social justice purposes, while corporate and profit-led capitalism takes on bigger roles in policy shaping (Rodrik 1998, Dervis 2005). This is not new; it has been long debated between the socialist and capitalist schools. While both agree on the need for some form of a state, the main question remains what kind of state is needed: one that protects capital, instigates policies that maximize growth and allows its concentration in the hands of a few, or one that conducts efficient policies, addresses equality and equity, and secures social and economic rights for all.

What goes beyond dispute is that the current arrangements result in a power shift involving the state, international institutions and non-governmental groups, including civil society[2] and market actors. This in turn reduces the capability of the state to allow for democratic processes and spaces. Such democratic deficit weakens democracy within our own countries (Stiglitz 2006, Soros 1998) and reduces the margin for national decision-making and citizens' participation.

In this paper we will be analyzing the impacts of contemporary economic globalization on development-related notions. In the first section, we will consider the limitations set on people's freedoms and rights by studying how economic globalization, and its trade liberalization mechanisms, affects human rights and the discourse on democratization.

In the second section, we will be studying the impact of this on the region, highlighting how Arab countries are faced with the dilemma of responding either to economic and social rights or to political and civil rights. We will also try to explain, through specifically looking at the human rights breaches resulting from the trade liberalization policies, how national policymaking is affected by the global economic architecture. Finally, the paper sheds some light on the economic and social reforms needed in the region.

Economic globalization, development discourse and people's freedoms and rights

The international trade system, which came to represent the engine of current economic globalization, has been instituting new forms of legislation and relations in and among states through institutions, policies, and legal agreements developed at the multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels. These agreements reach beyond trade in goods, into areas that have a direct impact on peoples' rights, living standards and cultural norms. These accords are boosting the role of markets and profit-oriented policies in shaping the world and the way people live. Accordingly, as they bring about new power systems, they require new spaces for democratic participation, both at the national and global level.

The dominant development discourse adopted by international institutions and most developed countries today promotes a limited role for the state, a freer hand for the market, prioritization of trade liberalization, privatization, and generation of higher income and wealth.

Proponents of such a neoliberal approach claim that these profit-oriented policies bring about democracy, good governance, and global norms of policy conduct. Moreover, they regard the policy-takeover by international institutions as a cure to the self-interest, corruption and lack of democratic political systems in developing countries.

Opponents to these doctrines, on their part, consider that neoliberalism introduces new problems, aggravates existing ones (Grabel 2002) and increases the levels of inequality and poverty (Chang and Grabel 2004, Atkinson 2002, Krugman 2002). For economic globalization, led by neoliberal policies that are set by the Industrial North, have often bypassed local democratic institutions and proved to be economically counterproductive and devastating to the so-called developing nations[3]. In the same line, some note that neoliberalism instigates a system in which groups, that as a result of these policies become economically disenfranchised, lack the political power to secure compensation from the government (DeMartino 2000). Moreover, such doctrines tend to limit both development discourse and state policy-making tools through the imposition of a single economic recipe for development, which not necessarily responds to national needs and priorities. Accordingly, this type of globalization tends to boost the demand for 'social protection' while at the same time thinning the capacity of the state to provide it.[4]

For that matter, Amartya Sen[5] reminds us that the process of social transformations and the value of the freedoms induced in such process hold priority over mere income growth, the latter being the focus of the neoliberal development discourse (See Sen, Amartya: *Development as Freedom, Markets and Freedoms,* and *Markets and the Freedom to Choose*). Sen underscores how important it for people to have freedom of choice and the ability to decide what to work on, how to produce, and what to consume. Benjamin Freidman (2005) notes that the value of the rising standards of living should not be limited to economic improvements, since it is expected to press forward the political and social institutions of any society towards more openness and democracy. The main question under contemporary global governance is whether the choice and freedom that Sen prioritizes, and the democracy that Freidman refers to, can be secured under the current global financial architecture or if, on the contrary, the latter is reinforcing an undemocratic layer of governance

1 Kinda Mohamadieh is Programme Manager at the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND: <www.annd.org>). The paper has benefited from extensive feedback and input from ANND's Executive Director, Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad.

2 Civil society actors, as referred in this paper, cover various forms of non-state, non-market, and non-familial actors, including social movements, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, media and research groups.

3 Bjonnes, Roar. "Economic Democracy, World Government, and Globalization", available at: <www.proutworld.org/wg/ecodemwglob.htm>.

4 Cheru, Fantu (2002). "Economics and Human Rights: Making Globalization Work for Human Development". American University.

5 In *Development as Freedom*, Sen defines development in terms of human capabilities: the freedom to lead a life of well-being – freedoms that include the acquisition of sufficient food, freedom from disease and ill-treatment, access to education, freedom from unemployment. The concerns of development are ultimately about what people can or cannot do: whether they are well-nourished, whether they can read and write, whether they can escape avoidable illness, whether they can live long. Perceived in these terms, development is a broad process of social transformation, the elimination of poverty, the reduction of unemployment and inequality, rising levels of schooling and literacy. [Taken from "Globalization and Its Contradictions; Democracy and Development in the Sub-Continent", Veena Thadani, New York University, paper presented at the British International Studies Conference, University College Cork, December 2006].

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that, lacking space for manoeuvre, ends-up limiting choices and rights at the national level.

Economic globalization and human rights

Everyone agrees that the underlying assumptions of economic globalization contradict those of international human rights. While UN human rights instruments assume core governmental responsibility towards fulfilling these rights, economic globalization calls governments to give away many of their responsibilities. Consequently, governments find themselves in a very paradoxical situation where, as Samir Naim-Ahmed has stressed, they are decision takers rather than decision makers.[6]

According to international law, human rights have primacy over other international laws and obligations, including those associated with economic and trade agreements. Moreover, our governments have a legal obligation to translate into policies the human rights conventions they sign, both at the international and national level. Governments have the responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights commitments.

However, Arab governments are being tied to a very different set of global rules that often violate human rights, pressed forward by institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), multilateral and bilateral free trade agreements, and international financial institutions.

Trade agreements, for instance, have direct bearing today on main economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to participation, food, health, education, and employment. These rights have to be considered not only within a country but also beyond national borders; this means that a country's ability to secure these rights should not be curtailed. Moreover, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) requires a policy margin for governments to implement human rights commitments. For example, governments need revenues to instigate policies to sustain these rights, and an industrial policy to support its producers to be competitive in the international market. However, today's trade agreements obligations will make it cumbersome for them to do that.

Within this context, poor and politically weak governments are presented with the choice of either honouring human rights accords or complying with the commands of international economic institutions. They often prefer to violate human rights and face complaints or, at worst, international investigation rather than being cut off of millions of dollars in aid in case they reject trade and economic agreements.[7]

On the implementation level, there exists a significant gap between the policy communities leading the economic and trade agendas in our countries and those leading the human rights agendas. Trade ministers and ambassadors do not mingle with the social affairs and other ministers that look after human rights obligations. Moreover, trade negotiators do not take human rights into consideration when discussing trade agreements, although their governments are bound by the conventions they are party to. In fact, they lack the understanding of what economic and social rights are required under international law. Differences between these two realms are not only institutional but also cultural; trade negotiators and human rights advocates and lawyers have different perspectives on what is at stake. Economists see that economic growth in the short-term will lead to progressive improvements regarding rights in the long-term, while human rights advocates see that short-term economic growth should not be prioritized at the expense of human rights commitments.[8] Accordingly, the problematic triggered for the short, medium, and long term by the international trade system is not being addressed in a constructive and comprehensive way.

Moreover, it remains difficult for governments to bring into play their human rights legal obligations in their trade negotiations. One of the main reasons for this difficulty is that there is no institutionalized policy forum where the relationship between trade and human rights can be addressed. The global system does not provide for a systematic dialogue on human rights and development issues between international organizations, for instance between the WTO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the UN.

Economic globalization, trade liberalization, and democracy

However, several researches argue for the interrelation between democratization and trade liberalization; and many voices promote economic globalization and its trade liberalization agenda as a core factor for democratization, as well as an indicator of it.

Such line of thinking notes that since the mid 1980's developing countries have rushed to adopt free trade, while concurrently there has been a global movement toward democracy.[9] This took place after the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the preference of import-substitution policies by most developing countries. Many claim that under such policies, the groups that gained most tended to be powerful supporters of the political leaders. Changing trade policies, it was believed, would inflict severe costs on the regime's main backers.[10]

Accordingly, these researches maintain that democratization and trade liberalization have structural inter-linkages. Democratization opens up new avenues of support for freer trade as it reduces the ability of governments to use trade barriers as a strategy for garnering political support. Moreover, democratization, which implies an increase in the electorate's size, induces the adoption of trade policies that more adequately promote the welfare of consumers/voters at large, this implying trade liberalization[11] and the assumption that trade liberalization promotes the welfare of consumers.

However, experience tells that trade liberalization does not necessarily lead to increasing the welfare of consumers nor allows for the protection of their basic rights, including the right to access basic services such as health, education, housing, water and electricity. Moreover, the experience in developing countries does not indicate that the change in trade policy and liberalization of the economy based on export substitution models made a difference regarding re-distribution of wealth and resources.

But, contrary to this approach, it should be noted that real and substantive democracy, one that enhances people's participation – including multiple stakeholders and constituencies from the middle and low income classes – might lead to opposition and call for limitations on trade liberalization policies. This is due to the fact that trade liberalization has been led by corporate priorities and has been concentrating wealth in the hands of the few, while marginalizing the rights of middle and low income groups. In this line, the adoption of a democratic system may actually contradict the tendencies towards economic liberalization.

In this sense, it could be stated that policies on economic liberalization not necessarily lead to open and democratic societies. The Arab region, for instance, shows the contrary: while many of its countries have taken steps to liberalize unilaterally their trade policies, most of them still witness concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, whom often tend to be the same people controlling the political processes or holding strong connections to the regimes in power.

6 Naim-Ahmed, Samir (2007). "Human Rights and Globalization", available at: <countercurrents.org>.

7 Shultz, Jim (2003). "Economic Globalization vs. Human Rights: Lessons From The Bolivian Water Revolt", available at: <www.fntg.org/news/index.php?op=read&articleid=651>.

8 This section is based on a presentation by Olivier de Schutter from the International Federation for Human Rights, entitled "Trade and Human Rights: Challenges and Opportunities", presented at the regional workshop on the role of civil society organizations in trade-related advocacy, organized by ANND, August 2007.

9 Milner, Helen and Kubota, Keiko (2005). "Why the Move to Free Trade? Democracy and Trade Policy in the Developing Countries" in *International Organization*, Vol. 59, issue 01, p. 107-143.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

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Social and economic rights versus political and civil rights

In the Arab region, both the contemporary global economic architecture and the global governance frameworks described above have significantly influenced social and economic policymaking processes and institution building. Although significant changes were introduced to the economic models adopted throughout the region, most of the Arab states have failed transitioning to democracy and are still dominated by undemocratic and autocratic regimes. Within this context, the region clearly combines a strong state role, dominating political spheres and limiting the space for civil society, with a relatively weak role of the small and medium private sector and an intensifying economic reform process – led according to the dominant global economic approaches and recipes.

It is worth noting that the geo-strategic importance of the region, and the abundance of natural resources within it, have often attracted global and hegemonic economic interests. One of the factors that intensified the focus on the region is the fact that, in the post colonial era, most Arab states adopted "anti imperialistic" foreign policies. In fact, Nasserite Egypt was one of the leaders of the Bandung process (1955) and the non-alignment bloc.[12] Moreover, countries like Algeria played a key role in the rise of the G77 and promoting the discourse on development within the UN.

In the Arab countries, the state has played a leadership role in economic and social affairs; during the sixties, the ruling groups that came into power adopted a leftist, socialist ideology and agenda that promised economic well being and social justice. In these early days, after the national liberation struggle, Arab countries, like other developing countries, were more enthusiastic towards institutionalizing social and economic rights within their national legislations and constitutions than political and civil rights. While the former were in tune with the welfare state system that was the norm in the region, the political and civil rights threatened with loss of control over power. Accordingly, Arab states exerted a tight rule and repressed political and civil freedoms.

Consequently, during the seventies, and consistent with the states' failure to provide with a successful institutional build up for the respect of political and civil rights, a public outcry came to the forefront demanding reform and change. This happened at the expense of economic and social rights, whose importance was minimized at the time. At the same time, responding to the Arab countries political stance, Western governments, as well as the international financial institutions, played an active role in promoting initiatives for change in the region.

> Trade agreements, for instance, have direct bearing today on main economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to participation, food, health, education, and employment.

Since the beginning of the nineties, the Western strategy towards the region took on a revised and more focused approach, resulting from world geopolitical changes. These strategies – intensified after the 11 September events – found expression in several political, economic, and social initiatives, starting with the introduction of the structural adjustment strategies by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), which took place during the late seventies and the eighties. This was followed by the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (Barcelona process), the Broader Middle East project, and endless proposals by international financial institutions. Such proposals were presented as reforms that tackle the basic economic and social structures of the region.[13] Indeed, foreign reform initiatives came aligned, either directly or indirectly, with economic liberalization agendas, while national and regional initiatives took a passive-acceptance stand from the mainstream neo-liberal recipes proposed within such agendas.

The changing role of the state in the development process

In the aftermath of the colonial era, the region achieved significant growth and economic and social progress. In its report "Labour, Growth, and Governance in the MENA region" the WB notes that the development model adopted by the Arab countries during that period depended on a comprehensive role played by the state as provider of social services, including education, housing, health, and food subsidies. The WB notes that during this period the Arab countries were able to achieve significant progress in social development.

The role of the states started to shrink in the seventies and eighties, while liberalization of the economy and trade was undertaken as part of the structural adjustment programmes advised by the WB and the IMF. This period witnessed started the de-construction of the existing social contract between state and citizens in the Arab countries. Moreover, during this period, the Arab countries were shifting from state-led economies and import-substitution growth policies to more export-substitution approaches. As noted above, this transition took place under repressive regimes that dropped the goals of development and liberation[14] and were more concerned with securing the continuity of their grip on power.

Today, the region sees development paralyzed. The socio-economic crisis includes lack of growth, unemployment, imbalance among productive sectors, and deteriorated indices of income and wealth distribution. The economic structures suffer from low productivity, lack of diversity, and scarcity of investments in productive sectors. The situation is further aggravated by the unbalanced distribution of wealth among the region's countries: some are among the richest countries of the world (such as the United Arab Emirates) and some (Somalia, for instance) among the poorest.

Also, countries in the Arab region face a deteriorating level of education, especially in rural areas, and a feeble connection between the curricula and the production needs, as well as the labour market needs. The expanded access to education, one of the most important achievements in the era of national independence, has not been complemented by the required modernization of the educational system. As for health schemes and social safety nets, they remain restricted to specific classes, embedded in complex bureaucratic procedures and providing poor services.[15]

Moreover, as a consequence of globalization and its intersecting position among three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe) the Arab region is witnessing a dramatic transformation in patterns of work and production. This, according to the Arab Labour Organization (ALO),[16] is producing higher figures of unemployment, especially among the educated youth and women, as well as aggravating the lack of social protection for national and expatriate work forces, in a region that needs to create some 100 million jobs over the next 20 years.[17]

In describing this situation, the ILO Director-General Juan Somavía notes that "more and more, the fundamental issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining are being seen not just as ends in themselves, but also as means to harness growth and equity". Somavía stresses that "this current model of globalization is not delivering for ordinary people…disparities are growing, discontent rising, and enemies of human security in every society are fanning the flames of discord."[18]

12 Abou Chakra, Sanaa (2007). "Establishing Democracy in the Arab Region: A Comparative Approach to International and Regional Initiatives (Political, Economic and Social)", a document prepared for ANND.

13 Milner and Kubota, *op. cit.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 This section is based on research and analysis provided in Milner and Kubota, *op. cit.*

16 Notes by Ahmad Mohammad Luqman, Director-General of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), Geneva (ILO News) – The ALO and ILO conference.

17 Refer to figures by ILO and ALO.

18 Notes by ILO Director-General Juan Somavía, addressing the 35th Session of the Arab Labour Conference in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, <www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/I-News/lang--en/WCMS_090684/index.htm>.

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What do the foreign reform initiatives convey to the region?

Within this context, much of today's reform proposals stem from the economic interests of those developed countries involved in the region and reflect the hegemony of the neoliberal, corporate-centred approach they support. These recipes have promoted a reform process that limits the role of the public sector and pushes towards more dependence on trade and investment as means for achieving fast economic growth and creating jobs.[19] However, these reforms are not complemented by reforms or changes in the other spheres. This limits the ability of trickling down to the people the economic benefits.

According to its supporters, globalization is supposed to create new spaces for people's participation; consequently, autocratic regimes would be less able to survive. However, the crude reality exposes the shortcomings of such theory: under the region's autocracies, be it monarchies or single party systems, or countries ruled by military juntas, the new educated elites have become a marginalized group that suffers from limited horizons for social ascent, monopolization of decision-making by closed inheritance processes, backward political representation formulas, as well as flagrant breaches of human rights and public and private liberties.[20] Even worse, the autocratic regimes are being reinforced through economic liberalization, which offers them more controlling powers through economic tools. As the concentration of wealth in the hand of few has been sustained and increasing, often these few are the same people controlling political power as well.

Today, economic globalization has become the process setting the political scenario and instruments of participation at the global, regional, and national fronts.[21] This context tends to limit the discussion of development as economic growth rather than human development and democracy as formal/procedural democracy rather than substantial democracy,[22] which includes economic empowerment of the majority and the disenfranchised poor.[23]

But the economic reforms and policy approaches that our countries are currently adopting do not provide for increased political choices; on the contrary they increase political tensions and misrepresentation: they enhance procedural rather than substantive democracy. In fact, the people in several Arab countries have been living under emergency law for decades; other states still violate human rights on a daily basis. Contrary to the alleged defence of democracy advocated by foreign players, in reality they seem to favour authoritarian rule in the region in order to have the aggressive neoliberal agenda of changes implemented, while marginalizing the rights of the people. This, in turn, seems to validate the theory asserting that authoritarian governments are more capable of initiating and sustaining major economic reforms.[24]

Trade liberalization resulting in direct breaches of citizen's rights

In 2005-2006, the average applied tariff on industrial products in the region ranged between 24-26% in countries like Tunisia, Djibouti and Morocco, 18-20% in Algeria, Egypt, and Sudan, 10-12% in Jordan and Mauritania, and 5-7% in Lebanon, Yemen, and the Gulf countries. The average tariff applied on agricultural products ranges between 23% and 65%. These tariffs, often inferior to the average applied in other developing countries, indicate the degree and extent that liberalization has undergone in the region.[25]

ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE UDHR

Most Arab countries recognize the Universal Bill of Rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. The UDHR integrates the comprehensiveness and non-divisibility of all rights, whether economic, social, cultural, political and civil.

However, in the last decades, the UDHR have been increasingly challenged, both globally and in the region, by the promotion and prioritization of the "war on terror", the rise of ideologies promoting the supremacy of a particular culture and the artificial division between social, economic and cultural rights from political and civil rights. To this, another disruptive factor must be added: the problematic of national sovereignty vis-à-vis the debate on who is responsible for implementing the UDHR (states, civil society, or the international community).

Ziad Abdel Samad. Presentation in the event of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Arab NGO Network for Development).

Qualified Industrial Zones agreement

The inadequate economic liberalization policies adopted today are not limited to zeroing policy space in the countries were they are implemented; the trade agreements developed and signed within this context directly contravene human rights of their populations.

For instance, preceding the bilateral free trade agreement between the two countries (2001), Jordan and the United States signed the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement. The QIZ requires that 11% of Jordanian industrial inputs come from Israel, unduly associating the US economic policy in the region with American support for Israel, even before reaching a political agreement about the rights of the Palestinian people. Thus, normalizing relations with Israel becomes a process independent of the political negotiations towards finding a just solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Yet, besides that geopolitical problem, the deregulation associated with the agreement leads to direct violations of labour laws and rights, including low wages, unfavourable employment conditions, lack of health insurance, abusive working hours, violation of the right to adequate work, deregulation of personnel dismissal, lack of training and of skill acquisition.

Mostly foreign owned companies – mainly Asian – occupy Jordan's QIZs, where 60% of their some 60,000 workers are foreign-born.[26] Thousands of foreign and Jordanian workers, mostly women from rural Jordanian areas, are employed under unfavourable conditions in the premises, producing

19 World Bank (2003). *Trade, Investment, and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Engaging the World.*

20 Milner and Kubota, *op. cit.*

21 Yasseen, Sayed (2008). "End of Representative Democracy". Appearing in *An-Nahar* Lebanese newspaper, 24 April 2008.

22 Substantive democracy is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed and is manifested by equal participation of all groups in society in the political process. This type of democracy can also be referred to as a functional democracy. Procedural democracy is a state system that has in place the relevant forms of democracy but is not actually managed democratically; accordingly the people or citizens of the state have less influence. This type of democracy assumes that the electoral process is at the core of the authority placed in elected officials and ensures that all procedures of elections are duly complied with (or at least appear so). It could be described as a democracy (i.e., people voting for representatives) wherein only the basic structures and institutions are in place.

23 Milner and Kubota, *op. cit.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 These numbers are extracted from unpublished research material developed by the United Nations Development Programme in the Arab region.

26 Yerkey, Gary G. (2006). "Bilateral Agreements: Jordan Cracks Down on Firms Exploiting Foreign Workers in Violation of Trade Pact". Bureau of National Affairs. Available online at: <www.nlcnet.org/article.php?id=70>.

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for multinationals like Wal-Mart, Gloria Vanderbilt, Target and Kohl's.

Tens of thousands of the foreign guest workers, mostly from Bangladesh, China, India and Sri Lanka had their passports confiscated upon arriving in Jordan and forced to work up to 109 hours a week.[27] Some of them were trapped in involuntary servitude, raped by plant managers and forced to work 24, 38 and even 72-hour shifts. In some cases, workers asking for their proper wages were imprisoned.

In a factory called Al Safa, which was sewing garments for Gloria Vanderbilt, a young woman hung herself after being raped by a manager. Workers were paid an average wage of two cents an hour. Moreover, they were slapped, kicked, punched and hit with sticks and belts.[28]

After the National Labor Committee, a workers' advocacy group based in New York,[29] reported and exposed these violations, foreign employees from companies implicated in labour rights violations were transferred to their home countries or to other companies.[30]

Also Egypt has signed a QIZ. This agreement sometimes presents the basis for signing a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with the US. At present, the US has bilateral FTAs in the Arab region with Jordan (2001), Morocco (2005), Bahrain (2006), and Oman (2006). The FTAs pressed forward by the US in turn have proven to reduce the policy space available for national decision-making, as they impose much stricter liberalization terms on the services sector than agreements within the WTO. The FTAs oblige countries to liberalize every service sector included in the agreement, thus opening them to privatization.[31] As a result, many Arab countries have given up the ability to regulate the equal access of citizens to basic services such as education, health services, water, and others.

27 "US government asked to investigate allegations, Jordan rocked by abuse claims", 5 May 2006, available online at: <www.emergingtextiles.com/?q=art&s=060505Jmark&r=free&n=1>.

28 Kernaghan, Charles (2006). "U.S. Jordan Free Trade Agreement Descends Into Human Trafficking & Involuntary Servitude; Tens of Thousands of Guest Workers Held in Involuntary Servitude". National Labour Committee.

29 National Labour Committee website: <www.nlcnet.org/index.php>.

30 "QIZ workers relocated following investigations". *Jordan Times*, 5 July 2006.

31 By the negative list approach to negotiations countries choose which services they are not going to negotiate on, while all other services will be included in the agreement; whereas the positive list approach implies countries specifically designate which services will be included in the agreement, while the undesignated remain out it.

GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL DESTITUTION

"Neoliberalism and the promise of material salvation are intensely refuted by the simultaneous presence of grotesque concentrations of wealth and privilege on the one hand, and an unprecedented scale of poverty, squalor, inequality and marginalization on the other. Above all, globalization exposes vast populations in virtually all parts of the world to a relentless market rationality, furthering already existing disparities and deepening social destitution."

Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 1999: 180-181.[1]

1 Thadani, Veena (2006). "Globalization and Its Contradictions; Democracy and Development in the Sub-Continent". New York University, paper presented at the British International Studies Conference, University College Cork.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Also, in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched within the Barcelona process, eight Arab countries[32] have signed association trade agreements with the European Union (EU) towards achieving a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA) by 2010. Although they are framed as a supposedly comprehensive partnership aiming at development, peace and security in the Northern and Southern basin of the Mediterranean, these agreements lack any consideration to social and economic rights. A report by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (Byrne and Shamas, 2002) revealed an almost complete absence of methodological thinking, within the EU and Euro-Mediterranean institutions, on the question of economic and social rights and their role in the overall construct of the agreements.[33] Even when human rights are included within the scope of the partnership, this is oriented towards political and civil rights. However, the lack of parallel advances in terms of economic and social rights might render consideration to civil and political rights as a formality devoid of substance.[34]

32 Arab countries who signed an association agreement with the EU include Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. Syria's agreement with the EU is still pending.

33 Martin, Ivan, Byrne, Iain and Schade-Poul, Marc (2004). "Economic and Social Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnerhsip". Universidad Carlos III of Madrid, Spain; Human Rights Centre, Essex University, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network.

34 *Ibid.*

In general, no impact assessment studies of these agreements are undertaken, neither before nor after their signature. The EU commissioned the single assessment of sustainability of the EMFTA carried out until today, to look at the implications of removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers on industrial products, agriculture, services and south-south trade liberalization. The study indicated that significant social challenges would arise from the liberalization of trade between the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs), specifically in the short and medium terms.

The study also stresses that the MPCs will harm the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, noting "significant adverse effects on Goals one (poverty), two (education) and four and five (health) and mixed effects for Goal seven (environment)". The potential adverse impacts relate to the loss in tariff revenues, occurring mainly because of the liberalization of industrial products, this worsened by the effects coming from the other components of the EMFTA scenario. "Without effective mitigation, some of the short term effects may continue into the long term", the study explains. According to the study, the MPCs will experience "a significant rise in unemployment, a fall in wage rates, and significant loss in government revenues in some countries, with potential for consequent social impacts through reduced expenditure on health, education and social support programmes". Furthermore, the liberalization process is expected to lead to "greater vulnerability of poor households to fluctuations in world market prices for basic foods and adverse effects on the status, living standards and health of rural women, associated with accelerated conversion from traditional to commercial agriculture."

Yet, even though such adverse implications have been foreseen, policy is still being developed in the same direction. It looks like the countries and policies involved are not open to discussion.

What kind of economic and social reforms does the region need?

The Arab region lacks clear and transparent national socio-economic reform agendas. Often, the political challenges are used as excuses to marshal laws interrupting the national political processes. The regimes in power have failed to address the pressing socio-economic problems that the region faces and the economic reforms implemented mainly respond to requirements by major international institutions and developed partner countries that not necessarily serve the local needs and priorities.

The Alexandria Declaration, one of the leading declarations on reform in the region, and the only comprehensive civil society initiative for reform, resulted from the conference of Arab civil society held

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in Alexandria, Egypt, in March 2004.[35] The Declaration[36] asserts that key aspects for any reform process to be undertaken in the region are not being taken into account, such as the controversies regarding the orientation of the economic system, the new definition of role of the state, the relationship between the state and the market and the social dimensions of development.

As stressed in the Declaration, there is a necessity to address poverty in its comprehensive and multiple dimensions, including social and political marginalization, lack of participation, and constrained opportunities for upward mobility. The signatories of the declaration believe that economic growth alone is not a sufficient instrument for poverty reduction. Therefore, they call for the adoption of a closer implementation timeframe to fight poverty in conformity with the United Nations' Millennium Declaration.

In addition, employment represents a major problem. The declaration proposes enhancing the development of medium and small enterprises funding programmes, empowering women to participate in the national work force, and reviewing the current economic policies from a full-employment perspective. Creating jobs and reducing unemployment remains the main development challenge the region faces. The unemployment rate has been increasing since the mid 1980s, and now averages over 15% of the labour force, by official figures. Actual unemployment is probably much higher.

For that reason, it is imperative to review the economic and social policies in the region and its inter-relation with political and civil rights and well-being. Arab civil society and private (business) sector institutions can make significant contributions to the economic reform. These contributions must be achieved through participation in priority setting and by working in implementation hand in hand with governments. ■

The Alexandria Declaration, one of the leading declarations on reform in the Arab region, and the only comprehensive civil society initiative for reform, stressed the need to address poverty in its comprehensive and multiple dimensions, including social and political marginalization, lack of participation, and constrained opportunities for upward mobility.

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35 This conference was organized by the Alexandria Bibliotheque and the League of Arab States in partnership with the Arab Business Council. The latter was established in 2003 and serves as the advisory body to the World Economic Forum on its Arab World strategy. The Arab Competitiveness Report for 2005, produced by the World Economic Forum, <www.weforum.org>, which tackled economic reform proposals in the Arab countries, talked about the needed reforms in the public sector institutions and labour markets, governance and competitiveness, structural reforms, investment climate, and private sector role, foreign direct investment, cooperation relations and liberalization policies, government expenditure and liquidity, as well as women's role.

36 Check the declaration at: <www.bibalex.org/arf/en/Files/Document.pdf>.

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MEASURING PROGRESS

BASIC CAPABILITIES INDEX 2008

Alarmingly slow progress

At the current rate of progress, Sub-Saharan Africa would only reach the satisfaction of basic needs in 2353, Central Asia in 2042 and, except for Europe and North America, none of the other regions would reach the basic minimum level before 2022.

Poverty is and will continue to be the lack of access to goods and services which are basic to human welfare. Measuring it through monetary levels only provides an approximation to the phenomenon, the implication being that all of these needs can be satisfied by buying them on the open market. Poverty, therefore, becomes endogenous to the capitalist system itself, a system in which "money is all-powerful". Consequently, poverty continues, very conveniently, to be measured through the intermediation of money and not by means of the direct measurement of a person's welfare.

On the other hand, those of us who consider that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and that many of the dimensions involved should be dealt with from a conceptual framework based on the rights of persons (and not on markets), also think that the welfare of a country's population can be assessed and monitored through observation of the levels of access to goods and services which these rights guarantee – independently of the means through which they are obtained.

Social Watch has been monitoring a major set of human welfare dimensions which are accessible through statistics available at international level. Although they are not all that we would wish, they do constitute a fairly comprehensive set. On the basis of the countries' situation in each and every one of these areas, it has been possible to determine levels and to monitor evolution.

The creation of the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) has slighty simplified this task. This index, composed of basic indicators for which there is a good deal of information in most countries, has enabled a closer follow-up of the performance of each country in connection with its citizens' minimum needs.

Reaching an acceptable BCI does not imply a high level of social development. It only means that a country has achieved universal coverage of those essential minimum needs indispensable for advancing towards greater welfare. As has been underlined since its inception, the maximum BCI level is a starting point and not the finishing line.

The BCI Tool

Social Watch has developed the BCI as a way to identify poverty not based on income.[1] The poverty-related indicators most widely used internationally are the World Bank estimates of the number of people living on less than one or two dollars a day, or the United Nations Development Programme ranking based on the Human Development Index, which combines income figures with health- and education-related indicators. The BCI is comparatively easier to construct and it is feasible to implement it at sub-national and municipal levels, without requiring expensive household surveys as income-based indices do. By not using income, the BCI is consistent with the definitions of poverty based on the deprivation of capabilities and the denial of human rights.

The BCI is based on three indicators: percentage of children who reach fifth grade, survival until the fifth year of age (based on mortality amongst children under five) and percentage of deliveries assisted by skilled health personnel. These indicators express different dimensions addressed by internationally agreed development goals (education, children's health and reproductive health). Likewise, research indicates that as a summary index, the BCI provides a general overview consistent with the health status and the basic educational performance of a given population.

The highest possible BCI score is reached when all women receive medical assistance during labour, no child leaves school before completing the fifth grade and infant mortality is reduced to its lowest possible level of less than five deaths for every thousand live births. These indicators are closely linked to the capabilities that members of society should have and which mutually reinforce one another to make it possible to achieve higher levels of individual and collective development. They focus especially on capabilities which incorporate the youngest members of society, thereby fostering future development.

The usefulness of the BCI lies in that it has proven to be closely correlated to measurements of other human capabilities related to the social development of countries. This index assigns a score to each country, thereby making it possible to compare it with other countries and to assess its evolution over time.

1 The current formulation of the BCI was designed by the Social Watch Research Team, on the basis of an idea first developed as the "Quality of Life Index" by Action for Economic Reforms, for the Social Watch coalition in the Philippines. This, in turn, was inspired in the Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) proposed by Professor Amartya Sen and popularised by the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI).

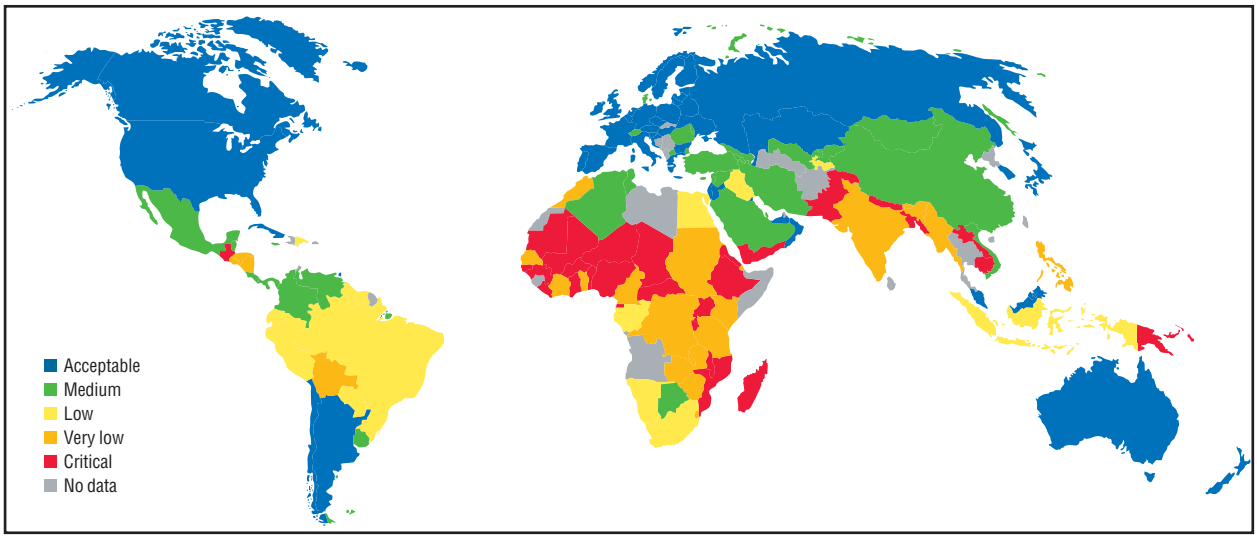

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CHART 1. BCI and BCI evolution by countries' BCI level

CRITICAL LEVEL			VERY LOW LEVEL			LOW LEVEL			MEDIUM LEVEL			ACCEPTABLE LEVEL		
Country	BCI	BCI Evolution	Country	BCI	BCI Evolution	Country	BCI	BCI Evolution	Country	BCI	BCI Evolution	Country	BCI	BCI Evolution
Chad	42	←	Cameroon	70	←	Zimbabwe	80	=	Vietnam	90	→	Denmark	98	←
Afghanistan	52		Gambia	70	→	Bolivia	80	→	Colombia	90	→	Sri Lanka	98	
Niger	52	←	Kenya	71	→	Guyana	81	←	Cook Islands	90		Kazakhstan	98	→
Rwanda	53	→	Togo	71	=	Solomon Islands	82		China	90		Argentina	98	→
Ethiopia	54	→	Senegal	71	→	Sao Tome & Prin.	82		Panama	91	=	New Zealand	98	=
Bangladesh	57	=	India	71	→	Gabon	82	→	Singapore	92		St Lucia	98	=
Burundi	58	→	Lesotho	72	=	Ecuador	83	→	Iran	92	←	Mauritius	98	=
Lao, PDR	58	→	Nicaragua	72	→	Iraq	83	→	Brazil	92	=	Kuwait	98	→
Equatorial G.	59	=	Zambia	73	→	Indonesia	84	→	Grenada	92	←	Libya	98	
Uganda	59	=	Tanzania	73	→	Tajikistan	85	=	Botswana	92	=	Russian Federation	98	→
Timor-Leste	60		Djibouti	75		Azerbaijan	85	←	Turkey	92	→	Ukraine	98	→
Guinea-Bissau	61		Sudan	76	←	Namibia	85	←	Cape Verde	93	=	Bulgaria	99	→
Sierra Leone	61		Burma/Myanmar	76	→	Paraguay	85	→	Belize	93	→	Fiji	99+	→
Madagascar	61	=	Swaziland	77	=	Suriname	86	←	St Vincent and Gren.	93	=	United Arab Em.	99+	=
Yemen	61	←	Philippines	77	→	Peru	86	→	Marshall Islands	93		United States of Am.	99+	→
Angola	62		Honduras	78	→	Maldives	86	→	Syria	94	→	United Kingdom	99+	→
Malawi	62	←	Bhutan	78	→	Vanuatu	87	←	Algeria	94	=	Cuba	99+	=
Nigeria	63	=	Comoros	79	→	Dominican Rep.	88	=	Albania	94	←	Belgium	99+	→
Pakistan	64	→	El Salvador	79	→	Kiribati	88	=	Mexico	94	→	Barbados	99+	→
Burkina Faso	64	→	Congo, Rep.	79		Egypt	88	→	Costa Rica	95	←	Bahamas	99+	
Cent. African R.	65		Côte d'Ivoire	79	→	Tuvalu	89	=	Venezuela	95	=	Belarus	99+	→
Liberia	65		Morocco	79	→	South Africa	89	→	Tonga	95	=	Oman	99+	→
Nepal	65	→				Georgia	89	←	Trinidad and Tobago	95	←	Bahrain	99+	=
Mozambique	66	→							Jamaica	95	→	Palau	99+	
Mauritania	66	=							Kyrgyzstan	95	=	Latvia	99+	→
Guinea	66	=							St Kitts and Nevis	95	=	Malaysia	99+	=
Ghana	66	=							Tunisia	95	→	Lithuania	99+	→
Cambodia	66	→							Lebanon	95	→	Hungary	99+	
Eritrea	67	→							Mongolia	96	=	Croatia	99+	→
Papua N. G.	68	→							Armenia	96	→	Canada	99+	→
Benin	68	←							Romania	96	←	Portugal	99+	→
Guatemala	68	→							Macedonia	96	=	France	99+	=
Mali	69	→							Moldova	96	=	Japan	99+	→
Congo, DR	69								Qatar	96	=	Slovenia	99+	→
									Thailand	96		Cyprus	99+	=
									Uruguay	96	=	Spain	99+	→
									Saudi Arabia	97	→	Czech Republic	99+	=
									Slovakia	97		Estonia	99+	=
									Switzerland	97	=	Australia	99+	→
									Samoa	97	=	Italy	99+	=
									Dominica	97	→	Korea. Rep.	99+	=
									Luxembourg	97	←	Greece	99+	→
									Jordan	97	=	Poland	99+	=
												Brunei Darussalam	99+	→
												Malta	99+	=
												Chile	99+	=
												Netherlands	99+	=
												Finland	99+	=
												Israel	99+	=
												Ireland	99+	=
												Iceland	99+	=
												Sweden	99+	→
												Norway	99+	=
												Germany	99+	→

NOTE: Countries presenting a +99 value had already reached a BCI value of 99 by the year 2000.

References: ← Major regression ← Regression = Stagnant → Slight progress → Significant progress

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The BCI 2008 was calculated for 176 countries, which were then grouped into various categories. The most serious situations are to be found in countries with *critical* BCI scores (less than 70 points). In the *very low* BCI category (70 to 79 points) there are countries that also face very significant obstacles in achieving the well-being of the population. Countries with *low* BCI scores (80 to 89 points) are at an intermediate level as regards the satisfaction of basic needs and their performance varies in some of the aspects of development. The countries which have succeeded in satisfying most or all of their populations' basic capabilities have been placed in the two categories with the highest BCI values (*medium*, 90 to 97 points, and *acceptable*, 98 to 99+ points). As has already been pointed out, belonging to these last two groups does not imply a high level of development, but only the fulfilment of basic levels of well-being.

Recent evolution

The 2008 BCI presents the situation on the basis of the latest available indicators (which date from around 2005). Its evolution is determined by means of a comparison with the values of the 2004 BCI (from around 2000).

A country-by-country analysis of the situation shows that close to half of the countries (76 of 153) have made progress since 2000. Figures show that 15% (24 countries) have regressed whereas 37% (56 countries) have not experienced significant changes during the period analysed.

Some countries in East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered a setback with regard to their basic capabilities, but the countries which have most regressed in their BCI are mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Regression has been major (over 5% of the BCI value) in seven cases. This is particularly disturbing since these countries are regressing from what are already *low*, *very low* or even *critical* BCI levels. This means that in some countries regression is getting worse, thus increasing the existing gap with the rest of the world (Chart 2).

Regional disparities

Different regional realities may be observed both in the index levels obtained and in the differential evolution of these levels. Regions in which basic capabilities are almost satisfied and concerns regarding social development involve targets which transcend the minimum levels indispensable for survival, coexist with others which are very distant from the minimum satisfaction of needs.

The magnitude of the gap shown by the BCI, with levels close to 99 in more advanced countries in Europe and North America and close to 70 in less advanced countries (in Sub-saharian Afric and South Asia, is already, in strictly numerical terms, extremely distressing: these numbers refer, precisely and exclusively, to the coverage of basic needs which any human being should enjoy. However, the real situation behind these differences is even harsher: critical BCI levels indicate serious difficulties in every dimension of social development. As an example, and with regard only to index components (directly related to all of the social development dimensions analysed by Social Watch), in some of these countries only 5% of births are assisted by skilled medical personnel or, every year, one in every four children under five dies and, with luck, a little over half of the children who start school will reach fifth grade.

Almost 20 points higher are East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and Central Asia, with values between 88 and 93, figures which, although higher, are still worrying. These regions have not yet achieved the satisfaction of minimum capabilities. The only regions which have achieved acceptable levels are Europe and North America.

An analysis of the evolution of these levels is even more discouraging: except for South Asia, which has recently evolved very favourably, all of the regions display very irregular patterns of growth.

TECHNICAL NOTES: BCI DESIGN BY COUNTRY

Indicators that make up the BCI:

- Percentage of children in the first grade who reach the fifth grade.
- Mortality amongst children under five.
- Percentage of births assisted by skilled health personnel.

To increase the number of countries with sufficient information to construct the index, values were assigned for the indicators where information was lacking. This was done by assigning the average value of that indicator for the group the country was in as defined by its current situation in the thematic area in question.

The BCI was calculated by using the non-weighted average of the original values of the three indicators in question (in the case of infant mortality a lineal transformation was previously applied to the indicator). To simplify the calculations all three indicators were given the same weight.

Child health is represented as I1 = (100 - M), survival rate up to 5 years of age, where M is the under-5 mortality rate (expressed as a percentage) or the probability of death in the first five years of life expressed as per 1,000 live births.

Education is represented as I2, where I2 is the rate of school retention or the percentage of children enrolled in the first grade who reach the fifth grade in the required number of years.

Reproductive health is shown as I3, where I3 is the percentage of births assisted by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses or midwives).

The Basic Capabilities Index value for a particular country is obtained by taking a simple average of the three components:

$$BCI = (I1 + I2 + I3) / 3$$

CHART 2. Number of countries by present BCI level according to evolution since 2000

	Critical level	Very low level	Low level	Medium level	High level	Total
Major regression ⟵	2	1	4	0	0	7
Regression ←	3	1	2	8	0	14
Stagnation =	8	4	4	18	22	56
Slight progress →	8	8	6	8	25	55
Significant progress ⟶	5	8	3	4	1	21
Total	26	22	19	38	48	153

CHART 3. BCI change by region (%)

Region	BCI 2008	Change 2000-latest available data (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	70	0.7
South Asia	71	6.6
East Asia & Pacific	88	1.9
Latin America & Caribbean	90	1.4
Middle East & North Africa	92	1.6
Central Asia	93	0.6
Europe	98	0.5
North America	99	3.1

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South Asia started off from a very low level with regard to deficiencies in conditions of life as measured by the BCI and despite the accelerated evolution of the last few years, the regional situation is still extremely critical, barely above that of Sub-Saharan Africa (Chart 3).

Likewise, the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is already very low according to its 70 BCI, excludes any hope of short, medium or even long-term changes by displaying an average evolution of 0.7%.

A discouraging future

Targets were set in the 1990s in an attempt to improve all of the social development indicators (World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen); in 2000 some of these challenges were relaunched (even lowering some of the aspirations) during the Millennium Summit. Marketing operatives and campaigns launched to show the world that poverty is a concern have been successful; however, the steps which followed have proved disappointing. We reached the year 2000 without fulfilling what we had undertaken in 1990 and there is every indication that the goals will not be achieved by 2015. It is also reasonable to think that, once the failure to achieve the Millennium Goals is confirmed, we may witness, in 2014, the launching of an alternative campaign for 2015-2030. However, if substantial changes do not occur, current rates of progress will still not be enough. Chart 4 shows the BCI's forecasts for each region if current tendencies are maintained.

At the present rate of progress, Sub-Saharan Africa will only reach the starting point – the satisfaction of basic needs – towards the year 2353. The scant progress registered during the last few years makes the date at which decent development may be achieved unthinkable – if not frankly ridiculous.

Central Asia, whose rate of progress is significantly higher, would be reaching that point 42 years after the Millennium Summit. And, except for Europe and North America, no other region will be able to reach that basic minimum level before 2022, if the current rate of progress does not improve. ■

CHART 4. BCI forecasts per region

FOR BCI 2008	BCI 2000	BCI 2008	BCI 2015	YEAR IN WHICH REGION WILL ACHIEVE BCI			
				BCI 70	BCI 80	BCI 90	BCI 98
Sub-Saharan Africa	69	70	70		2133	2256	2353
South Asia	64	71	85			2018	2022
Middle East & North Africa	90	92	93				2032
Latin America & the Caribbean	88	90	93				2027
East Asia & the Pacific	86	88	91				2031
Central Asia	92	93	94				2042
North America	96	99	99				
Europe	98	98	99				
	CRITICAL	VERY LOW		LOW	MEDIUM		ACCEPTABLE

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FOOD SECURITY

The high cost of basic rights

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER-NOURISHMENT (%)		ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)	
—	Afghanistan (52)				39	
ıı	Albania (94)	6	ıı	7	8	
→	Algeria (94)	4	ıı	6	4	→
ıı	Angola (62)	35	→	12	31	←
	Antigua and Barbuda (—)			5		
ıı	Argentina (98)	3	ıı	7	4	
→	Armenia (96)	24	→	8	4	
ıı	Australia (99)	<2.5	ıı	7		
ıı	Austria (—)	<2.5	ıı	7		
→	Azerbaijan (85)	7	→	12	7	
ıı	Bahamas (99)	8	ıı	7*		
—	Bahrain (99)			8	9*	
→	Bangladesh (57)	30	→	22	48	→
ıı	Barbados (99)	<2.5	ıı	13		
ıı	Belarus (99)	4	ıı	4	1	
ıı	Belgium (99)	<2.5	ıı	8*		
→	Belize (93)	4	→	6	7	
→	Benin (68)	12	→	16	23	→
	Bhutan (78)			15	19	
→	Bolivia (80)	23	→	7	8	→
ıı	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	9	ıı	5	2	
←	Botswana (92)	32	←	10	13	
→	Brazil (92)	7	→	8	6*	ıı
ıı	Brunei Darussalam (100)	4	ıı	10		
ıı	Bulgaria (99)	8	ıı	10		
ıı	Burkina Faso (64)	15	→	16	37	←
→	Burma/Myanmar (76)	5	→	15	32	ıı
←	Burundi (58)	66	←	11	39	ıı
→	Cambodia (66)	33	→	11	36	
ıı	Cameroon (70)	26	→	11	19	←
ıı	Canada (99)	<2.5	ıı	6		
	Cape Verde (93)			13*		
→	Central African Republic (65)	44	→	13	29	
→	Chad (42)	35	→	22	37	ıı
→	Chile (100)	4	→	6	1	ıı
→	China (90)	12	→	2	7	→
→	Colombia (90)	13	→	9	7	ıı
←	Comoros (79)	60	←	25	25	
←	Congo, DR (69)	74	←	12	31	
→	Congo, Rep. (79)	33	→	13	14	→
—	Cook Islands (90)			3	10*	

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population.
Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems.
Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished.
Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER-NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
←	Costa Rica (94)	5 ıı	7	5* ←
ıı	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	13 →	17	20 ←
→	Croatia (99)	7 →	6	1*
→	Cuba (99)	<2.5 →	5	4
ıı	Czech Republic (99)	<2.5 ıı	7	
ıı	Denmark (98)	<2.5 ıı	5	
→	Djibouti (75)	24 →	10	29
←	Dominica (97)	8 ←	10	
→	Dominican Republic (88)	29 ıı	11	5 →
→	Ecuador (83)	6 ıı	16	9 →
→	Egypt (88)	4 ıı	14	6 →
→	El Salvador (79)	11 ıı	7	10 →
	Equatorial Guinea (59)		13	19
←	Eritrea (67)	75 ←	14	40 ıı
→	Estonia (99)	<2.5 →	4	
→	Ethiopia (54)	46 →	20	38 →
→	Fiji (99)	5 →	10*	
ıı	Finland (100)	<2.5 ıı	4	
ıı	France (99)	<2.5 ıı	7*	
ıı	French Polynesia (—)	4 ıı		
→	Gabon (82)	5 →	14	12
←	Gambia (70)	29 ←	20	20
→	Georgia (89)	9 →	7	3
ıı	Germany (100)	<2.5 ıı	7	
→	Ghana (66)	11 →	9	18 →
ıı	Greece (100)	<2.5 ıı	8	
ıı	Grenada (92)	7 ıı	9	
→	Guatemala (68)	22 ←	12	23 →
→	Guinea (66)	24 →	12	26
←	Guinea-Bissau (61)	39 ←	24	19
→	Guyana (81)	8 →	13	14 →
→	Haiti (—)	46 →	25	22 →
→	Honduras (78)	23 ıı	10	11 →
ıı	Hungary (99)	<2.5 ıı	9	
ıı	Iceland (100)	<2.5 ıı	4	
→	India (71)	20 →	30*	46 →
→	Indonesia (84)	6 →	9	28 →
ıı	Iran (91)	4 ıı	7*	11*
	Iraq (83)		15	8
ıı	Ireland (100)	<2.5 ıı	6	
ıı	Israel (100)	<2.5 ıı	8	
ıı	Italy (99)	<2.5 ıı	6*	
→	Jamaica (95)	9 →	12	4 →
ıı	Japan (99)	<2.5 ıı	8	
ıı	Jordan (97)	6 ıı	12	4 ıı
←	Kazakhstan (98)	6 ←	6	4
→	Kenya (71)	31 →	10	20 →
ıı	Kiribati (88)	7 ıı	5*	13
←	Korea, DPR (—)	33 ←	7	23
ıı	Korea, Rep. (100)	<2.5 ıı	4	

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population.
Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems.
Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished.
Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER-NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
→	Kuwait (98)	5 →	7*	10* ıı
→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	4 →	5	3
→	Lao, PDR (58)	19 →	14	40 →
ıı	Latvia (99)	3 ıı	5	
ıı	Lebanon (95)	3 ıı	6	4
ıı	Lesotho (72)	13 →	13	20 ←
←	Liberia (65)	50 ←		26
ıı	Libya (98)	<2.5 ıı	7*	5*
ıı	Lithuania (99)	<2.5 ıı	4	
ıı	Luxembourg (97)	<2.5 ıı	8	
→	Macedonia (96)	5 →	6	2
←	Madagascar (61)	38 ←	17	42 ıı
→	Malawi (62)	35 →	13	19 →
→	Malaysia (99)	3 ıı	9	8 →
→	Maldives (86)	10 →	22	30
ıı	Mali (69)	29 ıı	23	33 ıı
ıı	Malta (100)	<2.5 ıı	6	
	Marshall Islands (93)		12	
→	Mauritania (66)	10 →		32 →
→	Mauritius (98)	5 ıı	14	15* →
→	Mexico (94)	5 ıı	8	5 →
	Micronesia (—)		18	15*
←	Moldova (96)	11 ←	6	4
→	Mongolia (95)	27 →	6	6 →
	Montenegro (—)		4	3
ıı	Morocco (79)	6 ıı	15	10 ıı
→	Mozambique (66)	44 →	15	24
→	Namibia (85)	24 →	14	24 ıı
→	Nepal (65)	17 →	21	39
ıı	Netherlands Antilles (—)	13 ıı		
ıı	New Caledonia (—)	10 ıı		
ıı	New Zealand (98)	<2.5 ıı	6	
→	Nicaragua (72)	27 →	12	10 ıı
→	Niger (52)	32 →	13	44 ıı
→	Nigeria (63)	9 →	14	29 →
	Niue (—)		0	
ıı	Norway (100)	<2.5 ıı	5	
	Oman (99)		8	18*
ıı	Pakistan (64)	24 ıı	19*	38 ıı
	Palau (99)		9*	
ıı	Panama (91)	23 ıı	10	8*
	Papua New Guinea (68)		11*	
→	Paraguay (85)	15 →	9	5 ıı
→	Peru (86)	12 →	11	8 →
→	Philippines (77)	18 →	20	28 →
ıı	Poland (100)	<2.5 ıı	6	
ıı	Portugal (99)	<2.5 ıı	8	
	Qatar (96)		10	6*
ıı	Romania (96)	<2.5 ıı	8	3
ıı	Russian Federation (98)	3 ıı	6	3*

NOTE:

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SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population.
Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems.
Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished.
Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER-NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
→	Rwanda (53)	33 →	6	23 →
→	Samoa (97)	4 →	4*	
→	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	10 →	8	9
ıı	Saudi Arabia (97)	4 ıı	11*	14*
→	Senegal (71)	20 →	19	17 →
	Serbia (—)		5	2
→	Seychelles (—)	9 →		
←	Sierra Leone (61)	51 ←	24	30 ıı
	Singapore (91)		8	3
←	Slovakia (97)	7 ←	7	
ıı	Slovenia (99)	3 ıı	6	
→	Solomon Islands (82)	21 →	13*	
	Somalia (—)		11	36
ıı	South Africa (89)	<2.5 ıı	15*	12
ıı	Spain (99)	<2.5 ıı	6*	
→	Sri Lanka (98)	22 →	22	29 →
→	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	10 →	9	
→	St Lucia (98)	5 →	12	
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	10 →	5	
←	Sudan (76)	26 →	31	41 ←
→	Suriname (86)	8 →	13	13
←	Swaziland (77)	22 ←	9	10
ıı	Sweden (100)	<2.5 ıı	4	
ıı	Switzerland (97)	<2.5 ıı	6	
ıı	Syria (94)	4 ıı	9	10 ıı
←	Tajikistan (85)	56 ←	10	17 →
ıı	Tanzania (73)	44 ←	10	22 →
→	Thailand (96)	22 →	9	9
ıı	Timor-Leste (60)	9 ıı	12	46
→	Togo (71)	24 →	12	26 ıı
	Tonga (95)		3	
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	10 →	19	6 ıı
→	Tunisia (95)	<2.5 ıı	7	4 →
→	Turkey (92)	3 ıı	16*	4 →
→	Turkmenistan (—)	7 →	4	11
	Tuvalu (89)		5	
→	Uganda (59)	19 →	12	20 ıı
ıı	Ukraine (99)	<2.5 ıı	4	1
ıı	United Arab Emirates (99)	<2.5 ıı	15*	14*
ıı	United Kingdom (99)	<2.5 ıı	8	
ıı	United States of America (99)	<2.5 ıı	8	2*
→	Uruguay (96)	<2.5 →	8	5 ıı
←	Uzbekistan (—)	25 ←	5	5
ıı	Vanuatu (87)	11 ıı	6	
ıı	Venezuela (95)	18 ←	9	5 →
→	Vietnam (90)	16 →	7	25 →
	West Bank and Gaza (—)	16	7	3
←	Yemen (61)	38 ←	32*	46 ←
→	Zambia (73)	46 ıı	12	20 →
←	Zimbabwe (80)	47 ıı	11	17 ←

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population.
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Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

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FOOD SECURITY

The high cost of basic rights

Today, in the world, every 24 hours, 100,000 people die of hunger, 30,000 of them children under the age of 5. Another 854 million people do not have enough food to cover their basic nutritional needs. This situation of extreme and generalized want persists and is heightened due to the ongoing food crisis, which particularly affects the poorest regions of the world.

The Heads of State and of Government at the 1996 World Food Summit reaffirmed "the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger"[1] and committed themselves to achieving food security and making an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger.

But if we are still far from achieving this fundamental human right, the upcoming scenario is even more alarming, since from 2007 there have been huge hikes in food prices at world level. The reasons for this are the following: climate change, precarious crops in different parts of the world, especially in Australia, the growing demands from the Asian market and developed countries for the use of food as biofuel. On the other hand, the constant rise of the oil price brings about associated costs increases, such as fertilizers and the transport of goods.

These factors, together with the fall in world food reserves and the lack of stability produced by speculation in the stock market, have contributed to generate a situation unknown until now. In developed countries the price hike has become the main preoccupation of the working classes. According to the World Bank, some 100 million people could be at risk as a consequence of the crisis.

Climate change and the world demand for bio energy are challenges to food security. The impact of climate change on the yield of agriculture, given the alteration between the availability of water, land, biodiversity and land ecosystem services, causes great uncertainty in the entire food chain. According to FAO, climate change will have consequences on world food security and affect the availability of food for 9 billion people by 2050.

Greater competition over agricultural resources for the production of bio energy exerts, in the long run, an unsustainable pressure on natural resources. Therefore, it is necessary to produce approaches that take into account the interrelationship between food security and socioeconomic and environmental sustainability, and that ensure the development of policies that protect food security in the wider context of measures taken with respect to climate change and bio energy.

In much the same way the uneven demographic growth between developed and developing zones, migration and urbanization, the new structures of the agricultural food world market and new consumer patterns pose new challenges to the world food system.

In face of all these changes, the role of the State is crucial to ensure the articulation of agricultural production objectives, environmental sustainability and social redistribution of income; it is therefore the State's responsibility to promote development models that will ensure that goals are achieved in questions of food security.

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in food security

		Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %)	Undernourishment (%)	Estimated low birth weight (%)
Worse relative situation	Average	38.6	41.6	23
	Number of countries	5	5	5
Better relative situation	Average	15.1	8.1	8.2
	Number of countries	26	62	65
Total	Average	24.7	17.9	11.6
	Number of countries	75	123	126

CHART 2. Current situation in food security by region (number of countries)

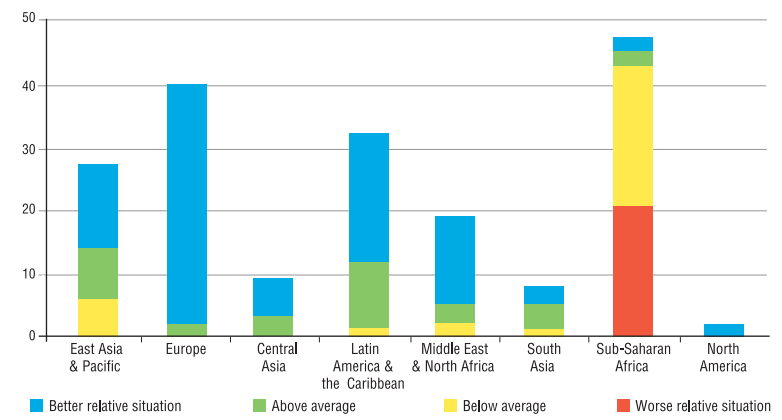

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in food security (number of countries)

	↑↑	↑	=	↓	↓↓	Total
Worse relative situation	1	2	0	1	1	5
Below average	3	5	4	9	7	28
Above average	2	4	10	8	4	28
Better relative situation	0	2	38	12	10	62
Total	6	13	52	30	22	123

The food gap

The study of the indicators in Chart 1 shows wide gaps in the food situation between countries in the better and worse relative situation. In the first group, on average, 8% of the population suffers undernourishment, while in the countries in the worse situation they are 40% of the population. In countries like Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo the situation is intolerable: 75% of the population suffer undernourishment.

Also, in countries with greater deficiencies, 4 out of every 10 children under-5 suffer from malnutrition, while in countries in the better relative situation, the relation is 3 for every 20. The more developed countries have zero cases for this indicator; therefore countries in the better relative situation do not necessarily reach the levels of countries in a developed state of food security.

Divergence by region

A geographic look at the world will show (Chart 2) that while in North America, Europe and Central Asia all the countries are in the better relative situation or above the world average, half those in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the most deficient situation or below the average.

Recent evolution (Chart 3) shows that more than 40% of countries register progress, while another 40% remains stagnant, although most show a satisfactory situation. The most worrying condition surfaces in countries with negative evolution, even in those that were in a poor situation to start with, such as Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Yemen. ■

1 FAO, Committee on World Food Security, "Fostering the political will to fight hunger". Twenty-seventh Session, Rome, 28 May - 1 June 2001.

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EDUCATION

New technologies and old debts

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- → Significant progress
- → Slight progress
- = Stagnant
- ← Regression
- ← Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old, %)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross, %)
=	Afghanistan (52)	34.3				1.3 =
→	Albania (94)	99.4 →	93.6 =		72.8* →	19.1 →
→	Algeria (94)	90.1 →	96.6 →	95.6 =	66.3* →	21.3 →
=	Andorra (—)		80.3 ←		76.4* →	8.3 →
=	Angola (62)	72.2				2.9 =
←	Anguilla (—)		88.6 ←	97.1	80.8* ←	3.3
→	Argentina (98)	98.9 =	98.6 =	96.9 →	78.9* →	64.7 →
=	Armenia (96)	99.8 =	78.8 ←		84.9* =	28.0 →
=	Aruba (—)	99.0	99.5 =	96.7 =	73.7* ←	31.5 →
→	Australia (99)		96.5 ←		86.4* →	72.6 →
→	Austria (—)		96.9 →			48.9 →
=	Azerbaijan (85)	99.9*	84.8 ←		77.8* →	14.8 ←
→	Bahamas (99)		90.2 =	99.1 →	83.8* →	
→	Bahrain (99)	97.0 =	98.2 =	98.9 →	92.3* →	33.1 →
→	Bangladesh (57)	63.6 →	88.9 →	65.1 →	41.0* ←	6.0 =
→	Barbados (99)		93.6 →	97.8 →	87.6* ←	37.2* →
→	Belarus (99)	99.8* =	89.4 →		89.2* →	63.7 →
→	Belgium (99)		97.6 =		96.7* →	62.4 →
→	Belize (93)		99.5 →	92.2 →	71.3* →	2.6 →
→	Benin (68)	45.3 →	77.7 →	51.6 ←	17.1* →	3.0* =
=	Bermuda (—)		97.9	89.8 ←		61.2* →
→	Bhutan (78)		73.9 →	91.0 →	35.5* →	3.1* =
→	Bolivia (80)	97.3 →	95.0 =	84.8 →	72.7* →	40.6 →
—	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	99.8				
→	Botswana (92)	94.0 →	86.2 =	90.5 →	61.1* →	5.1 =
→	Brazil (92)	96.8 →	94.7 →		77.7* →	23.8 →
→	Brunei Darussalam (100)	98.9 =	93.4 =	99.5 →	87.3* →	15.0 →
→	Bulgaria (99)	98.2 =	92.9 →		89.1* →	43.7 →
→	Burkina Faso (64)	33.0 →	44.1 →	75.5 →	11.0* →	2.2 =
→	Burma/Myanmar (76)	94.5 →	99.0 =	69.9 →	43.0* →	11.9* →
→	Burundi (58)	73.3 →	58.3 →	66.9 →		2.3 =
→	Cambodia (66)	83.4 →	96.5 →	63.1 →	23.9* →	3.6 →
←	Cameroon (70)			63.7 ←		5.7 =
←	Canada (99)		99.5* =			62.4 ←
→	Cape Verde (93)	96.3 →	90.1 =	92.5 =	57.5* →	6.9 →
=	Cayman Islands (—)		81.1 ←	77.8 →	95.6* →	18.8* ←
→	Central African Republic (65)	58.5 →				1.6 =
=	Chad (42)	37.6 ←	60.2 →	33.2 ←	10.5* →	1.2 =
→	Chile (100)	99.0 =	89.7 =	99.7 →		47.8 →
→	China (90)	98.9 →				21.6 →
→	Colombia (90)	98.0 →	88.5 →	81.7 →	64.9* →	30.8 →
→	Comoros (79)		55.1* =	80.3 →		2.3 →
=	Congo, DR (69)	70.4 =				1.3* =
=	Congo, Rep. (79)	97.4 →	52.9 ←	66.3 →		3.7* =
=	Cook Islands (90)		77.4* ←		64.4* →	

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org/), May 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old, %)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross, %)
⏸	Costa Rica (94)	97.6 ⏸		86.6 ⏸		25.3 ⏸
→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	60.7 →	54.9 →	87.6 →	19.8* →	6.5*
→	Croatia (99)	99.6 ⏸	87.3 →		85.0* →	38.7* →
→	Cuba (99)	100.0 ⏸	96.6 ⏸	97.2 →	87.0* →	87.9 →
→	Cyprus (99)	99.8 ⏸	99.3 →	99.1 ⏸	94.1* →	33.2 →
→	Czech Republic (99)		92.5 →	98.4 ⏸		47.8 →
→	Denmark (98)		95.8 ⏸	93.3 ⏸	91.2* →	80.8 →
→	Djibouti (75)		34.4 →	76.7* ←	21.5* →	2.2 →
⏸	Dominica (97)		84.0 ←	92.7 →	91.8* →	
→	Dominican Republic (88)	94.2 →	77.5 →	68.4 ←	52.1* →	34.5 →
⏸	Ecuador (83)	96.4 ⏸	97.3 ⏸	76.3 ←	55.4* →	
→	Egypt (88)	84.9 →	93.7 →	94.5 ←	82.7*	34.7 →
→	El Salvador (79)	88.5 →	94.5 →	69.4 →	54.9* →	20.1 →
⏸	Equatorial Guinea (59)	94.9 →	87.1 ←	32.6	25.3*	2.7* ⏸
⏸	Eritrea (67)		48.6 →	79.2 ←	24.1* →	1.0 ⏸
→	Estonia (99)	99.8 ⏸	94.7 ←	98.8 ⏸	90.8* →	66.0 →
→	Ethiopia (54)	49.9 →	66.4 →		31.8* →	2.7 ⏸
→	Fiji (99)		93.5 ←	98.7 →	80.9* →	15.4 →
→	Finland (100)		98.5 ⏸	99.5 ⏸	95.3* ⏸	91.9 →
→	France (99)		98.6 ⏸	98.0* ⏸	99.0* →	56.1 →
⏸	Gabon (82)	96.0 →	88.0* ←	69.3		7.1*
→	Gambia (70)		72.4 →		43.3* →	1.1 ⏸
⏸	Georgia (89)		86.7 ←	79.4	80.2* →	46.1 →
⏸	Ghana (66)	70.7 ←	63.6 →	63.3 ←	37.7* →	4.7 →
→	Greece (100)	98.9 ⏸	99.6 →	99.0 ⏸	91.1* →	90.4 →
→	Grenada (92)		84.6 ⏸	79.0	79.3* →	
→	Guatemala (68)	82.2 →	93.5 →	68.0 →	35.4* →	9.5* ⏸
→	Guinea (66)	46.6	69.4 →	76.0 →	24.8* →	3.0 ⏸
→	Guinea-Bissau (61)		45.1* →		8.7* ⏸	
⏸	Guyana (81)			64.3 ←		10.8 →
→	Honduras (78)	88.9 →	93.2 →	70.1		17.2 →
⏸	Hong Kong (—)		90.7 ←	99.5 ⏸	77.1* →	32.1 →
→	Hungary (99)		88.8 ⏸		89.9* →	65.3 →
→	Iceland (100)		98.1 ⏸	99.7 ⏸	88.7* →	70.4 →
→	India (71)	76.4 →	88.5 →	73.1 →		11.0 →
→	Indonesia (84)	98.7 ⏸	94.5 ⏸	89.5 →	57.4* →	17.0 →
→	Iran (91)	97.4 →	95.3 →	87.8 ⏸	77.3* ←	24.1 →
→	Iraq (83)	84.8 →	88.6 ←	80.6 →	38.4* →	15.8 →
→	Ireland (100)		94.6 →	99.8 ⏸	86.7* →	58.2 →
→	Israel (100)		97.4 →	99.8 ⏸	89.1* →	58.1 →
→	Italy (99)	99.8 ⏸	98.6 ⏸	99.8 →	92.5* →	65.3 →
→	Jamaica (95)		90.3 ←	90.3 →	78.3* →	19.0* →
→	Japan (99)		99.8 ⏸		100.0* →	55.3 →
⏸	Jordan (97)	99.0 ⏸	91.3 ←	96.2 ←	78.8* ←	39.9 →
→	Kazakhstan (98)	99.8* ⏸	91.0 →		88.8* →	52.0 →
→	Kenya (71)	80.3 ←	75.8 →	82.9 →	41.5* →	2.7 ⏸
←	Kiribati (88)		97.4* ⏸	81.9 ←	67.6* ←	
→	Korea, Rep. (100)		97.6 ⏸	99.1 ⏸	93.9* →	91.0 →
⏸	Kuwait (98)	99.7 →	83.5 →	95.8	78.3* ←	18.8 ←
⏸	Kyrgyzstan (95)	99.7*	85.9 ←		80.5* ←	42.7 →
→	Lao, PDR (58)	78.5 →	82.7 →	63.0 →	35.6* →	7.9 →
⏸	Latvia (99)	99.8 ⏸	90.1 ←			74.9 →
→	Lebanon (95)		81.9 →	90.9 ⏸	73.0*	46.3 →
→	Lesotho (72)		75.2 →	73.3 →	24.0* →	3.4 ⏸
→	Liberia (65)	67.4 →	66.2* →		17.1*	15.6* →

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE:
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org/), May 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old, %)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross, %)
→	Libya (98)	98.0 →				55.8* →
=	Liechtenstein (—)		88.2 ←		65.2* ←	25.1 →
=	Lithuania (99)	99.7 =	88.0 ←		94.2* →	76.5 →
=	Luxembourg (97)		96.7 =	92.0 ←	83.3* =	11.8 →
→	Macao (—)	99.6 →	96.3 →	99.7 =	77.5* →	57.4 →
→	Macedonia (96)	98.7 =	91.8 =		81.3* →	29.8 →
→	Madagascar (61)	70.2 ←	92.9 →	42.7 →	11.3*	2.6 =
→	Malawi (62)	76.0* →	92.8 →	42.1 ←	23.1* ←	
→	Malaysia (99)	97.2 →	99.2 →	98.4 =	72.0* →	30.6 →
→	Maldives (86)	98.2 =	97.6 =	92.1	64.1* →	
→	Mali (69)	24.2* ←	59.1 →	86.9 →		3.0 =
=	Malta (100)	96.0* ←	86.3 ←	99.3 =	84.8* →	31.5 →
=	Marshall Islands (93)		89.6 →		74.4* =	17.0* =
→	Mauritania (66)	61.3 →	76.7 →	52.9 ←	15.6* →	3.2 =
→	Mauritius (98)	94.5 →	95.0 →	97.0 =	81.7* →	16.9 →
→	Mexico (94)	97.6 =	97.7 =	93.8 →	68.6* →	25.3 →
—	Micronesia (—)					14.1* =
←	Moldova (96)	99.7 =	82.6 ←		74.8* ←	35.9 =
→	Mongolia (95)	97.7 =	91.4 =		81.5* →	47.2 →
→	Montserrat (—)		96.3 →		95.8* →	
→	Morocco (79)	70.5 →	87.5 →	79.2 →	34.5* →	11.4 =
→	Mozambique (66)	47.0* ←	76.6 →	62.4 →	7.0* →	1.5 =
→	Namibia (85)	92.3 →	76.5 →	86.1 →	38.7* →	6.2 →
—	Nauru (—)			30.8		
→	Nepal (65)	70.1 →	79.2 →	78.5 →		5.6 =
→	Netherlands (100)		97.9 =	99.4 =	86.6* →	59.0 →
=	Netherlands Antilles (—)	98.0 =	96.5*	84.2 =	81.0* ←	21.2* →
→	New Zealand (98)		99.2 =		91.9* →	82.2 →
→	Nicaragua (72)	86.2 →	87.0 →	53.5 →	42.8* →	18.1* →
→	Niger (52)	36.5 →	42.5 →	64.8 =	8.6* =	1.1 =
→	Nigeria (63)	84.2 →	63.4 →	72.6 ←	25.5* →	9.7 →
→	Niue (—)		98.5*		93.4*	
→	Norway (100)		98.0 =	100.0 =	95.8* →	78.5 →
→	Oman (99)	97.3 →	74.1 →	100.0 →	77.3* →	18.3 →
→	Pakistan (64)	65.1 →	67.2 →	69.7	20.3* ←	4.5 =
←	Palau (99)		96.4* ←			40.2* ←
→	Panama (91)	96.1 =	98.5 →	85.3 =	63.8* →	43.9 →
=	Papua New Guinea (68)	66.7 =		67.8 =		2.0*
→	Paraguay (85)	95.9 =	93.8 =	81.2 →		24.9 →
=	Peru (86)	97.1 =	96.4 ←	90.3 →	70.2* →	33.9 =
→	Philippines (77)	95.1 =	92.9 ←	74.9 →	60.2* →	28.0 =
→	Poland (100)		96.7 =	99.3 =	92.9* →	64.1 →
→	Portugal (99)	99.6 =	98.0 =		81.6* =	55.1 →
→	Qatar (96)	95.9 →	96.1 →		87.1* →	18.6 ←
→	Romania (96)	97.8 =	91.3 →		80.8* →	45.2 →
=	Russian Federation (98)	99.7 =	92.5 ←			70.5 →
=	Rwanda (53)	77.6 →	73.3 →	45.8 ←		2.6
=	Samoa (97)	99.3 =	90.4 ←	93.8 →	66.0* ←	7.5* ←
→	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	95.4 =	96.2 →	76.3 →	32.6* →	
→	Saudi Arabia (97)	95.8 →	87.3 →	96.3 →	70.8* →	29.2 →
→	Senegal (71)	49.1 →	69.6 →	73.0 ←	17.5* →	5.5 =
=	Seychelles (—)	99.1 =	99.4 =	98.7 →	97.1* ←	
=	Sierra Leone (61)	47.9				2.1* =
←	Singapore (91)		76.9* ←		64.4* ←	

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org/), May 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008 Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old, %)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net, %)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross, %)
→	Slovakia (97)		92.0 →			40.7 →
→	Slovenia (99)	99.8 ıı	95.7 ıı		91.0* ıı	79.5 →
→	Solomon Islands (82)		63.3		27.3* →	
→	South Africa (89)	93.9*	88.3 ıı	82.4 →	62.3* →	15.4 →
→	Spain (99)		99.6 ıı	100.0	93.9* →	66.2 →
←	Sri Lanka (98)	95.6 ıı	96.7 ←			
←	St Kitts and Nevis (95)		93.4 ←	86.5	86.1* ıı	
ıı	St Lucia (98)		97.9 ıı	95.9 ıı	69.4* →	7.1 ıı
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)		90.4 ıı	81.8	63.9* →	
→	Sudan (76)	77.2 →	41.2* ıı	78.6 ←		6.2* →
→	Suriname (86)	94.9	94.4 →		74.7* →	12.4*
ıı	Swaziland (77)	88.4 →	76.3 ıı	76.8 ıı	32.5* ıı	4.5 ıı
→	Sweden (100)		97.1 ıı		99.3* →	81.6 →
→	Switzerland (97)		89.9 →		82.2* ıı	45.4 →
→	Syria (94)	92.5 →	94.5* →	92.4 ←	61.8* →	
→	Tajikistan (85)	99.8 ıı	97.3 →		79.8* →	18.6 ←
→	Tanzania (73)	78.4 ←	97.8 →	85.0 →		1.4 ıı
→	Thailand (96)	98.0 ıı	94.2 →		71.0*	45.9 →
←	Timor-Leste (60)		68.1		22.8*	9.6*
→	Togo (71)	74.4 →	77.5 →	74.6 →	22.2* →	3.6* ıı
ıı	Tonga (95)	99.3*	95.4 →	88.6 ←	66.4* ıı	6.0 →
ıı	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	99.5 ıı	84.6 ←	91.0 ←	65.1* ←	11.4 →
→	Tunisia (95)	94.3 →	97.0 →	97.0 →	64.5* ←	30.1 →
→	Turkey (92)	95.6 →	90.2 ıı	96.9 ıı	66.0* →	31.0 →
—	Turkmenistan (—)	99.8*				
←	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)		78.0 ←	45.9	70.2* ←	
—	Tuvalu (89)			69.9 ←		
→	Uganda (59)	76.6 →		48.7 →	14.8* →	3.5 ıı
→	Ukraine (99)	99.8 ıı	90.2 →		83.8* ←	72.8 →
→	United Arab Emirates (99)	97.0 →	85.6 ←	96.8 →	77.2* →	23.2* →
→	United Kingdom (99)		98.7 ıı		95.3* →	59.4 →
ıı	United States of America (99)		91.6 ←		88.4* →	82.2 →
ıı	Uruguay (96)	98.6* ıı	93.8 →	91.2 ←		42.0 →
—	Uzbekistan (—)					15.3 ←
→	Vanuatu (87)		92.5 ıı	77.7 →	38.1* →	4.8 ıı
→	Venezuela (95)	97.2 ıı	91.1 →	92.0 →	63.0* →	41.2 →
→	Vietnam (90)	93.9* ıı	86.6 ←	86.8 →	68.8* →	15.9 →
→	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)		95.1 ıı		88.2* →	75.5 →
→	West Bank and Gaza (—)	99.0 →	76.0 ←		89.6* →	37.8 →
→	Yemen (61)	75.2 →	73.8 →	73.2 ←	33.5* →	9.4 ıı
→	Zambia (73)	69.5* →	92.0 →	94.2 →	28.1* →	2.3* ıı
ıı	Zimbabwe (80)	97.7 →	81.7 ıı	69.7 ←	34.4* ←	3.6* ıı

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE:
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org/), May 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Literacy (15-24 years old, %): Percentage of people aged 15-24 who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1990.

Primary school enrolment ratio (net, %): Number of children enrolled in primary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling, as percentage of the total population of the same age group.
Last available data: 2003/2006; evolution since 1991.

Children reaching 5th grade of primary school (%): Percentage of children entering first grade of primary school who eventually reach grade five.
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1999.

Secondary school enrolment ratio (net, %): Number of children enrolled in secondary school who belong to the agegroup that officially corresponds to secondary schooling, as percentage of the total population of the same age group.
Last available data: 2003/2005; evolution since 1991.

Tertiary education enrolment ratio (gross): Ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Tertiary education, whether or not to an advanced research qualification, normally requires, as a minimum condition of admission, successful completion of education at secondary level.
Last available data: 2004/2006; evolution since 1991.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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EDUCATION

New technologies and old debts

We are currently in the midst of an intense debate over the importance of access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and to the cooperation that developed countries should provide developing countries so that progress in ICT does not end up reinforcing or increasing North-South inequalities. Nonetheless, although this is a crucial debate, any problem in the field of the 'digital gap' or 'information technologies' should not hide the fact that, well into the 21st century, many old problems are still unsolved.

According to UNESCO data, today one out of every five adults is illiterate and approximately 72 million children are outside the formal education system. Not only is this information alarming in itself, in view of the difficulties of access to education, the indispensable minimum on which to work on other inequalities, but it accounts for a lack of symmetry, particularly in the North-South relation and in the situation of women. A case in point is that, out of those 72 million children, almost two thirds are girls.

Recent trends show that between 1999 and 2006 there was a fall of 25% in the number of children excluded from formal education. Basically, this decrease is countered by improvements registered in Asia, by the policies carried out in India and, in Africa, by Ethiopia and Tanzania. Seventy-five per cent of the fall is due to girls joining the basic levels of formal education, a fact that confirms the extreme injustice of the original situation and fosters hope in the medium term, provided that efforts made by governments, particularly in the South, do not decrease.

The latest available information (Chart 1) shows that in the countries in the worse relative situation, around a third of the population between 15 and 24 years old is illiterate. At the other end of the spectrum, in countries where education is in the better situation, illiteracy has been practically eradicated, affecting barely 1% of the population.

Enrolment in primary education and the proportion of children who reach fifth grade reflect a similar situation. Countries with the greatest education deficiencies are, on average, 30% below the more advanced.

This prospect is an alert to the difficulties that may appear, in spite of the progress made in absolute terms, in order to overcome, in relative terms, the differences between countries in the better or worse situation.

Major difficulties can be detected when looking into indicators for superior levels of education. Enrolment in secondary school is barely 23% in countries in the worse relative situation while it reaches nearly 90% in countries in the better situation. In other words, enrolment in secondary school is four times higher in countries in the better relative situation.

This perverse kind of logic by which inequality accumulates according to the level of education reaches its maximum expression in tertiary education. Here the differences are simply distressing: while in countries in the better relative situation tertiary education reaches 30% of the population, in countries in the worse relative situation enrolment is barely 4%, so that chances of having access to a university education are eight times lower for countries in the worse relative situation. If we consider the subgroup of European countries within the best placed, matriculation levels are beyond 50%.

But the differences and inequalities in education do not matter only for what they mean in themselves, but because of their relation with other types of inequalities. An example of this is the gender differences in terms of access to education; another is the information presented in

Chart 2, which clearly shows the validity of the North-South criterion when it comes to global inequalities. However it is important to point out the progress made since the latest report in two zones, the Middle East and North Africa and Central Asia, which have increased the number of countries that are in better relative situation with respect to the general average.

A diachronic reading, on the other hand, confirms that there is a positive trend, since more than 70% of countries have progressed, although in almost four out of five cases the progress detected is small. If to this we add that the proportion of stagnant countries is 24% while in the previous report they did not reach 22%, there are fewer reasons to believe that the minimum necessary capacities to make progress in terms of justice and equity are being generated.

Finally, it is easier to detect that significant progress in education tends to be more frequent when it involves countries in the below average situation, while it is very difficult to find countries that make progress at the extremes of the spectrum – that is, in the worse or better relative situation – or among those that are already above average. ■

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in education

		Literacy (15-24 years old, %)	Primary school enrolment rate (net, %)	Children reaching 5th grade (%)	Secondary school enrolment rate (net, %)	Tertiary education enrolment rate (gross, %)
Worse relative situation	Average	62	66	67	23	4
	Number of countries	33	35	33	29	41
Better relative situation	Average	99	96	98	89	61
	Number of countries	27	55	31	46	50
Total	Average	87	87	83	64	29
	Number of countries	128	172	130	150	168

CHART 2. Current situation in education by region (number of countries)

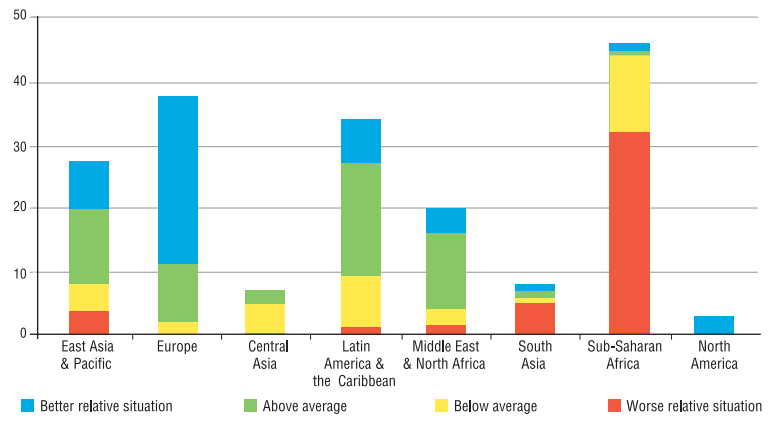

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in education (number of countries)

	←	←	=	→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	1	1	11	22	9	44
Below average	1	0	7	11	10	29
Above average	0	2	19	29	8	58
Better relative situation	0	4	8	39	2	53
Total	2	7	45	101	29	184

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The ruses of inequity: from the digital to the cognitive gap

References

CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	INTERNET USERS (per 1,000 people)	PERSONAL COMPUTERS (per 1,000 people)	TELEPHONE MAINLINES (per 1,000 people)	SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN R&D[1] (per million people)	ICT[2] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	R&D[1] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
—	Afghanistan (52)	1		3			
	Albania (94)	60	12	88			
	Algeria (94)	58	11	78		2.4	
—	American Samoa (—)			182			
—	Andorra (—)	331		535			
	Angola (62)	11	2	6			
—	Antigua and Barbuda (—)	350		467			
	Argentina (98)	177	83	227	720	6.9	0.4
	Armenia (96)	53	66	192			0.3
	Australia (99)	698	683	564	3759	6.5	1.7
	Austria (—)	486	607	450	2968	5.5	2.3
	Azerbaijan (85)	81	23	130			0.3
—	Bahamas (99)	319		439			
	Bahrain (99)	213	169	270			
	Bangladesh (57)	3	12	8	51*	2.7	0.6
	Barbados (99)	594	148	500			
—	Belarus (99)	347		336			0.6
	Belgium (99)	458	348	461	3065	5.9	1.9
	Belize (93)	130	132	114			
	Benin (68)	50	4	9			
	Bermuda (—)	661	542	892			0.1*
	Bhutan (78)	39	20	51			
	Bolivia (80)	52	23	70	120	4.9	0.3
—	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	206		248			
	Botswana (92)	34	45	75			
	Brazil (92)	195	105	230	344*	6.4	1.0
	Brunei Darussalam (100)	277	85	224	274		0.0
	Bulgaria (99)	206	59	321	1263	3.5	0.5
	Burkina Faso (64)	5	2	7	17*		0.2*
	Burma/Myanmar (76)	2	8	9	17		0.1
	Burundi (58)	5	5	4			
	Cambodia (66)	3	3	3			
	Cameroon (70)	15	10	6		5.1	
	Canada (99)	520	700	566	3597	5.7	1.9
	Cape Verde (93)	49	97	141	127		
	Central African Republic (65)	3	3	2	47*		
	Chad (42)	4	2	1			
	Chile (100)	172	141	211	444	5.2	0.6
	China (90)	85	41	269	708	5.3	1.4
	Colombia (90)	105	42	171	109	8.0	0.2
	Comoros (79)	33	9	28			
—	Congo, DR (69)	2		0			
	Congo, Rep. (79)	13	4	4	30*		
	Costa Rica (94)	254	219	321		7.3	0.4
	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	11	15	14			
	Croatia (99)	327	190	425	1296		1.1
	Cuba (99)	17	33	75			0.7

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	INTERNET USERS (per 1,000 people)	PERSONAL COMPUTERS (per 1,000 people)	TELEPHONE MAINLINES (per 1,000 people)	SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN R&D[1] (per million people)	ICT[2] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	R&D[1] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
→	Cyprus (99)	430 →	337 →	554 →	630 →		0.4 ıı
→	Czech Republic (99)	269 →	240 →	314 →	1594 →	7.4 ıı	1.3 ıı
→	Denmark (98)	527 →	656 →	619 →	5016 →	6.0 ıı	2.6 →
→	Djibouti (75)	13 →	24 →	14 →			
→	Dominica (97)	361 →	182 →	293 →			
—	Dominican Republic (88)	158 →		95 →			
→	Ecuador (83)	47 →	39 →	129 →	50 ←	3.0 ıı	0.1 ıı
→	Egypt (88)	68 →	38 →	140 →	493* →	1.4 ıı	0.2 ıı
→	El Salvador (79)	93 →	51 →	141 →	47* →		0.1*
→	Equatorial Guinea (59)	14 →	14 →	20 →			
ıı	Eritrea (67)	16 →	8 →	9 →			
→	Estonia (99)	513 →	483 →	328 →	2523 →		0.9 ıı
→	Ethiopia (54)	2 ıı	3 →	9 →			
—	Faeroe Island (—)	642 →		419			
→	Fiji (99)	77 →	52 →	122 →			
→	Finland (100)	534 →	481 →	404 ←	7832 →	6.8 ←	3.5 →
→	France (99)	430 →	575 →	586 →	3213 →	6.4 ıı	2.2 ıı
→	French Polynesia (—)	214 →	109 →	208 →			
→	Gabon (82)	48 →	33 →	28 →			
→	Gambia (70)	33 →	16 →	29 →			
→	Georgia (89)	39 →	43 →	151 →			0.3 ıı
→	Germany (100)	455 →	545 →	667 →	3261 →	6.2 ıı	2.5 ıı
→	Ghana (66)	18 →	5 →	15 →			
→	Greece (100)	180 →	89 →	568 →	1413 →	4.0 ıı	0.6 ıı
—	Greenland (—)	668 →		448 →			
→	Grenada (92)	182 →	151 →	309 →			
—	Guam (—)	383 →		507 →			
→	Guatemala (68)	79 →	19 →	99 →			
→	Guinea (66)	6 →	5 →	3 ıı			
—	Guinea-Bissau (61)	20 →		7 ıı			
→	Guyana (81)	213 →	39 →	147 →			
—	Haiti (—)	70 →		17 →			
→	Honduras (78)	36 →	16 →	69 →		4.6 ıı	0.1 ıı
→	Hong Kong (—)	508 →	601 →	546 →	1564 →	8.8 →	0.6 ıı
→	Hungary (99)	297 →	146 →	333 →	1472 →	6.0 ←	0.9 ıı
→	Iceland (100)	869 →	479 →	653 →	6807 →		3.0 →
ıı	India (71)	55 →	16 →	45 →	119* ←	6.1 →	0.9 ıı
→	Indonesia (84)	73 →	14 →	58 →	207 ←	3.1 ıı	0.1 ıı
→	Iran (91)	103 →	109 →	278 →	1279 →	2.4 →	0.7
	Iraq (83)	1 ıı	8	38 ıı			
→	Ireland (100)	276 →	494 →	489 →	2674 →	4.2 ←	1.2 ıı
→	Israel (100)	470 →	740 →	424 →		8.3 ıı	4.5 →
→	Italy (99)	478 →	367 →	427 →	1213 ←	4.4 ıı	1.1 ıı
→	Jamaica (95)	404 →	63 →	129 →		9.7 ←	0.1 ıı
→	Japan (99)	668 →	542 →	460 →	5287 →	7.9 ←	3.2 ıı
ıı	Jordan (97)	119 →	57 →	121 →	1927*	8.0 ←	
→	Kazakhstan (98)	27 →		167 →	629 ←		0.2 ıı
ıı	Kenya (71)	32 →	9 →	8 ıı		2.6 ıı	
→	Kiribati (88)	20 →	10 →	47 →			
—	Korea, DPR (—)	0 ıı		44 →			
→	Korea, Rep. (100)	684 →	545 →	492 →	3187 →	6.6 ıı	2.6 ıı
→	Kuwait (98)	276 →	237 →	201 →		1.4 ıı	0.2 ıı
ıı	Kyrgyzstan (95)	54 →	19 →	85 →			0.2 ıı
→	Lao, PDR (58)	4 →	18 →	13 →			
→	Latvia (99)	448 →	217 →	318 →	1434 →		0.4 ıı
→	Lebanon (95)	175 →	102 →	247 →			
—	Lesotho (72)	24 →		27 →			0.0

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	INTERNET USERS (per 1,000 people)	PERSONAL COMPUTERS (per 1,000 people)	TELEPHONE MAINLINES (per 1,000 people)	SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN R&D[1] (per million people)	ICT[2] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	R&D[1] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
—	Liberia (65)	0 ıı		2 ıı			
	Libya (98)	36 →	24	133 →	361*		
—	Liechtenstein (—)	633 →		574 ←			
→	Lithuania (99)	358 →	155 →	235 →	2136 →		0.8 ıı
→	Luxembourg (97)	690 →	635 →	535 →	4301 →		1.8 ıı
→	Macao (—)	369 →	295 →	379 →	41* →		
→	Macedonia (96)	79 →	222 →	262 →	504 ←		0.3 ıı
→	Madagascar (61)	5 →	5 →	4 ıı	15* →		0.1 ıı
→	Malawi (62)	4 →	2 ıı	8 →			
→	Malaysia (99)	435 →	197 →	172 →	299 →	6.8 ←	0.7 ıı
→	Maldives (86)	59 →	112 →	98 →			
ıı	Mali (69)	4 →	3 →	6 →			
→	Malta (100)	315 →	165 →	501 →	681 ←		0.3 ıı
→	Marshall Islands (93)	35 →	82 →	76 →			
→	Mauritania (66)	7 →	14 →	13 →			
→	Mauritius (98)	146 →	162 →	289 →			0.4 ←
→	Mexico (94)	181 →	136 →	189 →	268 →	3.3 ıı	0.4 ıı
—	Micronesia (—)	127 →		113 →			
→	Moldova (96)	103 →	29 →	240 →			0.8* ıı
—	Monaco (—)				41* →		
→	Mongolia (95)	105 →	133 →	61 →			0.3 ıı
→	Morocco (79)	153 →	25 →	44 →		6.4 →	0.6 ıı
→	Mozambique (66)	7 →	6 →	4 ıı			0.6
→	Namibia (85)	37 →	109 →	64 →			
→	Nepal (65)	4 →	4 →	17 →	59		0.7
→	Netherlands (100)	739 →	682 →	466 ıı	2482 →	6.3 ıı	1.9 ıı
—	Netherlands Antilles (—)	11* →		461 →			
—	New Caledonia (—)	324 →		236 →			
→	New Zealand (98)	672 →	474 →	422 ←	3945 →	10.6 ←	1.2 ıı
→	Nicaragua (72)	27 →	43 →	43 →	73		0.1 ıı
ıı	Niger (52)	2 ıı	1 ıı	2 ıı			
→	Nigeria (63)	35 →	6 →	9 →		3.4 ıı	
→	Norway (100)	735 →	573 →	460 ←	4587 →	5.3 ıı	1.8 ıı
→	Oman (99)	111 →	47 →	103 →			
→	Pakistan (64)	67 →	4 →	34 →	75*	6.8 ıı	0.2 ıı
→	Panama (91)	64 →	46 →	136 →	97 ←	8.2 ←	0.3 ıı
→	Papua New Guinea (68)	23 →	64 →	11 →			
→	Paraguay (85)	34 →	78 →	54 →	79 ←		0.1 ıı
ıı	Peru (86)	164 →	100 →	80 →	226* ←	5.9 ←	0.1 ıı
→	Philippines (77)	54 →	45 →	41 →	48 ←	6.7 →	0.1
→	Poland (100)	262 →	193 →	309 →	1581 →	4.2 ıı	0.6 ıı
→	Portugal (99)	279 →	134 →	401 →	1949 →	4.4 ıı	0.8 ıı
—	Puerto Rico (—)	221 →		285 →			
→	Qatar (96)	269 →	171 →	253 →			
→	Romania (96)	208 →	113 →	203 →	976 ←	3.2 ıı	0.4 ıı
→	Russian Federation (98)	152 →	122 →	280 →	3319 ←	3.2 ıı	1.2 ıı
—	Rwanda (53)	6 →		3 ıı			
→	Samoa (97)	32 →	7 →	73 →			
	San Marino (—)	536	857	741			
—	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	131 →		46 →			
→	Saudi Arabia (97)	70 →	376 →	164 →		2.3	
→	Senegal (71)	46 →	21 →	23 →		8.7	
→	Serbia (—)	203 →	52 →	360 →			
→	Seychelles (—)	249 →	189 →	253 →	19		0.1
—	Sierra Leone (61)	2 ıı		5 ıı			
→	Singapore (91)	571 →	621 →	425 →	4999 →	9.3	2.3 →
→	Slovakia (97)	464 →	358 →	222 →	1984 →	5.5 ıı	0.5 ıı

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	INTERNET USERS (per 1,000 people)	PERSONAL COMPUTERS (per 1,000 people)	TELEPHONE MAINLINES (per 1,000 people)	SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN R&D[1] (per million people)	ICT[2] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	R&D[1] EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
→	Slovenia (99)	545 →	404 →	408 →	2543 →	3.1 ıı	1.6 ıı
→	Solomon Islands (82)	8 →	46 →	16 ıı			
→	Somalia (—)	11 →	6 →	12 →			
→	South Africa (89)	109 →	85 →	101 →	307 ←	10.0 →	0.8
→	Spain (99)	348 →	277 →	422 →	2195 →	3.6 ıı	1.1 ıı
→	Sri Lanka (98)	14 →	27 →	63 →	128* ←	5.4 ıı	0.1 ıı
→	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	214 →	234 →	532 →			
→	St Lucia (98)	339 →	160 →	321 →			0.4* ←
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	84 →	135 →	189 →			0.2 ıı
→	Sudan (76)	77 →	90 →	18 →			0.3 ıı
	Suriname (86)	71 →	46	180 →			
→	Swaziland (77)	32 →	32 →	31 →			
→	Sweden (100)	764 →	763 →	717 →	5416 →	7.2 ıı	3.7 ıı
→	Switzerland (97)	498 →	865 →	689 →	3601* →	7.7 ıı	2.6 ıı
→	Syria (94)	58 →	42 →	152 →	29*		
—	Tajikistan (85)	1 ıı		38 ←	660* ←		
→	Tanzania (73)	9 →	7 →	4 ıı			
→	Thailand (96)	110 →	58 →	110 →	287 →	4.0 ıı	0.3 ıı
→	Togo (71)	49 →	30 →	10 →			
→	Tonga (95)	29 →	49 →	111 →			
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	123 →	79 →	248 →			0.1 ıı
→	Tunisia (95)	95 →	57 →	125 →	1013 →	6.0 →	0.6 ıı
→	Turkey (92)	222 →	52 →	263 →	341 →	8.2 ıı	0.7 ıı
—	Turkmenistan (—)	8 →		80 →			
→	Uganda (59)	17 →	9 →	4 ıı			0.8 ıı
→	Ukraine (99)	97 →	38 →	256 →		7.8 ıı	1.2 ıı
→	United Arab Emirates (99)	308 →	197 →	273 →		3.6 ıı	
→	United Kingdom (99)	473 →	600 →	528 →	2706* →	7.0 ←	1.9 ıı
→	United States of America (99)	630 →	762 →	606 →	4605 →	8.7 ←	2.7 ıı
→	Uruguay (96)	202 →	130 →	304 →	366 →	7.8 →	0.3 ıı
—	Uzbekistan (—)	34 →		67 ıı			
→	Vanuatu (87)	38 →	14 →	33 →			
→	Venezuela (95)	125 →	82 →	136 →		3.7 ıı	0.3 ıı
→	Vietnam (90)	129 →	13 →	191 →	115 ←	15.2 →	0.2
—	Virgin Islands (USA) (—)	276 →		652 →			
→	West Bank and Gaza (—)	67 →	48 →	96 →			
→	Yemen (61)	9 →	15 →	39 →			
→	Zambia (73)	20 →	10 →	8 ıı	51* →		0.0* ıı
→	Zimbabwe (80)	77 →	92 →	25 →		4.5 ıı	

NOTES: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading. Figure 0 means a value under 0.5
(1) Research and Development.
(2) Information and Communication Technology.

SOURCE: World Development Indicators 2008, World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Internet users (per 1,000 people): People with access to the internet, per 1,000 people.
Last available data: 2001-2004; evolution since 1990.

Personal computers (per 1,000 people): Personal computers are self-contained computers designed to be used by a single individual, per 1,000 people.
Last available data: 2001-2005; evolution since 1990.

Telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people): Telephone lines connecting a customer's equipment to the public switched telephone network. Data are presented per 1,000 people for the entire country.
Last available data: 2001-2005; evolution since 1990.

Scientists and engineers in research and development (per million people): People trained to work in any field of science who are engaged in professional R&D (research and development) activity, per million people. Most such jobs require completion of tertiary education.
Last available data: 2004; evolution since 1996.

Information and communication technology expenditure (% of GDP): Includes external spending on information technology ('tangible' spending on information technology products purchased by businesses, households, governments, and education institutions from vendors or organizations outside the purchasing entity), internal spending on information technology ('intangible' spending on internally customized software, capital depreciation, and the like), and spending on telecommunications and other office equipment. Expressed as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).
Last available data: 2005; evolution since 2000.

Research and development expenditure (% of GDP): Expenditures for research and development are current and capital expenditures (both public and private) on creative work undertaken systematically to increase knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture, and society, and the use of knowledge for new applications. R&D covers basic research, applied research, and experimental development. Expressed as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Last available data: 2000-2005; evolution since 1996.

Methodological notes and guidelines at, the end of the section.

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INFORMATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The ruses of inequity: from digital to cognitive gap

As the appearance of new information and digital technologies has consolidated what is known as the third industrial revolution, their impact has become an object of debate over the so-called "knowledge society". In the UNESCO World Report Towards Knowledge Societies, Director General Koichiro Matsuura asks, "Which types of knowledge are we talking about? Do we have to endorse the hegemony of the techno-scientific model in defining legitimate and productive knowledge? And what of the imbalances that mark access to knowledge and the obstacles confronting it, both locally and globally?"[1]

On the other hand, knowledge societies add new inequities without resolving those inherent to the "society model". To the well established problem of the "digital gap", that is, the socioeconomic difference between communities that have access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those that do not, a more profound and more subtle gap is added: the "cognitive gap", which is related to the differences in the ability to assimilate and use ICTs effectively, due to their different levels of literacy and technological capacity.

The cognitive gap determines that even if parity is reached in the access to knowledge and information, the ability to assimilate this information and knowledge will be differential, and certainly smaller, in societies and sectors that lack the minimum necessary elements to assimilate the new tools. Consequently, any attempt to bridge the digital gap between societies will lead to an increase of inequities if, apart from the chances to access them, the opportunities for incorporating them are not equalled.

Contradictory trends

This occurs in a paradoxical context, in which two opposite tendencies coexist: on the one hand, the new technologies facilitate access to information; on the other, there is a growing tendency, under the excuse that it is a necessary (military, scientific, commercial, professional, etc.) secret, to exclude increasingly larger sectors of the population from a significant part of the information generated.

Maybe one of the more obvious manifestations of the second tendency is observed in the huge imbalance between the societies of the North and those of the South regarding copyright, or even the "brain drain", two processes that not only reinforce the imbalance between North and South, but also within each zone, within regions and within societies. In this respect, the UNESCO document states that "Knowledge societies will be knowledge societies *for all* only on the condition that we can actually get beyond this asymmetric opposition between producers and users of knowledge contents."[2]

1 UNESCO (2005). *Towards Knowledge Societies.* UNESCO Publishing. Available at: <unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001418/141843e.pdf>.

2 *Ibid.*

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in information, science and technology

		Internet users (per 1,000 people)	Personal computers (per 1,000 people)	Telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people)	Scientists and engineers in R& D (per million people)	ICT expenditure (% of GDP)	R & D expenditure (% of GDP)
Worse relative situation	Average	37	27	58	120	5	0.3
	Number of countries	61	61	61	21	13	24
Better relative situation	Average	514	535	517	3,187	7	1.9
	Number of countries	28	28	28	24	20	26
Total	Average	190	162	204	1,567	6	0.9
	Number of countries	169	168	169	84	74	100

CHART 2. Current situation in information, science and technology by region (number of countries)

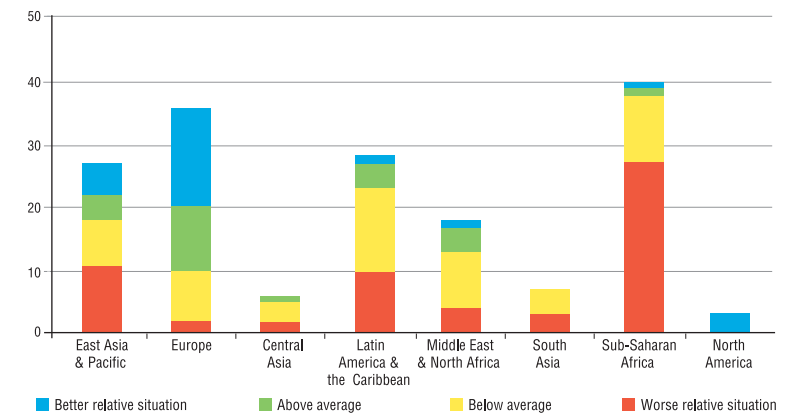

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in information, science and technology (number of countries)

	←	←	=	→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	0	0	6	50	3	59
Below average	0	0	4	38	13	55
Above average	0	0	0	6	18	24
Better relative situation	0	0	0	6	21	27
Total	0	0	10	100	55	165

The gap in numbers

If we analyze the table "Information, science and technology: The ruses of inequity: from the digital to the cognitive gap", where the five indicators are disaggregated, the persistence of very significant distances between countries becomes more evident. Chart 1 summarizes the gaps between countries in the better and worse situation. For example, the number of scientists and engineers per million inhabitants is almost 30 times higher for the group of countries in the better relative situation. When considering the indicators related not only to the development capacity of countries, but also to the access to its products, such as the number of Internet users, we see that, although the difference is still vast, the "gap", in terms related to the first indicator, is half as large. There are 14 times less Internet users in countries in the worse relative situation.

When considering the worse situations according to region of the countries in Chart 2, it is easy to see the asymmetry according to geographic zones. While around two out of three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the worse relative situation, the situation is diametrically opposite to Europe, and is excellent in North America where there are only countries that belong to the most privileged group.

However, even in the most excluded zones there is significant evolution. Chart 3 shows a trend towards a positive evolution that is not only true for most countries but also has speeded up, since there is an increase in the group of countries with significant progress with respect to the 2007 Social Watch Report. This trend is particularly encouraging for Latin America and the Caribbean, where more than 50% of the countries show significant progress. This is in contrast to less positive zones, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where some of the worse situations are found as well as the stagnant: this region includes 6 of the 10 countries with not recent evolution at all. ■

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PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

The need to invest in people

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- → Significant progress
- → Slight progress
- = Stagnant
- ← Regression
- ← Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE (% of GNI)	MILITARY EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
—	Afghanistan (52)	0.7 →			
→	Albania (94)	3.0 →	2.9	1.0 =	1.4 →
→	Algeria (94)	2.6 =		6.2 →	2.8 =
	Andorra (—)	4.9 =	2.6		
=	Angola (62)	1.5 =	2.6 =	7.8 ←	5.0 →
→	Antigua and Barbuda (—)	3.4 =	3.9 →		
=	Argentina (98)	4.4 ←	3.8 =	6.0 =	1.0 =
=	Armenia (96)	1.4 =	3.2 =	2.8 ←	2.7 =
—	Aruba (—)		5.1 =		
=	Australia (99)	6.5 →	4.8 =		1.8 =
=	Austria (—)	7.8 =	5.5 =		0.7 =
←	Azerbaijan (85)	0.9 =	2.5 ←	2.1 ←	2.0 →
=	Bahamas (99)	3.4 =	3.6* =		0.7 =
=	Bahrain (99)	2.7 =			4.3 =
=	Bangladesh (57)	0.9 =	2.5 =	1.3 =	1.1 =
=	Barbados (99)	4.5 =	6.9 =	3.3 →	0.9 =
=	Belarus (99)	4.6 =	6.0 =	2.3 ←	1.2 =
=	Belgium (99)	6.9 →	6.1 =		1.2 =
←	Belize (93)	2.7 =	5.4 =	23.0 ←	1.4* =
=	Benin (68)	2.5 =	3.5 →	1.6 =	
—	Bermuda (—)		1.9 ←		
=	Bhutan (78)	3.0 ←	5.6 =	0.8 =	
→	Bolivia (80)	4.1 →	6.4 →	5.8 →	1.9 =
=	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	4.1 ←		2.6 =	1.8 →
→	Botswana (92)	4.0 →	10.7 →	0.5 →	2.5 →
=	Brazil (92)	4.8 →	4.4 ←	7.4 ←	1.4 =
=	Brunei Darussalam (100)	2.6 =			6.6 =
=	Bulgaria (99)	4.6 →	4.2 =	21.1 ←	2.4 =
→	Burkina Faso (64)	3.3 →	4.7 →	0.8 =	1.3 =
→	Burma/Myanmar (76)	0.3 =	1.3 →		1.3 →
→	Burundi (58)	0.8 =	5.1 →	5.1 =	0.0 →
→	Cambodia (66)	1.7 →	1.9 =	0.5 →	1.8 =
=	Cameroon (70)	1.5 =	1.8 ←	4.9 =	1.3 =
=	Canada (99)	6.8 →	5.2 ←		1.1 =
=	Cape Verde (93)	3.9 →	6.6 →	3.4 ←	0.7 =
=	Central African Republic (65)	1.5 =		0.4 →	1.1 =
=	Chad (42)	1.6 ←	2.1 =	1.3 =	0.8 →
=	Chile (100)	2.9 =	3.5 =	7.0 →	3.7 =
=	China (90)	1.8 =	1.9* =	1.2 =	2.0 =
→	Colombia (90)	6.7 →	4.8 →	8.7 →	3.7 ←
=	Comoros (79)	1.6 =	3.9 =	1.0 =	
=	Congo, DR (69)	1.1 →		3.1 =	2.1 =
=	Congo, Rep. (79)	1.2 =	2.2 ←	2.7 →	1.4
→	Costa Rica (94)	5.1 =	4.9 →	3.2 →	
→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	0.9 =	4.6 →	3.1 →	1.6 =

NOTES:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.
(1) Prior to separation.

SOURCE:
World Development Indicators 2008 website (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE (% of GNI)	MILITARY EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
←	Croatia (99)	6.1 ←	4.7 =	13.1 ←	1.6 →
=	Cuba (99)	5.5 =	9.8 =		
→	Cyprus (99)	2.6 =	6.3 →		1.5 →
=	Czech Republic (99)	6.5 →	4.4 =	5.0 =	1.8 =
=	Denmark (98)	7.1 =	8.6 →		1.4 =
→	Djibouti (75)	4.4 =	7.9 →	2.4 =	4.3 →
←	Dominica (97)	4.2 =	5.0* ←	6.6 ←	
=	Dominican Republic (88)	1.9 =	1.8 =	3.3 =	0.6 =
=	Ecuador (83)	2.2 →	1.0 ←	12.0 =	2.4 =
→	Egypt (88)	2.2 =		2.8 →	2.8 →
=	El Salvador (79)	3.5 =	2.8 =	4.0 =	0.6 →
←	Equatorial Guinea (59)	1.2 =	0.6 ←	0.1 →	2.1* ←
=	Eritrea (67)	1.8 ←	5.4 →	2.1 ←	19.3 →
←	Estonia (99)	4.0 =	5.3 ←	12.2 ←	1.5 =
→	Ethiopia (54)	2.7 =	6.1 →	0.8 =	3.1 →
→	Fiji (99)	2.9 =	6.4 =	0.6 →	1.2 =
=	Finland (100)	5.7 →	6.5 =		1.2 =
→	France (99)	8.2 →	5.9 =		2.5
→	Gabon (82)	3.1 =	3.9* →	1.6 →	1.3 →
=	Gambia (70)	1.8 =	2.0 ←	6.5 →	0.3 =
=	Georgia (89)	1.5 =	2.9 →	3.0 ←	3.1 ←
=	Germany (100)	8.2 =	4.6 =		1.4 =
→	Ghana (66)	2.8 =	5.5 →	2.7 →	0.8 =
=	Greece (100)	4.2 =	4.3 →		4.5 =
→	Grenada (92)	5.0 →	5.2 =	2.8 =	
=	Guatemala (68)	2.3 =		1.5 →	0.4 =
=	Guinea (66)	0.7 =	2.0 =	4.9 →	2.9 =
←	Guinea-Bissau (61)	1.3 =	5.3*	11.3 ←	3.1 ←
→	Guyana (81)	4.4 =	8.5 →	4.4 →	0.8* =
=	Haiti (—)	2.9 →		1.3 =	0.1* =
→	Honduras (78)	4.0 =		4.8 →	0.6 =
—	Hong Kong (—)		4.2 →		
=	Hungary (99)	5.7 →	5.5 =	22.7 ←	1.3 =
→	Iceland (100)	8.3 →	8.1 →		0.0 =
=	India (71)	0.9 =	3.8 =	3.0 =	2.9 =
=	Indonesia (84)	1.0 =	1.0 =	6.6 →	0.9 =
=	Iran (91)	3.2 →	4.7 =	1.4 =	4.5 ←
—	Iraq (83)	4.2 →			
=	Ireland (100)	5.7 →	4.8 =		0.6 =
=	Israel (100)	6.1 =	6.9 =		7.9 →
→	Italy (99)	6.5 →	4.7 →		1.8 =
=	Jamaica (95)	2.8 ←	5.3 =	10.6 →	0.7 =
=	Japan (99)	6.3 =	3.6 =		1.0 =
=	Jordan (97)	4.7 =	4.9* ←	4.7 →	7.7 →
←	Kazakhstan (98)	2.3 =	2.3 ←	25.5 ←	1.1 =
→	Kenya (71)	1.8 =	6.7 =	1.2 →	1.4 =
→	Kiribati (88)	12.7 →	16.5 →		
—	Korea, DPR (—)	3.0 =			
=	Korea, Rep. (100)	2.9 →	4.6 =		2.6 =
→	Kuwait (98)	2.2 =	5.1 =		5.7 →
←	Kyrgyzstan (95)	2.3 =	4.5 ←	5.3 ←	2.9 ←
=	Lao, PDR (58)	0.8 =	2.3 →	6.6 ←	2.1 →
=	Latvia (99)	4.0 →	5.3 →	19.7 ←	1.7 =
=	Lebanon (95)	3.2 =	2.6 =	17.0 ←	3.8 →

NOTES:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.
(1) Prior to separation.

SOURCE:
World Development Indicators 2008 website (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE (% of GNI)	MILITARY EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
→	Lesotho (72)	5.5 →	13.4 →	3.1 ıı	2.4 →
→	Liberia (65)	3.6 →		0.2 ıı	7.5 ıı
→	Libya (98)	2.9 →	2.7*		1.9 →
←	Lithuania (99)	4.9 ıı	5.2 ıı	10.8 ←	1.8 ıı
ıı	Luxembourg (97)	7.2	3.6* ıı		0.9 ıı
—	Macao (—)		2.3 ıı		
←	Macedonia (96)	5.7 ıı	3.5 ←	4.2 ←	2.2 ıı
→	Madagascar (61)	1.8 →	3.2 ıı	1.6 →	1.4 ıı
→	Malawi (62)	9.6 →	5.8 →	4.7 →	0.7 ıı
→	Malaysia (99)	2.2 →	6.3 ıı	7.5 →	1.9 ıı
ıı	Maldives (86)	6.3 →	7.1 ıı	4.7 ıı	
→	Mali (69)	3.3 →	4.3 →	1.7 ıı	1.9 ıı
→	Malta (100)	7.0 →	4.5 ıı		0.7 ıı
←	Marshall Islands (93)	14.7 →	11.8 ←		
→	Mauritania (66)	2.0 ıı	2.3 ←	3.5 →	1.0 →
ıı	Mauritius (98)	2.4 ıı	4.5 ıı	4.5 →	0.2 ıı
→	Mexico (94)	3.0 →	5.4 →	5.8 ıı	0.4 ıı
→	Micronesia (—)	6.5 →	7.3* ıı		
ıı	Moldova (96)	4.2 →	4.3 ıı	7.3 ←	0.3 ıı
	Monaco (—)	7.5 →	4.5		
←	Mongolia (95)	4.0 ←	5.4 ←	2.2 →	1.7 →
→	Morocco (79)	1.8 ıı	6.8 →	5.3 →	4.3 ıı
ıı	Mozambique (66)	2.7 ←	3.7 →	1.5 →	1.3 →
ıı	Namibia (85)	4.7 ıı	6.9 ıı		3.0 →
ıı	Nepal (65)	1.5 ıı	3.4 →	1.6 ıı	2.0 ıı
ıı	Netherlands (100)	5.7 →	5.4 ıı		1.6 ıı
ıı	New Zealand (98)	6.5 →	6.5 ıı		1.0 ıı
ıı	Nicaragua (72)	3.9 ıı	3.1 ıı	3.6 ←	0.7 →
ıı	Niger (52)	2.2 ıı	2.3 ıı	1.1 →	1.1 ıı
ıı	Nigeria (63)	1.4 ıı		10.5 →	0.9 ıı
ıı	Norway (100)	8.1 →	7.7 ıı		1.7 ıı
ıı	Oman (99)	2.4 ıı	3.6 ıı	4.3 ıı	12.3 →
→	Pakistan (64)	0.4 ıı	2.3 ıı	2.2 →	3.3 →
→	Palau (99)	8.9 ıı	10.3 →		
←	Panama (91)	5.2 ıı	3.8 ıı	14.5 ←	1.0* ıı
→	Papua New Guinea (68)	3.0 ıı		8.5 →	0.5 →
ıı	Paraguay (85)	2.6 ←	4.3 →	6.7 ıı	0.8 ıı
←	Peru (86)	1.9 ←	2.4 ıı	7.5 ←	1.3 ıı
ıı	Philippines (77)	1.4 ıı	2.7 ıı	9.3 ıı	0.8 ıı
ıı	Poland (100)	4.3 ıı	5.4 ıı	11.7	1.8 ıı
ıı	Portugal (99)	7.0 →	5.7 ıı		2.2 ıı
←	Qatar (96)	1.8 ıı	1.6 ←		
ıı	Romania (96)	3.4 ıı	3.4 ıı	7.2 ←	2.1 →
ıı	Russian Federation (98)	3.7 ıı	3.6 ıı	5.6 ←	3.7 →
→	Rwanda (53)	4.3 →	3.8 →	1.1 ıı	2.2 →
←	Samoa (97)	4.1 ←	4.5 ←	5.9 ←	
—	San Marino (—)	5.9 ←			
—	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	9.9 →			
ıı	Saudi Arabia (97)	2.5 ←	6.8 ıı		8.2 →
→	Senegal (71)	2.4 →	5.4 →	2.4 →	1.5 ıı
ıı	Serbia and Montenegro (—)[1]	7.3 →	3.3* ←	4.9 ←	2.7 →
ıı	Seychelles (—)	4.6 →	5.4 ıı	8.1 ←	1.7 →
ıı	Sierra Leone (61)	2.0 ıı	3.8 ←	2.1 →	1.1 ıı
ıı	Singapore (91)	1.3 ıı			4.7 ıı

NOTES:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.
(1) Prior to separation.

SOURCE:
World Development Indicators 2008 website (www.worldbank.org).

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Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE (% of GNI)	MILITARY EXPENDITURE (% of GDP)
←	Slovakia (97)	5.3 ıı	4.3 ıı	12.9 ←	1.7 ıı
ıı	Slovenia (99)	6.6 ıı	6.0 ıı		1.7 ıı
ıı	Solomon Islands (82)	5.6 →	3.3* ıı	4.7 ıı	
—	Somalia (—)	1.2 ıı			
ıı	South Africa (89)	3.5 ıı	5.4 ıı	2.0 ıı	1.4 →
ıı	Spain (99)	5.7 →	4.3 ıı		1.0 ıı
ıı	Sri Lanka (98)	2.0 ıı		1.9 →	2.7 ıı
ıı	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	3.3 ıı	9.4 →	12.2 ←	
←	St Lucia (98)	3.3 ıı	5.8 ←	4.3 ←	
ıı	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	3.9 ıı	8.2 →	6.0 ←	
ıı	Sudan (76)	1.5 →		1.5 ıı	2.2 ıı
—	Suriname (86)	3.6 ıı			
→	Swaziland (77)	4.0 →	6.2 ıı	1.6 →	1.7 ıı
ıı	Sweden (100)	7.7 →	7.4 ıı		1.6 ıı
ıı	Switzerland (97)	6.7 →	6.0 ıı		1.0 ıı
→	Syria (94)	2.2 ıı		0.7 →	6.3 ıı
←	Tajikistan (85)	1.0 ıı	3.5 ←	3.5 ←	2.2 ←
ıı	Tanzania (73)	1.7 ıı	2.2* ıı	1.0 →	1.0 ıı
ıı	Thailand (96)	2.3 ıı	4.2 ıı	11.3 ←	1.2 ıı
—	Timor-Leste (60)	8.8 →			
ıı	Togo (71)	1.1 ıı	2.6 ←	0.8 →	1.6 →
ıı	Tonga (95)	5.0 ıı	4.8 ←	1.9 ıı	
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	1.4 ıı	4.2 ıı	2.4 →	0.5* ıı
ıı	Tunisia (95)	2.8 ıı	7.3 ıı	7.7 →	1.5 ıı
ıı	Turkey (92)	5.2 →	4.0 →	11.6 ←	3.2 ←
←	Turkmenistan (—)	3.3 ıı		4.1 ←	2.9* ←
→	Uganda (59)	2.5 →	5.2 →	2.0 ıı	2.5 ıı
←	Ukraine (99)	3.7 →	6.4 ıı	6.9 ←	2.4 ←
ıı	United Arab Emirates (99)	2.0 ←	1.3 ıı		1.9 →
ıı	United Kingdom (99)	7.0 →	5.4 ıı		2.6 ıı
ıı	United States of America (99)	6.9 →	5.9 ıı		4.1 ıı
ıı	Uruguay (96)	3.6 ıı	2.6 ıı	13.9 ←	1.4 →
ıı	Uzbekistan (—)	2.4 ıı		5.4 ←	0.5 →
→	Vanuatu (87)	3.2 ıı	9.6 →	0.7 ıı	
ıı	Venezuela (95)	2.0 ←		3.9 →	1.1 ıı
→	Vietnam (90)	1.5 ıı		1.9 ıı	2.7* →
—	West Bank and Gaza (—)	7.8			
ıı	Yemen (61)	1.9 ıı	9.6 ←	1.4 →	5.0 →
→	Zambia (73)	3.5 →	2.0 ıı	3.5 →	0.6 ıı
←	Zimbabwe (80)	3.5 ıı	4.6* ←	7.0 ıı	3.4 ıı

NOTES:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.
(1) Prior to separation.

SOURCE:
World Development Indicators 2008 website (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Public health expenditure (% of GDP): Recurrent and capital spending from government (central and local) budgets, external borrowings and grants (including donations from international agencies and non-governmental organizations), and social (or compulsory) health insurance funds. Expressed as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).
Last available data: 2001/2005; evolution since 2000.

Public education expenditure (% of GDP): Public spending on public education plus subsidies to private education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Expressed as percentage of gross domestic product (based on World Bank and OECD GDP estimates).
Last available data: 2001/2006; evolution since 1991.

Total debt service (% of GNI): Sum of principal repayments and interest actually paid in foreign currency, goods, or services on long-term debt, interest paid on short-term debt, and repayments (repurchases and charges) to the IMF. Expressed as percentage of gross national income (GNI).
Last available data: 2004/2005; evolution since 1990.

Military expenditure (% of GDP): (Based on the NATO definition) Includes all current and capital expenditures on the armed forces, including peacekeeping forces; defence ministries and other government agencies engaged in defence projects; paramilitary forces, if these are judged to be trained and equipped for military operations; and military space activities. Such expenditures include military and civil personnel, including retirement pensions of military personnel and social services for personnel; operation and maintenance; procurement; military research and development; and military aid (in the military expenditures of the donor country). Excluded are civil defence and current expenditures for previous military activities, such as for veterans' benefits, demobilization, conversion, and destruction of weapons. Expressed as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1990.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

The need to invest in people

The public budget is the basic framework on which the socioeconomic development model of a country is built, since it establishes criteria for distributing income and determines political priorities. Commitments made by governments on social development goals and, specifically, on the reduction of poverty, should have a counterpart in the allocation of resources in the budget for the implementation of policies.

Since the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 there has been agreement between most governments over the importance of social development and human welfare in economic growth: investments in human capital stimulate economic development while promoting social equity and helping fight poverty.

As a framework for action the countries that attended the summit proposed placing human beings at the very core of development and guide the economy to satisfy their needs. They committed themselves to "enhancing social development throughout the world so that all men and women, especially those living in poverty, may exercise the rights, utilize the resources and share the responsibilities that enable them to lead satisfying lives and contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities, and humankind."[1]

Likewise, in the Millennium Declaration (2000), Heads of State and of Government expressed their concern over making the right to development a reality, particularly for those who live in extreme poverty. In this sense, it mentions that the adoption of policies and measures applicable to the needs of each national reality together with good management and transparency in public affairs may contribute to the attainment of this goal as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, the allocation of resources for the efficient running of public services will have a positive impact, above all, on the lives of people with the greatest deficiencies, helping make their rights a reality.

The analysis of the structure of public expenditure is, therefore, a valuable tool when evaluating the social development of countries. The budget allocated to health and education policies leads directly to the attainment of agreed social goals, while the expenditure allocated to maintaining the military and servicing the external debt and its interests reduces budget availability for the social development area.

According to the systematization of information contained in the table "Public expenditure: The need to invest in people", averages presented in Chart 1 show that public expenditure in health of countries in the better relative situation is four times as much as those in the worse situation; the latter allocate on average 1.8% of their GDP to public health policies, while those in the better situation allocate 6.8%.

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in public expenditure

		Public health expenditure (% of GDP)	Public education expenditure (% of GDP)	Total debt service (% of GNI)	Military expenditure (% of GDP)
Worse relative situation	Average	1.8	2.6	8.7	3.3
	Number of countries	17	14	10	16
Better relative situation	Average	6.8	7.3	3.1	1.0
	Number of countries	29	26	9	22
Total	Average	3.8	4.8	5.3	2.2
	Number of countries	180	159	133	157

CHART 2. Current situation in public expenditure by region (number of countries)

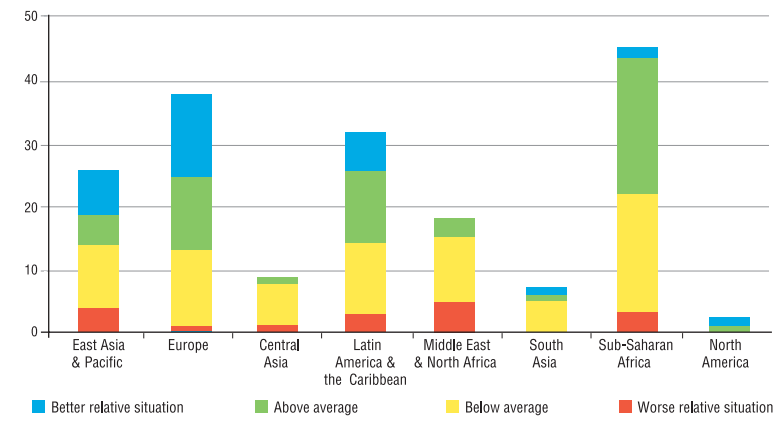

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in public expenditure (number of countries)

	↑↑	↑	=	↓	↓↓	Total
Worse relative situation	1	2	12	2	0	17
Below average	0	15	43	17	0	75
Above average	0	4	29	23	1	57
Better relative situation	0	1	19	8	1	29
Total	1	22	103	50	2	178

This marked difference is repeated in the public budget allocation for education: the countries in the better situation allocate on average 7.3% of GDP while those in the worse position allocate 2.6%.

Resources allocated to the payment of external debt and military expenses are high in countries in the worse relative situation (8.7% and 3.2%) and lower in the better positioned countries (3.1% and 1%). Even the average external debt service of countries with the greatest deficiencies registers an average increase of 0.4% in relation to the 2007 Social Watch Report. This group spends almost five times as many resources for debt payment than for the health assistance of their citizens. This relation is in inverse proportion in countries in the better relative situation, which dedicate more than double the expense on public debt to health policies.

Europe is the region with the largest number of countries (13) with an efficient allocation of public expenditure, although the proportion of countries in the region below world average is also high, including Georgia, which is in the worse relative situation.

As to the number of countries in a better relative situation, the regions that follow Europe, though at a distance, are East Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively with seven and six countries in the most favourable position. There are no countries in Central Asia or in the Middle East and North Africa in this position.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the largest number of countries below the world average or in the worse relative situation, excepting Malawi, which is not only among those countries in the better relative situation, but which in a short period of time has allocated significantly progressive resources to the health area.

The evolution of public expenditure (Chart 3) shows a discouraging scenario: less than one third of countries evince some progress in budget assignment. Most of them register neither progress nor regression; among these, more than half remain stationary below average or even in the worse situation. A further 23 countries regressed in their expenditure structure, with Guinea-Bissau in the worst relative situation. ■

1 World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen Declaration.

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The more help, the more rights

TRENDS IN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (% OF GNI) [A]

Net Official Development Assistance from DAC Countries and Multilateral Organizations to Developing Countries

	1989-1990 AVERAGE [B]	1994-1995 AVERAGE	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	0.36	0.34	0.27	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.30
Austria	0.16	0.22	0.23	0.34	0.26	0.20	0.23	0.52	0.47	0.49
Belgium	0.46	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.43	0.60	0.41	0.53	0.50	0.43
Canada	0.44	0.40	0.25	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.27	0.34	0.29	0.28
Czech Republic			0.03	0.05	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.11
Denmark	0.94	0.99	1.06	1.03	0.96	0.84	0.85	0.81	0.80	0.81
Finland	0.64	0.31	0.31	0.32	0.35	0.35	0.37	0.46	0.40	0.40
France	0.60	0.58	0.30	0.31	0.37	0.40	0.41	0.47	0.47	0.39
Germany	0.42	0.32	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.28	0.28	0.36	0.36	0.37
Greece	—	—	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.21	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.16
Hungary	—	—	—	—	—	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.13	0.07
Iceland	—	—	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.27	0.25
Ireland	0.16	0.27	0.29	0.33	0.40	0.39	0.39	0.42	0.54	0.54
Italy	0.36	0.21	0.13	0.15	0.20	0.17	0.15	0.29	0.20	0.19
Japan	0.31	0.28	0.28	0.23	0.23	0.20	0.19	0.28	0.25	0.17
Korea, Rep.	—	—	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.07
Luxembourg	0.20	0.38	0.71	0.76	0.77	0.81	0.83	0.86	0.84	0.90
Netherlands	0.93	0.79	0.84	0.82	0.81	0.80	0.73	0.82	0.81	0.81
New Zealand	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.27	0.27	0.27
Norway	1.11	0.94	0.76	0.80	0.89	0.92	0.87	0.94	0.89	0.95
Poland	—	—	0.02	0.02	—	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.09
Portugal	0.24	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.27	0.22	0.63	0.21	0.21	0.19
Slovakia	—	—	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.10	0.09
Spain	0.17	0.26	0.22	0.30	0.26	0.23	0.24	0.27	0.32	0.41
Sweden	0.93	0.86	0.80	0.77	0.84	0.79	0.78	0.94	1.02	0.93
Switzerland	0.31	0.35	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.39	0.41	0.44	0.39	0.37
Thailand	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.04	—
Turkey	—	—	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.17	0.18	—
United Kingdom	0.29	0.30	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.47	0.51	0.36
United States of America	0.18	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.23	0.18	0.16
Total DAC	0.32	0.28	0.22	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.26	0.33	0.31	0.28

NOTES: A: Net disbursements at current prices and exchange rates. B: Including debt forgiveness of non-ODA claims in 1990, except for total DAC.

SOURCE: OECD, Website Database (www.oecd.org); June 2008.

Official Development Assistance (% of GNI): Grants or loans to countries and territories on Part I of the DAC List of Aid Recipients (developing countries) which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector; (b) with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms (if a loan, having a Grant Element [q.v.] of at least 25%). In addition to financial flows, Technical Co-operation q.v. is included in aid. Grants, loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Transfer payments to private individuals (e.g. pensions, reparations or insurance payouts) are in general not counted. Expressed as percentage of gross national income (GNI).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the equal and inalienable rights of each person, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." The effective exercise of human rights must be guaranteed by the creation of economic, civil, political, social and cultural conditions that will foster them.

Economic and social development, however, show a very heterogeneous world, in which situations of great opulence coexist with manifestations of distressing poverty. International cooperation, one of the international instruments of human rights, is fundamental for the poorer countries in their quest for growth and development.

Since the 1970s, developed countries have committed themselves to allocating a fixed amount to Official Development Assistance (ODA), a commitment ratified in the final declaration of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. AOD, as a percentage, was fixed at 0,7% of the gross national income (GNI) of donor countries in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Also, the Millennium Development Goals propose to foster a global partnership for development, with the commitment of financial assistance by the more developed countries and the responsibility of the recipients to allocate it to social development and to the reduction of poverty in particular.

However by 2007 international assistance was only 0.28% of donor countries' GNI, thus highlighting the downward trend in recent years and moving further away from the commitments undertaken. The only countries that complied with the UN goal, going over 0.7% of the GNI for ODA, were Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

At the same time, the assistance granted counts up sums allocated to public debt relief, so the flow of capital available for development programmes ends up being less than what the donor countries declare.

Recent ODA trends predict a disheartening scenario to which the ongoing financial crisis adds new concerns. While it is necessary to keep fighting to reach the sums committed for assistance and to improve the loans granted to developing countries, it is essential to understand ODA as a north-south 'horizontal' process in which it is the needs and priorities of recipient countries that channel assistance, free from the restrictive conditioning of donor countries. ■

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The clean water gap

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- → Significant progress
- → Slight progress
- " Stagnant
- ← Regression
- ← Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour)	Summary: EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SANITATION (%)		POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES (%)	
	→	Afghanistan (52)	34	→	22*	→
	"	Albania (94)	91	"	97*	"
	←	Algeria (94)	92	→	85*	←
	"	Andorra (—)	100	"	100*	"
	→	Angola (62)	31	"	51*	→
	"	Anguilla (—)	99	"	60	"
	"	Antigua and Barbuda (—)	95	"	91	"
	→	Argentina (98)	91	→	96*	"
	→	Armenia (96)	83	"	98*	→
	"	Aruba (—)			100	"
	"	Australia (99)	100	"	100*	"
	"	Austria (—)	100	"	100*	"
	→	Azerbaijan (85)	54	"	78*	→
	"	Bahamas (99)	100	"	97	"
	→	Bangladesh (57)	39	→	80*	→
	"	Barbados (99)	100	"	100*	"
	"	Belarus (99)	84	"	100*	"
	"	Belize (93)	47	"	91	"
	→	Benin (68)	33	→	65*	"
	→	Bhutan (78)	70	"	81*	→
	→	Bolivia (80)	46	→	86*	→
	"	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	95	"	99*	"
	→	Botswana (92)	42	→	96*	→
	→	Brazil (92)	75	→	91*	→
	"	Bulgaria (99)	99	"	99*	"
	→	Burkina Faso (64)	13	→	72*	→
	→	Burma/Myanmar (76)	77	→	80*	→
	←	Burundi (58)	36	←	71*	"
	→	Cambodia (66)	17	→	65*	→
	→	Cameroon (70)	51	→	70*	→
	"	Canada (99)	100	"	100*	"
	→	Cape Verde (93)	43	→	80	"
	→	Central African Republic (65)	27	→	66*	→
	→	Chad (42)	9	"	48*	→
	→	Chile (100)	91	→	95*	→
	→	China (90)	44	→	88*	→
	→	Colombia (90)	86	→	93*	"
	←	Comoros (79)	33	"	85*	←
	→	Congo, DR (69)	30	→	46*	→
	→	Congo, Rep. (79)	27	"	71*	→
	→	Cook Islands (90)	100	→	95*	"
	→	Costa Rica (94)	92	"	98*	→
	→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	37	→	81*	→
	"	Croatia (99)	100	"	99*	"
	"	Cuba (99)	98	"	91*	"
	"	Cyprus (99)	100	"	100*	"
	"	Czech Republic (99)	98	"	100*	"
	"	Denmark (98)			100*	"
	→	Djibouti (75)	82	→	92*	→
	"	Dominica (97)	84	"	97	"
	→	Dominican Republic (88)	78	→	95*	→

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour)	Summary: EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SANITATION (%)		POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES (%)	
	→	Ecuador (83)	89	→	95*	→
	→	Egypt (88)	70	→	98*	→
	→	El Salvador (79)	62	→	84*	→
	"	Equatorial Guinea (59)	53	"	43*	"
	→	Eritrea (67)	9	"	60*	→
	"	Estonia (99)	97	"	100*	"
	→	Ethiopia (54)	13	→	42*	→
	→	Fiji (99)	72	→	47*	"
	"	Finland (100)	100	"	100*	"
	"	France (99)			100*	"
	"	French Guiana (—)	78	"	84	"
	"	French Polynesia (—)	98	"	100	"
	→	Gabon (82)	36	"	87*	→
	→	Gambia (70)	53	"	86*	→
	→	Georgia (89)	94	←	99*	→
	"	Germany (100)	100	"	100*	"
	→	Ghana (66)	18	→	80*	→
		Greece (100)			100*	
	"	Grenada (92)	96	"	95	"
	"	Guadeloupe (—)	64	"	98	"
	"	Guam (—)	99	"	100	"
	→	Guatemala (68)	86	→	96*	→
	→	Guinea (66)	18	→	70*	→
	→	Guinea-Bissau (61)	35	→	57*	"
	→	Guyana (81)	70	"	93*	→
	→	Haiti (—)	30	→	58*	→
	→	Honduras (78)	69	→	84*	"
	"	Hungary (99)	95	"	100*	"
	"	Iceland (100)	100	"	100*	"
	→	India (71)	33	→	89*	→
	→	Indonesia (84)	55	→	80*	→
	"	Iran (91)	83*	"	94	"
	←	Iraq (83)	79	"	77*	←
	"	Israel (100)			100*	"
	→	Jamaica (95)	80	→	93*	"
	"	Japan (99)	100	"	100*	"
	"	Jordan (97)	93	"	98*	"
	→	Kazakhstan (98)	72	"	96*	→
	→	Kenya (71)	43	→	57*	→
	→	Kiribati (88)	40	→	65*	→
	"	Korea, DPR (—)	59	"	100*	"
	"	Korea, Rep. (100)			92	"
	→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	59	"	89*	→
	→	Lao, PDR (58)	30	→	60*	→
	"	Latvia (99)	78		99*	"
	"	Lebanon (95)	98	"	100*	"
	"	Lesotho (72)	37	"	78*	"
	←	Liberia (65)	27	←	64*	→
	"	Libya (98)	97	"	71	"
	"	Luxembourg (97)			100*	"
		Macedonia (96)			100*	

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SANITATION (%)		POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES (%)	
→	Madagascar (61)	32	→	47*	→
→	Malawi (62)	61	→	76*	→
ıı	Malaysia (99)	94	ıı	99*	ıı
←	Maldives (86)	59	→	83*	←
→	Mali (69)	46	→	60*	→
ıı	Malta (100)			100*	ıı
←	Marshall Islands (93)	82	→	87	←
→	Mauritania (66)	34	→	60*	→
ıı	Mauritius (98)	94	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Mexico (94)	79	→	95*	→
→	Micronesia (—)	28	ıı	94*	→
←	Moldova (96)	68	ıı	90*	←
ıı	Monaco (—)	100	ıı	100	ıı
→	Mongolia (95)	59	ıı	72*	→
	Montenegro (—)			98	
ıı	Montserrat (—)	100	ıı	100	ıı
→	Morocco (79)	73	→	83*	→
→	Mozambique (66)	32	→	42*	→
→	Namibia (85)	25	ıı	93*	→
→	Nepal (65)	35	→	89*	→
ıı	Netherlands (100)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
ıı	New Zealand (98)			97*	ıı
→	Nicaragua (72)	47	ıı	79*	→
→	Niger (52)	13	→	42*	→
→	Nigeria (63)	44	→	47*	ıı
ıı	Niue (—)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Northern Mariana Islands (—)	95	→	99	ıı
ıı	Norway (100)			100*	ıı
→	Oman (99)	88*	→	82	ıı
→	Pakistan (64)	59	→	90*	→
→	Palau (99)	80	→	89*	→
ıı	Panama (91)	73	ıı	92*	ıı
ıı	Papua New Guinea (68)	44	ıı	40*	ıı
→	Paraguay (85)	80	→	77*	→
→	Peru (86)	63	→	84*	→
→	Philippines (77)	72	→	93*	→
	Portugal (99)			99*	
ıı	Qatar (96)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Romania (96)			88*	→
→	Russian Federation (98)	87	ıı	97*	→
→	Rwanda (53)	42	→	65*	→
←	Samoa (97)	100	ıı	88*	←
→	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	25	ıı	86*	→
ıı	Saudi Arabia (97)			93	ıı
→	Senegal (71)	57	→	77*	→
	Serbia (—)			99	

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SANITATION (%)		POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES (%)	
ıı	Seychelles (—)			88	ıı
←	Sierra Leone (61)	39	ıı	53*	←
ıı	Singapore (91)	100	ıı	100	ıı
ıı	Slovakia (97)	99	ıı	100*	ıı
ıı	Solomon Islands (82)	31	ıı	70*	ıı
ıı	Somalia (—)	26	ıı	29*	ıı
ıı	South Africa (89)	65	←	93*	→
ıı	Spain (99)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Sri Lanka (98)	91	→	82*	→
ıı	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	95	ıı	99*	ıı
ıı	St Lucia (98)	89	ıı	98*	ıı
→	Sudan (76)	34	ıı	70*	→
→	Suriname (86)	94	→	92*	ıı
←	Swaziland (77)	48	ıı	60*	←
ıı	Sweden (100)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
ıı	Switzerland (97)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Syria (94)	90	→	89*	→
→	Tajikistan (85)	51	ıı	67*	→
→	Tanzania (73)	47	ıı	55*	→
→	Thailand (96)	99	→	98*	→
→	Timor-Leste (60)	36	ıı	62*	→
→	Togo (71)	35	ıı	59*	→
→	Tokelau (—)	78	→	88	←
ıı	Tonga (95)	96	ıı	100*	ıı
ıı	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	100	ıı	94*	ıı
→	Tunisia (95)	85	→	94*	→
→	Turkey (92)	88	→	97*	→
ıı	Turkmenistan (—)	62	ıı	72	ıı
←	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)	96	←	100	ıı
→	Tuvalu (89)	90	→	93*	→
→	Uganda (59)	43	ıı	64*	→
ıı	Ukraine (99)	96	ıı	97*	ıı
ıı	United Arab Emirates (99)	98	ıı	100*	ıı
ıı	United Kingdom (99)			100*	ıı
ıı	United States of America (99)	100	ıı	99*	ıı
ıı	Uruguay (96)	100	ıı	100*	ıı
→	Uzbekistan (—)	67	→	88*	←
ıı	Vanuatu (87)	50	ıı	60	ıı
ıı	Venezuela (95)	68	ıı	83	ıı
→	Vietnam (90)	61	→	92*	→
ıı	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)	100	ıı	100	ıı
ıı	Wallis and Futuna (—)	80	ıı	100	ıı
ıı	West Bank and Gaza (—)	73	ıı	92	ıı
ıı	Yemen (61)	43	→	66*	←
→	Zambia (73)	55	→	58*	→
→	Zimbabwe (80)	53	→	81*	→

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE: Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply & Sanitation, UNICEF and WHO (www.wssinfo.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Population with access to sanitation (%): Percentage of the population with at least adequate excreta disposal facilities (private or shared, but not public) that can effectively prevent human, animal, and insect contact with excreta. Improved facilities range from simple but protected pit latrines to flush toilets with a sewerage connection. To be effective, facilities must be correctly constructed and properly maintained.
Last available data: 2004; evolution since 1990.

Population with access to improved water sources (%): Percentage of the population who use any of the following types of water supply for drinking: piped water, public tap, borehole or pump, protected well, protected spring or rainwater. Improved water sources do not include vendor provided waters, bottled water, tanker trucks or unprotected wells and springs.
Last available data: 2004/2006; evolution since 1990.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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WATER AND SANITATION

The clean water gap

Access to drinkable water and adequate sanitation facilities are fundamental components of sustainable human development and the reduction of poverty and hunger in the world. In the world today, according to United Nations, a child dies every 20 seconds due to lack of adequate sanitation and 2.6 billion people – including almost one million children – live without access to sanitation facilities.

Although water is a crucial component for a decent and healthy life, more than one billion people have no access to improved water sources; the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that, by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with severe limitations in the access to water. A restricted access to water in adequate quantity and quality diminishes the capacity to produce food, energy and industrial products, while also conspiring against the hygienic conditions indispensable for reducing the impact of diseases.

Furthermore, the restrictions of access to basic sanitation facilities have negative impacts on human health and wellbeing; the lack of sanitation is linked to various diseases that cause illness and death to millions of people, among them cholera, diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition.

The poor and the lack of access to water

The poorest of the world are those without access to basic services and, therefore, the most exposed to suffer the consequences. In rural areas, it is impossible for many to ensure the daily production of subsistence food and income. Both in rural and in urban areas poor people are more prone to contracting diseases due to the use of water – including water contaminated by the absence of sanitation – unfit for human consumption.

The information in the Table "The clean water gap" summarized in Chart 1 shows the huge gap in access to water and sanitation between countries that are in a better or worse situation. The former have, on average, reached high levels of access to improved water sources (98.2%) and sanitation (95%). At the other extreme, the average situation indicates that more than 40% of the population in these countries do not have access to improved water sources, while almost 70% lack basic sanitation services.

The vast majority (91%) of the countries where there are severe restrictions to the population's access to these services are countries with a low level of income according to the World Bank's classification.

Access by region

The shortage of water and adequate sanitation affects practically all regions (Chart 2). The worst relative situation is in Sub-Saharan Africa, where there are more than 30 countries with a severe lack of access to these basic services. In East Asia and the Pacific there is also a high number of countries with in a deficient situation, although the majority of countries in the region do not suffer a significant shortage in the region. In South Asia there is no country in the better relative situation.

Europe is the region with the highest number of countries practically without restrictions in the population's access to these services. Romania, however, is among the countries in worse situation and still shows unacceptable limitations (43%) in access to improved water sources. Also in Europe, Moldova is below the world average and a high percentage of the population (32%) has no basic sanitation facilities.

Although the data shows no major regressions (Chart 3) in access to water and sanitation, the existence of some regression in this area is alarming. The figures for Algeria, Maldives, Marshall Islands and Uzbekistan register regression in access to drinkable water, while Burundi and Liberia register regression in access to sanitation.

Most countries are stagnant in their coverage of these services; although services reached acceptable levels, many countries are stagnant in a scenario of rigid limitations to the access of drinkable water and sanitation.■

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in water and sanitation

		Population with access to improved water sources (%)	Population with access to sanitation (%)
Worse relative situation	Average	58.5	32.9
	Number of countries	43	43
Better relative situation	Average	98.4	95.6
	Number of countries	81	67
Total	Average	84.4	68.6
	Number of countries	195	177

CHART 2. Current situation in water and sanitation by region (number of countries)

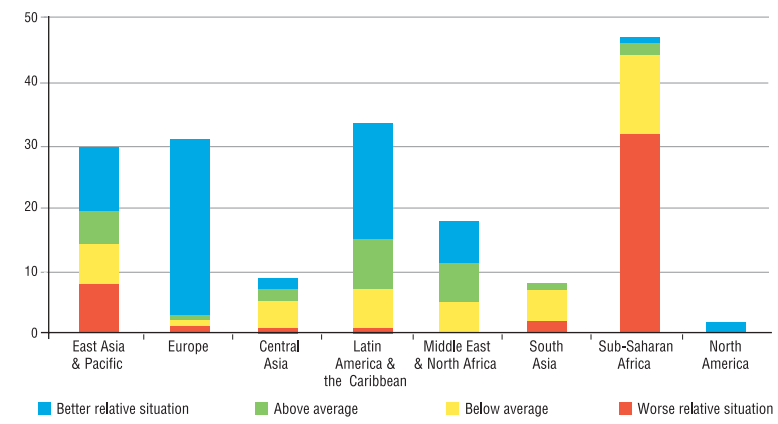

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in water and sanitation (number of countries)

	⟵	←	=	→	⟶	Total
Worse relative situation	0	4	6	19	12	43
Below average	0	4	7	19	14	43
Above average	0	1	10	8	6	28
Better relative situation	0	3	59	11	5	76
Total	0	12	82	57	37	190

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Globalization and its pathologies

References

CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data)
- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year)
- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	MALARIA (cases per 1,000 people)	TUBERCULOSIS (cases per 100,000 people)	PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %)	INFANT MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)	UNDER-5 MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)
→	Afghanistan (52)	24.7 =	231 →	<0.1	165 =	257 =
→	Albania (94)		26 →		15 →	17 →
→	Algeria (94)	<0.1 =	56 ←	<0.1 =	33 →	38 →
=	Andorra (—)		17 →		3 =	3 =
=	Angola (62)	106.9 ←	344 →	3.3 =	154 =	260 =
—	Antigua and Barbuda (—)		9 →		10	11
→	Argentina (98)	<0.1 =	48 →	0.5 =	14 →	16 →
→	Armenia (96)	<0.1 =	80 ←	0.1 =	21 →	24 →
=	Australia (99)		7 →	<0.1 =	5 =	6 →
→	Austria (—)		10 →	0.2 =	4 →	5 →
=	Azerbaijan (85)	0.1 =	87 ←	<0.1	73 →	88 →
→	Bahamas (99)		40 →	2.8 =	13 →	14 →
→	Bahrain (99)		45 →		9 →	10 →
→	Bangladesh (57)	0.4 =	391 →	<0.1	52 →	69 →
→	Barbados (99)		11 →	1.2 =	11 →	12 →
=	Belarus (99)		71 ←	0.2	12 →	13 →
→	Belgium (99)		11 →	0.2 =	4 →	4 →
→	Belize (93)	3.7 →	56 →	2.1 =	14 →	16 →
→	Benin (68)	122.0 ←	135 →	1.6 =	88 →	148 →
→	Bhutan (78)	1.7 →	96 →	<0.1	63 →	70 →
→	Bolivia (80)	2.3 =	266 →	0.1 =	50 →	61 →
→	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)		57 →	<0.1	13 →	15 →
←	Botswana (92)	12.6 ←	454 ←	23.6 →	90 ←	124 ←
→	Brazil (92)	2.1 =	55 →	0.5 =	19 →	20 →
=	Brunei Darussalam (100)		99 →	<0.1 =	8 =	9 =
=	Bulgaria (99)		41 →	<0.1	12 =	14 →
=	Burkina Faso (64)	114.9 ←	476 ←	2.0 →	122 =	204 =
→	Burma/Myanmar (76)	14.5 →	169 →	1.0 =	74 →	104 →
=	Burundi (58)	274.0 ←	714 ←	3.1 →	109 →	181 →
→	Cambodia (66)	5.0 →	665 →	1.5 →	65 →	82 →
=	Cameroon (70)	46.0 →	237 ←	4.9 →	87 =	149 ←
=	Canada (99)		4 →	0.2 =	5 =	6 =
→	Cape Verde (93)	0.3 =	324 →		25 →	34 →
=	Central African Republic (65)	24.7 →	528 ←	10.0 →	115 =	175 =
←	Chad (42)	47.7 ←	570 ←	3.1 →	124 ←	209 ←
→	Chile (100)		16 →	0.2 =	8 →	9 →
→	China (90)	<0.1 =	201 →	<0.1 =	20 →	24 →
→	Colombia (90)	3.7 =	59 →	0.5 =	17 →	21 →
→	Comoros (79)	5.1 →	86 →	0.5	51 →	68 →
←	Congo, DR (69)	83.1 ←	645 ←	2.9 →	129 =	205 =
←	Congo, Rep. (79)	5.3 →	566 ←	4.7 =	79 ←	126 ←
→	Cook Islands (90)		24 →		16 →	19 →
→	Costa Rica (94)	0.2 =	17 →	0.2 =	11 →	12 →
→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	24.9 →	747 ←	6.4 =	90 →	127 →

SOURCES:
Malaria: World Malaria Report 2005, UNICEF and WHO (www.rbm.who.int/wmr2005/).
Tuberculosis: Communicable Disease Global Atlas Database, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas).
People living with HIV/AIDS: 2007 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS.
Infant mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).
Under-5 mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	MALARIA (cases per 1,000 people)	TUBERCULOSIS (cases per 100,000 people)	PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %)	INFANT MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)	UNDER-5 MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)
→	Croatia (99)		64 →	<0.1	5 →	6 →
→	Cuba (99)		10 →	<0.1 ıı	5 →	7 →
→	Cyprus (99)		6 →		3 →	4 →
→	Czech Republic (99)		10 →	<0.1 ıı	3 →	4 →
→	Denmark (98)		7 →	0.1 ıı	4 ıı	5 →
→	Djibouti (75)	7.2 ıı	1300 →	3.0 ıı	86 →	130 →
ıı	Dominica (97)		16 →		13 ıı	15 ıı
→	Dominican Republic (88)	0.1 ıı	118 →	1.0 ıı	25 →	29 →
→	Ecuador (83)	4.0 →	195 →	0.2 ıı	21 →	24 →
→	Egypt (88)	<0.1 ıı	31 →	<0.1 ıı	29 →	35 →
→	El Salvador (79)	<0.1 ıı	64 →	0.8 ıı	22 →	25 →
←	Equatorial Guinea (59)		404 ←	2.9	124 ←	206 ←
→	Eritrea (67)	17.4 →	218 →	2.2 ıı	48 →	74 →
→	Estonia (99)		40 →	0.9 ıı	5 →	7 →
→	Ethiopia (54)	8.0 ←	641 ←	3.0 →	77 →	123 →
→	Fiji (99)		30 →	0.5 ıı	16 ıı	18 →
ıı	Finland (100)		4 →	<0.1 ıı	3 ıı	4 ıı
→	France (99)		11 →	0.3 ıı	4 ıı	4 →
ıı	Gabon (82)	66.8 ←	428 ←	6.8 ıı	60 ıı	91 ıı
→	Gambia (70)	100.5 →	423 ←	2.1 ←	84 →	113 →
ıı	Georgia (89)	0.1 ıı	84 ←	0.2 ıı	28 →	32 →
→	Germany (100)		5 →	<0.1 ıı	4 ıı	4 →
ıı	Ghana (66)	169.8 ←	379 →	2.2 →	76 ıı	120 ıı
→	Greece (100)		16 →	<0.1 ıı	4 →	4 →
→	Grenada (92)		8 →		16 →	20 →
→	Guatemala (68)	2.5 ıı	103 →	0.8 ıı	31 →	41 →
ıı	Guinea (66)	109.5 ←	466 ←	1.5 →	98 →	161 →
→	Guinea-Bissau (61)	134.6 ←	313 →	3.5	119 →	200 →
ıı	Guyana (81)	36.1 ←	215 ←	2.1 ıı	46 →	62 →
→	Haiti (—)	1.2 ıı	402 →	3.4 →	60 →	80 →
→	Honduras (78)	1.5 →	95 →	1.4 ıı	23 →	27 →
→	Hungary (99)		21 →	<0.1	6 →	7 →
ıı	Iceland (100)		3 →	0.5 ıı	2 ıı	3 →
→	India (71)	1.7 ıı	299 →	0.7 ıı	57 →	76 →
→	Indonesia (84)	1.0 ıı	253 →	0.1 ıı	26 →	34 →
→	Iran (91)	0.2 ıı	28 →	0.1 ıı	30 →	34 →
→	Iraq (83)	<0.1 ıı	78 →		37 →	46 →
→	Ireland (100)		11 →	0.2 ıı	4 →	5 →
→	Israel (100)		6 →		4 →	5 →
→	Italy (99)		6 →	0.3 ıı	4 →	4 →
ıı	Jamaica (95)		8 →	1.4 ıı	26 ıı	31 ıı
ıı	Japan (99)		29 →	<0.1 ıı	3 ıı	4 ıı
→	Jordan (97)		6 →		21 →	25 →
→	Kazakhstan (98)		142 ←	0.1 ıı	26 →	29 →
ıı	Kenya (71)	3.9 →	334 ←	6.1 →	79 ←	121 ←
→	Kiribati (88)		402 →		47 →	64 →
—	Korea, DPR (—)	0.7	180 →		42 ıı	
→	Korea, Rep. (100)	<0.1 ıı	123 →	<0.1 ıı	5 ıı	5 →
→	Kuwait (98)		25 →		9 →	11 →
→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	0.1 ıı	137 ←	0.1 ıı	36 →	41 →
→	Lao, PDR (58)	3.3 ıı	292 →	0.1 ıı	59 →	75 →
ıı	Latvia (99)		60 ←	0.5 ıı	8 →	9 →
→	Lebanon (95)		12 →	0.1 ıı	26 →	30 →
←	Lesotho (72)		513 ←	22.7 →	102 ←	132 ←

SOURCES:
Malaria: World Malaria Report 2005, UNICEF and WHO (www.rbm.who.int/wmr2005/).
Tuberculosis: Communicable Disease Global Atlas Database, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas).
People living with HIV/AIDS: 2007 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS.
Infant mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).
Under-5 mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	MALARIA (cases per 1,000 people)	TUBERCULOSIS (cases per 100,000 people)	PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %)	INFANT MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)	UNDER-5 MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)
←	Liberia (65)	301.5 ←	578 ←		157 ıı	235 ıı
→	Libya (98)		18 →		17 →	18 →
—	Liechtenstein (—)				3 →	3 →
→	Lithuania (99)		61 →	0.1 ıı	7 ıı	8 →
→	Luxembourg (97)		10 →	0.5 ıı	4 →	4 →
→	Macedonia (96)		33 →	<0.1 ıı	15 →	17 →
→	Madagascar (61)	121.5 ←	415 ←	0.5 →	72 →	115 →
→	Malawi (62)	240.4 →	322 →	12.5 →	76 →	120 →
→	Malaysia (99)	0.2 ıı	125 →	0.4 ıı	10 →	12 →
→	Maldives (86)		54 →		26 →	30 →
→	Mali (69)	62.2 ←	578 →	1.6 ıı	119 →	217 →
→	Malta (100)		5 →	0.5 ıı	5 →	6 →
→	Marshall Islands (93)		241 →		50 →	56 →
ıı	Mauritania (66)	59.6 ←	606 ←	0.6 ıı	78 →	125 →
→	Mauritius (98)	<0.1 ıı	40 →	0.4	13 →	14 →
→	Mexico (94)	<0.1 ıı	25 →	0.2 ıı	29 →	35 →
→	Micronesia (—)		109 →		33 →	41 →
ıı	Moldova (96)		154 ←	0.8	16 →	19 →
→	Monaco (—)		2 →		3 →	4 →
→	Mongolia (95)		191 →	<0.1 ıı	34 →	43 →
—	Montenegro		49		9 →	10 →
→	Morocco (79)	<0.1 ıı	79 →	<0.1	34 →	37 →
ıı	Mozambique (66)	269.7 ←	624 ←	14.4 ←	96 →	138 →
→	Namibia (85)	223.4 →	658 →	17.7 →	45 →	61 →
—	Nauru (—)		134 →		25	30
→	Nepal (65)	0.4 ıı	244 →	0.4 ıı	46 →	59 →
→	Netherlands (100)		6 →	0.1 ıı	4 ıı	5 →
→	New Zealand (98)		9 →	<0.1 ıı	5 →	6 →
→	Nicaragua (72)	1.2 →	74 →	0.2 ıı	29 →	36 →
→	Niger (52)	59.1 →	314 →	1.0 ıı	148 →	253 →
→	Nigeria (63)	21.0 ←	615 ←	3.5 →	99 →	191 →
—	Niue (—)		85 →			
→	Norway (100)		4 →	<0.1 ıı	3 →	4 →
→	Oman (99)	<0.1 →	14 →		10 →	12 →
→	Pakistan (64)	0.8 ıı	263 →	<0.1 ıı	78 →	97 →
→	Palau (99)		51 →		10 →	11 →
→	Panama (91)	2.9 ←	43 →	0.8 ıı	18 →	23 →
→	Papua New Guinea (68)	12.3 →	513 →	1.6 ←	54 →	73 →
→	Paraguay (85)	0.2 ıı	100 →	0.3 ıı	19 →	22 →
→	Peru (86)	2.9 ıı	187 →	0.5 ıı	21 →	25 →
→	Philippines (77)	0.5 ıı	432 →	<0.1 ıı	24 →	32 →
→	Poland (100)		27 →	<0.1	6 →	7 →
→	Portugal (99)		24 →	0.4 ıı	3 →	5 →
ıı	Qatar (96)		73 →		18 ıı	21 →
ıı	Romania (96)		140 ←	<0.1	16 →	18 →
ıı	Russian Federation (98)		125 ←	0.8 ıı	14 →	16 →
→	Rwanda (53)	102.1 →	562 ←	3.1 →	98 →	160 →
→	Samoa (97)		25 →		23 →	28 →
→	San Marino (—)		5 →		3 →	3 →
→	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	393.5 →	252 →		63 ıı	96 →
→	Saudi Arabia (97)	<0.1 ıı	62 →		21 →	25 →
ıı	Senegal (71)	119.3 ←	504 ←	0.8 ıı	60 →	116 →
—	Serbia		41		7	8
→	Seychelles (—)		56 →		12 →	13 →

SOURCES:
Malaria: World Malaria Report 2005, UNICEF and WHO (www.rbm.who.int/wmr2005/).
Tuberculosis: Communicable Disease Global Atlas Database, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas).
People living with HIV/AIDS: 2007 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS.
Infant mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).
Under-5 mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	MALARIA (cases per 1,000 people)	TUBERCULOSIS (cases per 100,000 people)	PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %)	INFANT MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)	UNDER-5 MORTALITY (per 1,000 live births)
←	Sierra Leone (61)	95.4 ←	977 ←	1.4	159 →	270 →
→	Singapore (91)		25 →	0.2 ıı	2 →	3 →
→	Slovakia (97)		18 →	<0.1	7 →	8 →
→	Slovenia (99)		15 →	<0.1 ıı	3 →	4 →
→	Solomon Islands (82)	189.9 →	194 →		55 →	73 →
→	Somalia (—)	2.4 ıı	293 →	0.9	90 →	145 →
ıı	South Africa (89)	0.3 ıı	998 ←	16.6 →	56 ←	69 ←
→	Spain (99)		24 →	0.4 ıı	4 ıı	4 →
→	Sri Lanka (98)	0.6 →	80 →	<0.1 ıı	11 →	13 →
→	St Kitts and Nevis (95)		17 →		17 →	19 →
→	St Lucia (98)		22 →		12 →	14 →
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)		47 →		17 ıı	20 →
→	Sudan (76)	91.8 →	419 ←	1.5 ıı	61 →	89 →
→	Suriname (86)	33.7 ←	95 →	1.6 ıı	29 →	39 →
←	Swaziland (77)	34.0 ←	1084 ←	34.5 →	112 ←	164 ←
ıı	Sweden (100)		5 →	0.1 ıı	3 ıı	3 →
→	Switzerland (97)		5 →	0.3 ıı	4 ıı	5 →
→	Syria (94)	<0.1 ıı	40 →		12 →	14 →
→	Tajikistan (85)	0.9 ıı	298 ←	0.1	56 →	68 →
→	Tanzania (73)	289.7 →	459 ←	5.9 →	74 →	118 →
→	Thailand (96)	0.6 →	197 →	1.1 ıı	7 →	8 →
→	Timor-Leste (60)	40.9	789 →		47 →	55 →
→	Togo (71)	92.1 →	787 ←	2.9 →	69 →	108 →
→	Tonga (95)		34 →		20 →	24 →
ıı	Trinidad and Tobago (95)		10 →	2.5 ıı	33 ıı	38 ←
→	Tunisia (95)		28 →	0.1 ıı	19 →	23 →
→	Turkey (92)	0.1 ıı	32 →		24 →	26 →
→	Turkmenistan (—)	<0.1 ıı	78 →	<0.1	45 →	51 →
→	Tuvalu (89)		504 →		31 →	38 →
ıı	Uganda (59)	477.9 ←	561 ←	6.3 ←	78 →	134 →
ıı	Ukraine (99)		114 ←	1.0 ıı	20 ıı	24 ıı
→	United Arab Emirates (99)		24 →		8 →	8 →
ıı	United Kingdom (99)		12 →	0.1 ıı	5 ıı	6 →
→	United States of America (99)		3 →	0.5 ıı	6 →	8 →
→	Uruguay (96)		31 →	0.4 ıı	11 →	12 →
→	Uzbekistan (—)	<0.1 ıı	145 ←	0.2 ıı	38 →	43 →
→	Vanuatu (87)	71.9 →	65 →		30 →	36 →
→	Venezuela (95)	1.2 ıı	52 →	0.6 ıı	18 →	21 →
→	Vietnam (90)	0.5 ıı	225 →	0.4 ıı	15 →	17 →
—	West Bank and Gaza (—)				20 →	22 →
→	Yemen (61)	13.2 ←	132 →		75 →	100 →
→	Zambia (73)	190.2 →	568 →	15.8 →	102 ıı	182 ıı
←	Zimbabwe (80)	97.6 ←	597 ←	19.2 →	68 ←	105 ←

SOURCES:

Malaria: World Malaria Report 2005, UNICEF and WHO (www.rbm.who.int/wmr2005/).

Tuberculosis: Communicable Disease Global Atlas Database, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas).

People living with HIV/AIDS: 2007 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS.

Infant mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).

Under-5 mortality: The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Malaria (cases per 1,000 people): Total number of malaria cases reported to the World Health Organization by countries in which malaria is endemic, per 1,000 people. Many countries report only laboratory-confirmed cases, but many in Sub-Saharan Africa report clinically diagnosed cases as well.
Last available data: 2003; evolution since 1990.

Tuberculosis (cases per 100,000 people): Total number of tuberculosis cases reported to the World Health Organization per 100,000 people. A tuberculosis case is defined as a patient in whom tuberculosis has been bacteriologically confirmed or diagnosed by a clinician. Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1990.

People living with HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %): Percentage of adults (15-49 years) living with HIV/AIDS. Last available data: 2005; evolution since 2001.

Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births): Number of infants dying before reaching one year of age, per 1,000 live births in a given year. Last available data: 2006; evolution since 1990.

Under-5 mortality (per 1,000 live births): Probability of dying between birth and exactly five years of age expressed per 1,000 live births. Last available data: 2006; evolution since 1990.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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HEALTH

Globalization and its pathologies

The 2007 World Health Organization (WHO) Report[1] highlights the efforts made to obtain relatively stable global sanitary safety during the last 57 years, as from the publication of the first legally binding regulations[2] to prevent the propagation of international diseases.

In spite of the efforts and knowledge accumulated since then, the present scenario evinces complexities unforeseeable over half a century ago. According to recent estimates, in 2006 some 2 billion passengers travelled by airplane. This indicator of the astonishing mobility that technological progress affords nowadays, is at the same time, and from a different angle, a potential threat to global sanitary safety. That number of passengers can allow an epidemic occurring in one part of the world to reach, in a matter of hours, the other side of the globe.

The Report also warns about other elements that challenged the world sanitary system. In the last 30 years diseases have been identified at an unprecedented rate. "There are now nearly 40 diseases that were unknown a generation ago. In addition, during the last five years, WHO has verified more than 1100 epidemic events worldwide."[3]

To the above elements can be added others derived from big accidents, climate change, reappearance of new and more resilient illnesses which were considered controlled or even eradicated, and the appearance of new diseases. Many of these are the unwanted consequences of progress at global level, even of achievements related to health.

Global risk, unequal problems

These scenarios are proof of the global reach of the different threats. The only way to effectively face the new challenges is by articulating the efforts made by each country separately with the implementation and development of global policies in which developed countries must help developing countries, in particular the poorest, not only to repair injustices between North and South but also because developed countries cannot achieve security in their territories if they disregard what is happening in the rest.

Nevertheless, the fact that the risk is global does not imply an egalitarian distribution of problems: once again, asymmetry, inequity and injustice between developed countries and the rest of the planet make global threats in the short run much more harmful to the more impoverished and more unequal societies. The summary in Chart 1 shows the averages for different illnesses in countries in the better and the worse sanitary situation. In the case of malaria, nearly one out of five people in the less favoured group have suffer illness, while in the more favoured group there is less than one case per 1,000 inhabitants. Tuberculosis is 15 times more prevalent in the countries in the worse relative situation than in the group of the more privileged countries.

Finally, a comparison of the trend for the HIV/AIDS pandemic between last year's and this year's report shows that the situation in the less advantaged countries has remained constant, with 9% of carriers in the 15 to 49 age bracket, whereas there was a slight improvement in countries in the better relative situation, which moved from 0.4% to 0.3% for the reference population.

Other crucial indicators for understanding the global situation are infant mortality (under 1 year) and mortality in under -5. For many years the infant mortality rate was widely used as an indicator linked to the general development rate of a country. Lately, the implementation of focalized policies has led to a certain progress in infant mortality, with no correlation in progress to the general development of the country. But reducing mortality in children under the age of 5 tends to be more difficult, since this requires more long-term changes in access to health services and quality of life. This is why mortality in the first few years of life is still a useful indicator of the general sanitary situation of a country. Data for this variable show a relatively stagnant situation, if compared with last year's report. Also unchanged is the gap between countries in the

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in health

		Malaria (cases per 1,000 people)	Tuberculosis (cases per 100,000 people)	People living with HIV/AIDS (15-49 years old, %)	Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	Under-5 mortality (per 1,000 live births)
Worse relative situation	Average	172	565	9	108	174
	Number of countries	19	21	19	21	21
Better relative situation	Average	0.6	41	0.3	12	14
	Number of countries	28	98	74	98	98
Total	Average	52	199	2	39	56
	Number of countries	103	185	148	185	185

CHART 2. Current situation in health by region (number of countries)

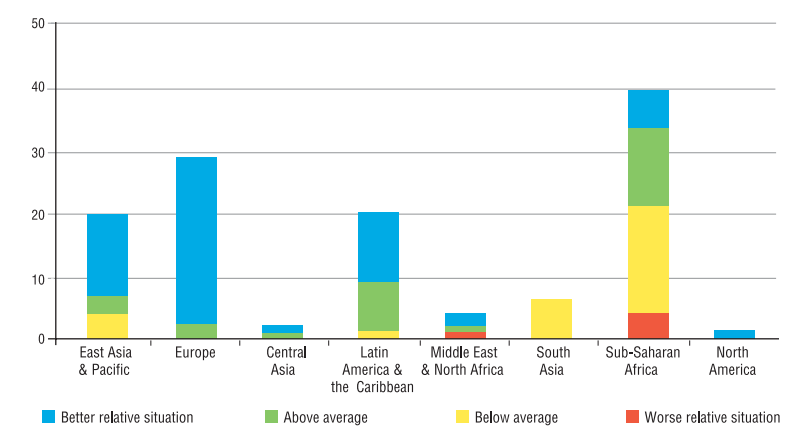

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in health (number of countries)

	←	←	=	→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	1	7	6	5	2	21
Below average	0	2	8	10	12	32
Above average	0	0	7	10	18	35
Better relative situation	0	0	16	70	11	97
Total	1	9	37	95	43	185

1 World Health Organization (WHO) (2007). *The World Health Report. A safer future: global public health security in the 21st century.*

2 International Health Regulations (IHR), adopted in 1951. A new expanded and revised IHR came into force in June 2007.

3 WHO, *op. cit.*

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better and the worse situation: mortality in under fives is still 13 times greater in the latter group.

If the behaviour of countries in different geographical zones is analyzed for the indicators in that area, Chart 2 is more than eloquent in revealing the distressing situation faced by Sub-Saharan Africa.

With respect to overall health progress, the comparison between the current situation and recent progress (Chart 3), the picture is more encouraging, at least for the countries that can provide information. Of these 185 countries only 10 regressed, while 3 out of 4 evinced slight or significant progress. However the values for Equatorial Guinea show that there is still significant regression. ■

The figures for infant mortality in countries in the worse relative situation are alarming. In this subgroup, the average infant mortality is 108 children for every 1,000 live births, 9 times higher than for the subgroup in a better relative situation. There are also large differences within the less advantaged subgroup. Eleven countries double these values, with over 200 deaths for every 1,000 live births: 1 infant dies out of 5 live births.

Countries	Infant mortality (per 1.000 live births)	Countries	Infant mortality (per 1.000 live births)	Countries	Infant mortality (per 1.000 live births)
Sierra Leone	270	Liberia	235	Congo, DR	205
Angola	260	Mali	217	Burkina Faso	204
Afghanistan	257	Chad	209	Guinea-Bissau	200
Niger	253	Equatorial Guinea	206	**Average for the 185 countries**	**39**

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A matter of life and death

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	ESTIMATED MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (per 100,000 live births)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)
	Afghanistan (52)	52*	14*	1800	10*
	Albania (94)	81*	100*	92	60*
	Algeria (94)	79*	95	180	61
	Angola (62)		45*	1400	6*
	Antigua and Barbuda (—)		100		53*
	Argentina (98)		99*	77	65*
	Armenia (96)	93*	98*	76	53*
	Australia (99)		100*	4	
	Austria (—)			4	51*
	Azerbaijan (85)	70*	97	82	55*
	Bahamas (99)		99	16	
	Bahrain (99)		99*	32	
	Bangladesh (57)	49*	20	570	58*
	Barbados (99)	89*	100*	16	55
	Belarus (99)		100*	18	73*
	Belgium (99)		99*	8	
	Belize (93)		91	52	56*
	Benin (68)	88*	74	840	17
	Bhutan (78)		51*	440	31*
	Bolivia (80)	79*	60,8*	290	58*
	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	99*	100	3	36
	Botswana (92)	99*	99*	380	44*
	Brazil (92)		97*	110	77*
	Brunei Darussalam (100)		100*	13	
	Bulgaria (99)		99	11	42*
	Burkina Faso (64)	73*	54	700	17
	Burma/Myanmar (76)		68*	380	34*
	Burundi (58)	93*	34*	1100	9*
	Cambodia (66)	69*	43,8*	540	40*
	Cameroon (70)	83*+	63	1000	29
	Canada (99)		100*	7	
	Cape Verde (93)		89*	210	53*
	Central African Republic (65)		54	980	19
	Chad (42)	43*+	15*	1500	3*
	Chile (100)		100*	16	61*
	China (90)		98	45	90*
	Colombia (90)	94*+	96*	130	78*
	Comoros (79)		62*	400	26*
	Congo, DR (69)		61*	1100	31*
	Congo, Rep. (79)	87*+	83*	740	44*
	Cook Islands (90)		100*		
	Costa Rica (94)		94	30	96*
	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	84*	57	810	13

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCES:
Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy: Global Health Atlas. WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).

Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).

Maternal mortality ratio: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/).

Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Development Indicators 2008 website, World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	ESTIMATED MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (per 100,000 live births)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)
	Croatia (99)		100 ıı	7	69*
ıı	Cuba (99)		100 ıı	45	73 ıı
	Cyprus (99)		100*	10	
←	Czech Republic (99)		100 ıı	4	72* ←
—	Denmark (98)			3	
	Djibouti (75)		93	650	18
	Dominica (97)		99* ıı		50*
→	Dominican Republic (88)	98*+ ıı	96 →	150	61 →
ıı	Ecuador (83)	56* ←	80* ←	210	73* →
→	Egypt (88)	71*+ →	74* →	130	59* →
→	El Salvador (79)		69* →	170	67* →
	Equatorial Guinea (59)		63*	680	
→	Eritrea (67)	70*+	28* →	450	8* ıı
	Estonia (99)		100* ıı	25	
ıı	Ethiopia (54)	28*+ ıı	6* ıı	720	15* →
ıı	Fiji (99)		99* ıı	210	44* ıı
	Finland (100)		100* ıı	7	
	France (99)		99*	8	82* →
	Gabon (82)	94*	86*	520	33*
	Gambia (70)	92*	57	690	18* →
ıı	Georgia (89)	91*	92* ←	66	47* →
	Germany (100)		100	4	
ıı	Ghana (66)	92* →	50 →	560	17 ←
—	Greece (100)			3	
ıı	Grenada (92)		100* ıı		54* ıı
→	Guatemala (68)	86*	41* →	290	43* →
→	Guinea (66)	82*+ →	38* →	910	9* →
	Guinea-Bissau (61)	89*	39	1100	10 →
←	Guyana (81)	88*	94* ıı	470	35* ←
→	Haiti (—)	85* →	26 →	670	32 →
→	Honduras (78)	92*+	67 →	280	65 →
	Hungary (99)		100 ıı	6	
—	Iceland (100)			4	
→	India (71)	65*	47 →	450	56 →
→	Indonesia (84)	92* →	66* →	420	57* →
	Iran (91)		97*	140	74* →
	Iraq (83)		89	300	50 →
	Ireland (100)		100* ıı	1	
—	Israel (100)			4	
	Italy (99)		99*	3	60*
→	Jamaica (95)		97* →	170	69* →
←	Japan (99)		100* ıı	6	52* ←
→	Jordan (97)	99* →	100* →	62	56* →
←	Kazakhstan (98)	82*	100 ıı	140	51 ←
ıı	Kenya (71)	88* →	42* ←	560	39* →
	Kiribati (88)		90* →		21*
	Korea, DPR (—)	98*	97*	370	69* →
→	Korea, Rep. (100)		100 ıı	14	81* →
→	Kuwait (98)		100 ıı	4	50* →
←	Kyrgyzstan (95)	88*	98 ıı	150	48 ←
→	Lao, PDR (58)	44*	19* →	660	32* →
	Latvia (99)		100* ıı	10	
ıı	Lebanon (95)		98* →	150	58* ←

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCES:
Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy: Global Health Atlas, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).
Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database. Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).
Maternal mortality ratio: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/).
Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Development Indicators 2008 website, World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	ESTIMATED MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (per 100,000 live births)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)
→	Lesotho (72)	90*+ ıı	55*	960	37* →
	Liberia (65)		51*	1200	10*
	Libya (98)		100 →	97	
	Lithuania (99)		100* ıı	11	
	Luxembourg (97)		100*	12	
	Macedonia (96)		98* →	10	14
ıı	Madagascar (61)	80*+ ıı	45* ←	510	27* →
→	Malawi (62)	93*+ →	54 ıı	1100	42 →
	Malaysia (99)		100* →	62	
	Maldives (86)	98*	84*	120	39* ←
→	Mali (69)	53* →	41* ıı	970	8* →
	Malta (100)		100	8	
←	Marshall Islands (93)		95* ıı		34* ←
	Mauritania (66)	63*	53* →	820	8*
	Mauritius (98)		99*	15	76* ıı
→	Mexico (94)		94 →	60	71 →
	Micronesia (—)		88* ←		45*
ıı	Moldova (96)	98*+ ıı	100* ıı	22	68* ←
	Mongolia (95)		99*	46	66 ıı
—	Montenegro (—)		99*		
→	Morocco (79)	68*+ →	63* →	240	63* →
→	Mozambique (66)	85*+ →	48* →	520	17* →
→	Namibia (85)	85* ←	76* →	210	44* →
—	Nauru (—)		100*		
→	Nepal (65)	70	19 →	830	48 →
←	Netherlands (100)		100 ıı	6	75* ←
	New Zealand (98)		95* ←	9	
→	Nicaragua (72)	85* →	67* →	170	69* →
→	Niger (52)	46 →	18 →	1800	11 →
ıı	Nigeria (63)	61* ıı	35* ıı	1100	13* →
—	Niue (—)		100 ıı		
—	Norway (100)			7	
→	Oman (99)		98 →	64	32* →
→	Pakistan (64)		54 →	320	28* →
←	Palau (99)		100 ıı		17* ←
	Panama (91)		91* →	130	
	Papua New Guinea (68)		38* ←	470	26*
→	Paraguay (85)		100* →	150	73* →
ıı	Peru (86)	85* →	73* ←	240	46 ←
→	Philippines (77)	88* →	60* →	230	49* →
	Poland (100)		100 ıı	8	
	Portugal (99)		100* ıı	11	
—	Puerto Rico (—)				78*
	Qatar (96)	62*	100	12	43*
→	Romania (96)	89*	98* ıı	24	70* →
→	Russian Federation (98)	96*	100 ıı	28	73* →
ıı	Rwanda (53)	94*+ ıı	28* ıı	1300	17* ←
→	Samoa (97)		100* ıı		43* →
	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	91*	81		30 ıı
	Saudi Arabia (97)		93	18	21* ←
→	Senegal (71)	87*+ →	52* →	980	12* →
	Serbia (—)		99*		41*
	Sierra Leone (61)	82*	43*	2100	5* ıı

NOTE:
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SOURCES:
Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy: Global Health Atlas, WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).

Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).

Maternal mortality ratio: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/).

Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Development Indicators 2008 website, World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	ESTIMATED MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (per 100,000 live births)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)
←	Singapore (91)		100 ıı	14	62* ←
	Slovakia (97)		100 ıı	6	
	Slovenia (99)		100 ıı	6	
←	Solomon Islands (82)		43* ←	220	7* ←
→	Somalia (—)		33 ıı	1400	15 →
→	South Africa (89)	89*	92* →	400	60* →
—	Spain (99)			4	
→	Sri Lanka (98)		97* →	58	70* →
	St Kitts and Nevis (95)		100* ıı		54*
—	St Lucia (98)		100* ıı		
←	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)		100* ıı		48* ←
←	Sudan (76)		49* ←	450	8 ıı
	Suriname (86)	91*	71*	72	42*
	Swaziland (77)		74*	390	48* →
—	Sweden (100)			3	
	Switzerland (97)		100	5	
→	Syria (94)		93 →	130	58 →
→	Tajikistan (85)	75*	83* ıı	170	38* →
ıı	Tanzania (73)	94*+ →	46* ←	950	26* →
→	Thailand (96)		97 →	110	77 →
	Timor-Leste (60)		19*	380	10* →
→	Togo (71)	78* →	62 →	510	17 ←
	Tonga (95)		99*		33* ←
ıı	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	96* ıı	98 ıı	45	43 →
→	Tunisia (95)		90* →	100	63* →
→	Turkey (92)	67*	83* →	44	71* →
←	Turkmenistan (—)	87*	100 →	130	48 ←
—	Tuvalu (89)		100* ıı		
→	Uganda (59)	94 →	42 →	550	24 →
←	Ukraine (99)	90*	100* ıı	18	66* ←
	United Arab Emirates (99)		100* ıı	37	
	United Kingdom (99)		99*	8	82 ıı
→	United States of America (99)		100* →	11	73* ıı
←	Uruguay (96)		100* ıı	20	77* ←
→	Uzbekistan (—)		100 ıı	24	65 →
→	Vanuatu (87)		92* →		28* →
	Venezuela (95)		95* ıı	57	77*
→	Vietnam (90)	70*	88 →	150	76 →
—	West Bank and Gaza (—)				50 →
→	Yemen (61)	34* →	20* ←	430	23* →
ıı	Zambia (73)	93* ıı	43* ←	830	34* →
ıı	Zimbabwe (80)	94 ıı	69 ıı	880	60 →

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCES:
Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy: Global Health Atlas. WHO (www.who.int/GlobalAtlas). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).
Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database. Department of Reproductive Health and Research. WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys).
Maternal mortality ratio: Reproductive Health Indicators Database. Department of Reproductive Health and Research. WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/).
Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Development Indicators 2008 website. World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (%): Percentage of women aged 15-49 years attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses or midwives).
Last available data: 2001-2006; evolution since 1990.

Births attended by skilled health personnel (%): Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses or midwives).
Last available data: 2001/2006; evolution since 1990 or closest possible year.

Estimated maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births): Annual number of deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births. Due to changes in the model of estimation, 1995 and 2005 data are not comparable.
Last available data: 2005.

Contraceptive use among women currently in union aged 15-49 (%): Percentage of women in union aged 15-49 years currently using contraception.
Last available data: 2001/2006; evolution since 1991.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

A matter of life and death

Reproductive health problems are still the main cause of illness and death for women in reproductive age throughout the world. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) a woman per minute dies in childbirth due to avoidable causes and for each death there are 20 or more women who have permanent health disorders from complications arising when giving birth.

Every year half a million women lose their lives and more than 10 million find they will be unable to lead a full life. This is particularly worrying in poor countries, where most of the unwanted pregnancies, abortions performed in poor conditions, HIV/AIDS infections, deaths and permanent maternal damages occur.

Poverty and inequity related to sex exclude millions of women from the free exercise of their reproductive rights, while mortality and morbidity derived from maternity worsen their poverty situation. This makes the governments of the world more predisposed to committing themselves to prioritize, in the political agenda, the rights of women in general and their reproductive health in particular.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which came into force in 1981, related the rights of women, among them reproductive health, as the right to enjoy life in decent conditions. The policies to promote, plan and invest in the field of reproductive health cannot be treated independently from the actions that the Millennium Development Goals hope to achieve, particularly those referring to the reduction of poverty and hunger in the world.

Likewise, after the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, there was a drive for the adoption of a series of policies to foster a greater coverage of reproductive health services, integrating family planning services in pre- and post-natal care to prevent unwanted pregnancies, labour services provided by skilled personnel, adequate obstetric assistance and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

The information in the table "Reproductive health: A matter of life or death" brings to the fore the huge distance in progress between countries. Chart 1 shows that the distance between the average values in countries in the better and worse relative situation is still very significant. The greatest differences surface in the percentage of births assisted by skilled personnel: while the better positioned countries can be considered to have made assistance practically universal (98.9%), at the other end of the spectrum 62% of births do not receive specialized attention.

It is also alarming to confirm the maternal mortality gap: in the countries in the better relative situation an average of 35 women die per 100,000 live births, while in countries with greater deficiencies 929 lives are lost owing to causes related to pregnancy and labour.

There are also differences in the access to modern contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies: for every six women who use contraceptives in the group of more developed countries, less than two have access to these methods in the countries in the worse relative situation.

The highest number of maternal deaths is closely associated with the lack of assistance at childbirth, and the increase in the number of deaths in countries with a high lack of attention during labour is significant. It is therefore possible to make a positive impact in the reduction of the maternal mortality rate through policies aimed at universalizing assistance at childbirth by specialized personnel.

Scenarios by region

Today's reproductive health scenario is very uneven per region (Chart 2). In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than half the countries are in the worse situation. If this category is added to the following (which includes countries below the average), the rate for the region is 87% or 9 out of 10 countries in the worse situation or below the world average.

The rest of the countries in the worse situation in this field are in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. In Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Europe there are no countries in the group of the worse situation in reproductive health; and the two latter regions are the most advanced in the world.

The evolution indicators (Chart 3) shows that most countries have progressed slightly or significantly in the last few years; although there is also a significant proportion of stagnant countries – including critical scenarios – but, no doubt, the most worrying situation is that of countries in unfavourable scenarios whose indicators register regression. ■

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse situation in reproductive health

		Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (%)	Contraceptive use among women currently in union aged 15-49	Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	Estimated maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)
Worse relative situation	Average	67.2	17.1	37.9	928.8
	Number of countries	24	33	33	33
Better relative situation	Average	93.9	64.5	98.9	35.2
	Number of countries	11	50	75	70
Total	Average	80.7	44.9	79.1	336.1
	Number of countries	79	150	177	162

CHART 2. Current situation in reproductive health by region (number of countries)

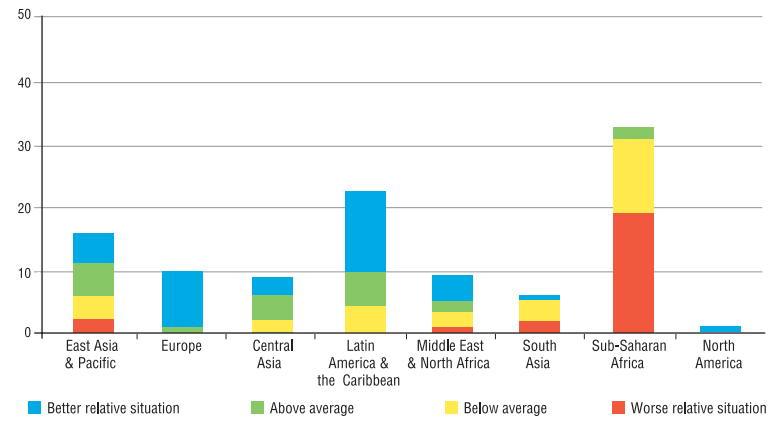

CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in reproductive health (number of countries)

	⟵	←	=	→	⟶	Total
Worse relative situation	1	1	5	12	5	24
Below average	0	3	5	7	11	26
Above average	0	3	4	5	9	21
Better relative situation	0	9	7	16	4	36
Total	1	16	21	40	29	107

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GENDER EQUITY

20th century debts, 21st century shame

Gender and education

References

CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
	Afghanistan (52)	—	0.29			0.28*
=	Albania (94)	56	0.99 =	0.99* =	0.97* →	1.60* =
=	Algeria (94)	52	0.76 ←	0.98* →	1.06* =	1.28*
←	Andorra (—)	—		0.97* ←	1.10* =	1.06* =
	Angola (62)	53	0.65			0.66* ←
	Anguilla (—)	—		1.06*	0.96*	3.11*
=	Argentina (98)	72	1.00 =	0.99*	1.09* =	1.42* =
=	Armenia (96)	—	0.99 =	1.05* =	1.03* →	1.22* =
=	Aruba (—)	—	1.00	1.01 =	1.10 =	1.56 =
=	Australia (99)	76		1.01* =	1.02* =	1.25* =
→	Austria (—)	73		1.02* =		1.21* →
=	Azerbaijan (85)	62	0.99*	0.97 =	0.96 ←	0.94 →
=	Bahamas (99)	80		1.03* =	1.02* =	
←	Bahrain (99)	46	0.94 ←	1.00* =	1.06* =	2.41* =
→	Bangladesh (57)	51	0.76 =	1.04*	1.04* →	0.53* →
=	Barbados (99)	77		1.00* =	1.01* =	2.46* =
=	Belarus (99)	66	1.00* =	0.97* =	1.02* =	1.36* =
→	Belgium (99)	73		1.00* =	1.01*	1.23* →
=	Belize (93)	64	1.00* =	1.01 =	1.01* =	2.43*
→	Benin (68)	41	0.49 =	0.81* →	0.49* →	0.25* →
	Bermuda (—)	—				1.18*
	Bhutan (78)	—		1.00*	1.00*	0.53*
=	Bolivia (80)	66	0.87 ←	1.01* =	0.99* →	
	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	—	0.95			
=	Botswana (92)	66	1.02 =	1.00* =	1.09* =	1.00* →
=	Brazil (92)	69	1.00 =	1.01*	1.10* =	1.32* =
←	Brunei Darussalam (100)	63	0.95 ←	1.01* =	1.05* =	2.02* =
=	Bulgaria (99)	74	0.99 =	0.99* =	0.98* ←	1.15* =
→	Burkina Faso (64)	52	0.53 =	0.80* →	0.71* →	0.46* →
=	Burma/Myanmar (76)	—	0.92 ←	1.02* →	0.99* =	1.77* =
=	Burundi (58)	62	0.78 =	0.91* →		0.38* =
→	Cambodia (66)	60	0.76 ←	0.99* →	0.84* →	0.47* →
	Cameroon (70)	49				0.66* →
=	Canada (99)	76		1.00* =		1.36* =
=	Cape Verde (93)	51	0.71* ←	0.98* →	1.09* =	1.04* →
←	Cayman Islands (—)	—		0.90* ←	0.92* ←	3.01*
←	Central African Republic (65)	42	0.52 ←			0.19* →
=	Chad (42)	41	0.31 ←	0.70* →	0.33* →	0.14*
=	Chile (100)	62	1.00 =	0.98* =		0.96* →
=	China (90)	69	0.91 ←			0.98 →
=	Colombia (90)	75	1.00 =	1.00 =	1.11 =	1.09 =
→	Comoros (79)	—		0.85* →		0.77* →
	Congo, DR (69)	—	0.67 ←			

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
	Congo, Rep. (79)	43		1.20*		0.19* ←
	Cook Islands (90)	—		0.99*	1.10* =	*
=	Costa Rica (94)	68	1.01 =			1.26* =
→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	37	0.63 =	0.80* →	0.57* →	0.36*
←	Croatia (99)	74	0.98 ←	0.99* =	1.02* =	1.19* =
=	Cuba (99)	70	1.00 =	1.01 =	1.03 =	2.59 =
←	Cyprus (99)	69	0.96 ←	1.00* =	1.02* =	1.13* =
→	Czech Republic (99)	69		1.03* =		1.16* →
=	Denmark (98)	80		1.01* =	1.02* =	1.39* =
=	Djibouti (75)	46		0.81* →	0.66* →	0.73* ←
	Dominica (97)	—		1.02*	1.01*	*
=	Dominican Republic (88)	66	1.00 =	1.03 =	1.22 =	1.59*
←	Ecuador (83)	71	0.97 ←	1.01* =	1.02* =	
←	Egypt (88)	40	0.71 ←	0.95* →	0.92*	
←	El Salvador (79)	67	0.92* ←	1.00* =	1.04* =	1.22* =
=	Equatorial Guinea (59)	45	0.86 ←	0.90* ←		0.43* →
←	Eritrea (67)	45		0.85* ←	0.66* ←	0.15* =
=	Estonia (99)	74	1.00 =	0.99* =	1.02* =	1.66* =
→	Ethiopia (54)	52	0.51* ←	0.93 →	0.70 →	0.32* →
=	Fiji (99)	—		0.99* =	1.07* =	1.20*
=	Finland (100)	85		1.00* =	1.01* =	1.21* =
=	France (99)	73		1.01* =	1.02* =	1.27* =
	Gabon (82)	53	0.82*	0.99* =		0.54*
→	Gambia (70)	49		1.00* →	0.84* →	0.24* ←
=	Georgia (89)	64		1.01* =	1.02* =	1.04* =
=	Ghana (66)	58	0.75 ←	1.01 →	0.91 →	0.53 →
←	Greece (100)	66	0.96 ←	1.00* =	1.02* =	1.14* =
	Grenada (92)	—		0.98*	1.01*	*
=	Guatemala (68)	49	0.84 =	0.95* →	0.93* =	0.72*
→	Guinea (66)	51	0.43	0.84* →	0.54* →	0.24* →
→	Guinea-Bissau (61)	48		0.71* →	0.55*	0.18* =
	Guyana (81)	61				2.09*
→	Honduras (78)	69	1.01 =	1.01* =		1.41* →
→	Hong Kong (—)	72		0.95* =	1.01* →	1.04* →
=	Hungary (99)	71		0.98* ←	1.00* =	1.46* =
=	Iceland (100)	78		0.97* =	1.03* =	1.91* =
=	India (71)	40	0.65 ←	0.96* →		0.71* →
=	Indonesia (84)	52	0.92 ←	0.97* =	0.99* →	0.79* →
→	Iran (91)	54	0.87 ←	1.10* →	0.94*	1.09* →
→	Iraq (83)	—	0.76 =	0.86* =	0.70* →	0.59* →
=	Ireland (100)	70		1.01* =	1.06* =	1.26* →
=	Israel (100)	73		1.01* =	1.01* =	1.34* =
→	Italy (99)	65	0.99 =	0.99* =	1.01* =	1.36* →
→	Jamaica (95)	61		1.00* =	1.05* =	2.29* →
→	Japan (99)	61		1.00* =	1.01*	0.89* →
←	Jordan (97)	47	0.91 ←	1.01* =	1.04* =	1.05* =
=	Kazakhstan (98)	75	1.00* =	1.00* =	0.99* =	1.43* =
←	Kenya (71)	59	0.90 ←	1.01* =	1.01*	0.60*
	Kiribati (88)	—		1.01*	1.10*	*
=	Korea, Rep. (100)	54		0.93* ←	0.96 =	0.64 →
=	Kuwait (98)	—	0.96 ←	0.99 →	1.04* =	2.87* =
=	Kyrgyzstan (95)	71	0.99*	0.99 =	1.02	1.27 =
→	Lao, PDR (58)	—	0.79 =	0.94* →	0.85* →	0.71* →

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE:
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
ıı	Latvia (99)	76	1.00 ıı	1.03* ıı		1.79* ıı
ıı	Lebanon (95)	47		0.99 ıı	1.10	1.13* ıı
ıı	Lesotho (72)	64		1.06* ıı	1.56* ıı	1.27* ıı
	Liberia (65)	—		0.78*	0.57*	0.76*
	Libya (98)	—				1.10* →
	Liechtenstein (—)	—		1.03*	1.11*	0.37*
ıı	Lithuania (99)	77	1.00 ıı	1.00* ıı	1.01* ıı	1.56* ıı
ıı	Luxembourg (97)	61		1.01* ıı	1.07* ıı	1.17* ıı
ıı	Macao (—)	—	0.92 ←	0.96 ıı	1.05 ıı	0.81 →
ıı	Macedonia (96)	68	0.96	1.00* ıı	0.98* ıı	1.38* ıı
ıı	Madagascar (61)	61	0.85 ←	1.00* ıı	1.03*	0.89* →
→	Malawi (62)	48	0.72* ıı	1.05 →	0.89* →	0.55* →
←	Malaysia (99)	58	0.93 ←	1.00* ıı	1.12* ıı	1.26* ıı
ıı	Maldives (86)	62	1.00 ıı	1.00* ıı	1.10* ıı	2.37*
ıı	Mali (69)	50	0.44* ←	0.78* →		0.45* →
ıı	Malta (100)	59	1.03* ıı	0.95* ←	0.98* ıı	1.35* →
	Marshall Islands (93)	—		0.99*	1.06*	1.30*
→	Mauritania (66)	49	0.73 ıı	1.05* →	0.89* →	0.34* →
ıı	Mauritius (98)	60	0.91 ←	1.02* ıı	1.02* ıı	1.26* →
ıı	Mexico (94)	60	0.97 ←	0.99* ıı	0.99* ıı	0.94* →
ıı	Moldova (96)	74	0.99 ıı	1.00 ıı	1.03 ıı	1.39 ıı
ıı	Mongolia (95)	70	1.00 ıı	1.02 ıı	1.13 ıı	1.57 ıı
	Montserrat (—)	—		0.96*	1.11*	*
→	Morocco (79)	43	0.60 ←	0.94* →	0.85* →	0.81* →
ıı	Mozambique (66)	64	0.46* ←	0.91* →	0.78* →	0.49*
←	Namibia (85)	71	0.96 ←	1.06* ıı	1.32* ıı	0.88* ←
→	Nepal (65)	44	0.56 ıı	0.87*		0.40* →
ıı	Netherlands (100)	78		0.99* ıı	1.02* ıı	1.07* →
ıı	Netherlands Antilles (—)	—	1.00* ıı		1.10 ıı	1.43* ıı
ıı	New Zealand (98)	78		1.00* ıı	1.03* ıı	1.49* ıı
ıı	Nicaragua (72)	52	1.00 ıı	0.98* ←	1.13* ıı	1.08* →
ıı	Niger (52)	47	0.35 ←	0.73* →	0.66* →	0.34* ←
	Nigeria (63)	43	0.65* ←	0.86*	0.84*	0.53*
	Niue (—)	—		1.00*	1.05*	*
ıı	Norway (100)	84		1.00* ıı	1.01* ıı	1.53* ıı
→	Oman (99)	48	0.85 ıı	1.02 →	0.99 ıı	1.09* →
→	Pakistan (64)	42	0.55 ıı	0.76*	0.74*	0.88* →
	Palau (99)	—		0.96*		2.15* ıı
ıı	Panama (91)	71	0.99 ıı	0.99* ıı	1.09* ıı	1.63* ıı
	Papua New Guinea (68)	—	0.80 ←			0.55*
←	Paraguay (85)	67	0.96* ←	1.00* ıı		1.34* ıı
←	Peru (86)	69	0.88 ←	1.02* ıı	0.99* ıı	1.02*
ıı	Philippines (77)	76	1.02 ıı	1.02 ıı	1.20* ıı	1.23* ıı
ıı	Poland (100)	71		1.01* ıı	1.01* ıı	1.40* ıı
←	Portugal (99)	72	0.92* ←	0.99* ıı	1.11* ıı	1.30* ıı
ıı	Qatar (96)	50	0.99 ıı	0.99* ıı	1.00* ıı	3.45* ıı
ıı	Romania (96)	72	0.98 ←	0.99* ıı	1.03* ıı	1.26* →
ıı	Russian Federation (98)	76	1.00 ıı	1.01 ıı		1.37* ıı
ıı	Rwanda (53)	80	0.84 ←	1.04* ıı		0.62* →
ıı	Samoa (97)	50		1.01* ıı	1.14* ıı	0.93* ←
	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	47	0.85	0.98*	1.11*	*
→	Saudi Arabia (97)	47	0.87 ıı	1.00* →	1.03* →	1.50* →
ıı	Senegal (71)	55	0.57 ←	0.96* →	0.75*	

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE:
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
→	Seychelles (—)	51	1.01	1.01* →	1.06* ıı	*
	Sierra Leone (61)	41	0.52			0.40*
	Singapore (91)	66	0.87* ←	1.00*	1.02*	
ıı	Slovakia (97)	74		1.01* ıı		1.29* ıı
ıı	Slovenia (99)	71	1.00* ıı	1.00* ıı	1.01* ıı	1.43* ıı
	Solomon Islands (82)	—		0.97*	0.87* →	*
ıı	South Africa (89)	70	0.96* ←	1.00* ıı	1.11* ıı	1.21* →
←	Spain (99)	77	0.97* ←	1.00* ıı	1.03* ıı	1.22* ıı
	Sri Lanka (98)	53	0.97 ←	1.01*		
	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	—		1.06*	0.99*	*
ıı	St Lucia (98)	71		0.98 ıı	1.29 ıı	2.62 ıı
ıı	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	61		0.96* ıı	1.23* ıı	*
→	Sudan (76)	41	0.73 ıı	0.83* →		0.92* →
ıı	Suriname (86)	56	0.95	1.04* ıı	1.39* ıı	1.62*
ıı	Swaziland (77)	50	0.97 ←	1.01* ıı	1.13* ıı	1.06* →
ıı	Sweden (100)	89		1.00* ıı	1.00* ıı	1.55* ıı
ıı	Switzerland (97)	63		0.99* ıı	0.96* ıı	0.87* →
→	Syria (94)	—	0.84 ıı	0.95* →	0.94* →	
←	Tajikistan (85)	52	1.00 ıı	0.96 ıı	0.85* ←	0.37 ←
ıı	Tanzania (73)	58	0.80 ←	0.99 ıı		0.48* →
←	Thailand (96)	70	0.95 ←	0.99 ıı	1.11	1.07 ıı
	Timor-Leste (60)	55		0.96*		1.26*
→	Togo (71)	39	0.56 ←	0.86* →	0.48* →	0.20* →
←	Tonga (95)	—	1.00*	0.96* ←	1.23* ıı	1.68*
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70		1.00* ıı	1.04* ıı	1.28 →
ıı	Tunisia (95)	49	0.78 ←	1.01* →	1.10* ıı	1.40* →
ıı	Turkey (92)	46	0.84 ←	0.95* →	0.85*	0.74* →
	Turkmenistan (—)	—	0.99*			
←	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)	—		1.07* ıı	0.96* ←	*
ıı	Uganda (59)	64	0.75 ←		0.90* →	0.62* →
ıı	Ukraine (99)	74	0.99 ıı	1.00 ıı	1.01 ıı	1.23 ıı
ıı	United Arab Emirates (99)	51		0.99* ıı	1.02* ıı	2.81* ıı
→	United Kingdom (99)	75		1.00* →	1.03* ıı	1.39* →
ıı	Uruguay (96)	75	1.01* ıı	1.00* ıı		2.02* ıı
	Uzbekistan (—)	57				0.80*
→	Vanuatu (87)	56		0.99* ıı	0.87* →	0.59* →
ıı	Venezuela (95)	68	0.99 ıı	1.00 ıı	1.15* ıı	1.08* ıı
←	Vietnam (90)	71	0.93* ←	0.94* →	0.96*	0.71* ←
→	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)	—		0.99* ıı	1.16* →	2.28*
→	West Bank and Gaza (—)	46	0.91	1.00 ıı	1.06 ıı	1.04* →
ıı	Yemen (61)	29	0.30* ←	0.73* →	0.46*	0.37* →
←	Zambia (73)	55	0.78* ←	1.02* →	0.80* ←	0.46* ıı
ıı	Zimbabwe (80)	57	0.88* ←	1.02* ıı	0.93* →	0.63* →

NOTE:
(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE:
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Literacy ratio gap (women/men): Ratio of female literacy ratio (15-24 years old) to male literacy ratio (15-24 years old).
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1990.

Net primary enrolment ratio gap (women /men):
Ratio of female net primary enrolment ratio to male net primary enrolment ratio.
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Net secondary enrolment ratio gap (women /men):
Ratio of female net secondary enrolment ratio to male net secondary enrolment ratio.
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Gross tertiary enrolment ratio gap (women/men):
Ratio of female gross tertiary enrolment ratio to male gross tertiary enrolment ratio.
Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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GENDER EQUITY

20th century debts, 21st century shame

Gender gap in economic activity and earned income

References

CURRENT SITUATION
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION
(since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO (women/men)
←	Albania (94)	56	0.7 ←	0.5
→	Algeria (94)	52	0.5 →	0.3
"	Angola (62)	53	0.8 "	0.6
→	Argentina (98)	72	0.7 →	0.5
←	Armenia (96)	—	0.8 ←	0.6
→	Australia (99)	76	0.8 →	0.7
→	Austria (—)	73	0.8 →	0.5
"	Azerbaijan (85)	62	0.8 "	0.6
→	Bahamas (99)	80	0.9 →	0.7
"	Bahrain (99)	46	0.3 "	0.4
←	Bangladesh (57)	51	0.6 ←	0.5
"	Barbados (99)	77	0.8 "	0.6
←	Belarus (99)	66	0.8 ←	0.6
→	Belgium (99)	73	0.7 →	0.6
→	Belize (93)	64	0.5 →	0.4
←	Benin (68)	41	0.6 ←	0.5
→	Bhutan (78)	—	0.6 →	0.5
→	Bolivia (80)	66	0.7 →	0.6
→	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	—	0.9 →	0.7
←	Botswana (92)	66	0.7 ←	0.3
→	Brazil (92)	69	0.7 →	0.6
"	Brunei Darussalam (100)	63	0.6 "	0.4
←	Bulgaria (99)	74	0.8 ←	0.7
"	Burkina Faso (64)	52	0.9 "	0.7
"	Burma/Myanmar (76)	—	0.8 "	
"	Burundi (58)	62	1.0 "	0.8
"	Cambodia (66)	60	0.9 "	0.7
←	Cameroon (70)	49	0.7 ←	0.5
→	Canada (99)	76	0.8 →	0.6
←	Cape Verde (93)	51	0.5 ←	0.4
"	Central African Republic (65)	42	0.8 "	0.6
→	Chad (42)	41	0.9 →	0.6
→	Chile (100)	62	0.5 →	0.4
←	China (90)	69	0.8 ←	0.6
→	Colombia (90)	75	0.8 →	0.6
←	Comoros (79)	—	0.7 ←	0.5
"	Congo, Rep. (79)	43	0.7 "	0.5

SOURCE:

Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Activity rate gap (women/men): Female economic activity rate (the share of the female population ages 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labour for the production of goods and services) as a percentage of the male economic activity rate. Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1990.

Estimated earned income ratio (women/men): Ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated by UNDP on the basis of data on the ratio of the female non-agricultural wage to the male non-agricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in USD). Last available data: 1991/2005.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO (women/men)
→	Costa Rica (94)	68	0.6 →	0.5
←	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	37	0.4 ←	0.3
ıı	Croatia (99)	74	0.7 ıı	0.7
→	Cuba (99)	70	0.6 →	0.4
→	Cyprus (99)	69	0.8 →	0.6
←	Czech Republic (99)	69	0.8 ←	0.5
ıı	Congo, DR (69)	—	0.7 ıı	0.5
←	Denmark (98)	80	0.8 ←	0.7
←	Djibouti (75)	46	0.6 ←	0.5
→	Dominican Republic (88)	66	0.6 →	0.4
→	Ecuador (83)	71	0.7 →	0.6
←	Egypt (88)	40	0.3 ←	0.2
←	El Salvador (79)	67	0.6 ←	0.4
ıı	Equatorial Guinea (59)	45	0.6 ıı	0.4
←	Eritrea (67)	45	0.6 ←	0.4
←	Estonia (99)	74	0.8 ←	0.6
ıı	Ethiopia (54)	52	0.8 ıı	0.6
ıı	Fiji (99)	—	0.6 ıı	0.5
←	Finland (100)	85	0.9 ←	0.7
ıı	France (99)	73	0.8 ıı	0.6
ıı	Gabon (82)	53	0.8 ıı	0.6
←	Gambia (70)	49	0.7 ←	0.5
←	Georgia (89)	64	0.7 ←	0.3
→	Germany (100)	—	0.8 →	0.6
ıı	Ghana (66)	58	0.9 ıı	0.7
→	Greece (100)	66	0.7 →	0.6
→	Guatemala (68)	49	0.4 →	0.3
ıı	Guinea (66)	51	0.9 ıı	0.7
ıı	Guinea-Bissau (61)	48	0.7 ıı	0.5
→	Guyana (81)	61	0.5 →	0.4
←	Haiti (—)	—	0.7 ←	0.5
→	Honduras (78)	69	0.6 →	0.5
→	Hong Kong (—)	72	0.8 →	0.6
←	Hungary (99)	71	0.7 ←	0.6
ıı	Iceland (100)	78	0.9 ıı	0.7
←	India (71)	40	0.4 ←	0.3
ıı	Indonesia (84)	52	0.6 ıı	0.5
→	Iran (91)	54	0.5 →	0.4
→	Ireland (100)	70	0.7 →	0.5
→	Israel (100)	73	0.9 →	0.7
→	Italy (99)	65	0.6 →	0.5
←	Jamaica (95)	61	0.7 ←	0.6
ıı	Japan (99)	61	0.7 ıı	0.4
→	Jordan (97)	47	0.4 →	0.3
→	Kazakhstan (98)	75	0.9 →	0.6

SOURCE:

Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Activity rate gap (women/men): Female economic activity rate (the share of the female population ages 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labour for the production of goods and services) as a percentage of the male economic activity rate. Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1990.

Estimated earned income ratio (women/men): Ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated by UNDP on the basis of data on the ratio of the female non-agricultural wage to the male non-agricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in USD). Last available data: 1991/2005.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO (women/men)
←	Kenya (71)	59	0.8 ←	0.8
ıı	Korea, Rep. (100)	54	0.7 ıı	0.4
→	Kuwait (98)	—	0.6 →	0.3
←	Kyrgyzstan (95)	71	0.7 ←	0.6
ıı	Lao, PDR (58)	—	0.7 ıı	0.5
←	Latvia (99)	76	0.8 ←	0.7
ıı	Lebanon (95)	47	0.4 ıı	0.3
←	Lesotho (72)	64	0.6 ←	0.5
→	Libya (98)	—	0.4 →	0.3
←	Lithuania (99)	77	0.8 ←	0.7
→	Luxembourg (97)	61	0.7 →	0.5
←	Madagascar (61)	61	0.9 ←	0.7
ıı	Malawi (62)	48	1.0 ıı	0.0
ıı	Malaysia (99)	58	0.6 ıı	0.4
→	Maldives (86)	62	0.7 →	0.5
→	Mali (69)	50	0.9 →	0.7
→	Malta (100)	59	0.5 →	0.5
ıı	Mauritania (66)	49	0.7 ıı	0.5
ıı	Mauritius (98)	60	0.5 ıı	0.4
→	Mexico (94)	60	0.5 →	0.4
←	Mongolia (95)	70	0.7 ←	0.5
ıı	Morocco (79)	43	0.3 ıı	0.3
ıı	Mozambique (66)	64	1.0 ıı	0.8
ıı	Namibia (85)	71	0.7 ıı	0.6
ıı	Nepal (65)	44	0.6 ıı	0.5
→	Netherlands (100)	78	0.8 →	0.6
→	New Zealand (98)	78	0.8 →	0.7
ıı	Nicaragua (72)	52	0.4 ıı	0.3
ıı	Niger (52)	47	0.8 ıı	0.6
←	Nigeria (63)	43	0.5 ←	0.4
ıı	Norway (100)	84	0.9 ıı	0.8
ıı	West Bank and Gaza (—)	46	0.2 ıı	
→	Oman (99)	48	0.3 →	0.2
→	Pakistan (64)	42	0.4 →	0.3
→	Panama (91)	71	0.6 →	0.6
ıı	Papua New Guinea (68)	—	1.0 ıı	0.7
→	Paraguay (85)	67	0.8 →	0.3
→	Peru (86)	69	0.7 →	0.5
→	Philippines (77)	76	0.7 →	0.6
←	Poland (100)	71	0.8 ←	0.6
→	Portugal (99)	72	0.8 →	0.6
→	Qatar (96)	50	0.4 →	0.2
←	Moldova (96)	74	0.8 ←	0.6
ıı	Romania (96)	72	0.8 ıı	0.7
←	Russian Federation (98)	76	0.8 ←	0.6

SOURCE:

Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Activity rate gap (women/men): Female economic activity rate (the share of the female population ages 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labour for the production of goods and services) as a percentage of the male economic activity rate.
Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1990.

Estimated earned income ratio (women/men): Ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated by UNDP on the basis of data on the ratio of the female non-agricultural wage to the male non-agricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in USD).
Last available data: 1991/2005.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO (women/men)
←	Rwanda (53)	80	1.0 ←	0.7
→	St Lucia (98)	71	0.7 →	0.5
=	Samoa (97)	50	0.5 =	0.4
←	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	47	0.4 ←	0.3
=	Saudi Arabia (97)	47	0.2 =	0.2
←	Senegal (71)	55	0.7 ←	0.5
=	Sierra Leone (61)	41	0.6 =	0.5
=	Singapore (91)	66	0.7 =	0.5
←	Slovakia (97)	74	0.8 ←	0.6
=	Slovenia (99)	71	0.8 =	0.6
←	Solomon Islands (82)	—	0.7 ←	0.5
←	South Africa (89)	70	0.6 ←	0.4
→	Spain (99)	77	0.7 →	0.5
←	Sri Lanka (98)	53	0.5 ←	0.4
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	61	0.7 →	0.5
=	Sudan (76)	41	0.3 =	0.3
=	Suriname (86)	56	0.5 =	0.4
←	Swaziland (77)	50	0.4 ←	0.3
←	Sweden (100)	89	0.9 ←	0.8
→	Switzerland (97)	63	0.8 →	0.6
→	Syria (94)	—	0.4 →	0.3
=	Tajikistan (85)	52	0.7 =	0.6
←	Macedonia (96)	68	0.6 ←	0.5
←	Thailand (96)	70	0.8 ←	0.6
→	Timor-Leste (60)	55	0.7 →	
←	Togo (71)	39	0.6 ←	0.4
→	Tonga (95)	—	0.6 →	0.5
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70	0.6 →	0.5
→	Tunisia (95)	49	0.4 →	0.3
←	Turkey (92)	46	0.4 ←	0.4
←	Turkmenistan (—)	—	0.8 ←	0.6
←	Tanzania (73)	58	1.0 ←	0.0
→	Uganda (59)	64	0.9 →	0.7
←	Ukraine (99)	74	0.8 ←	0.5
→	United Arab Emirates (99)	51	0.4 →	0.2
→	United Kingdom (99)	75	0.8 →	0.7
=	United States of America (99)	75	0.8 =	0.6
→	Uruguay (96)	75	0.7 →	0.6
←	Uzbekistan (—)	57	0.8 ←	0.6
=	Vanuatu (87)	56	0.9 =	0.7
→	Venezuela (95)	68	0.7 →	0.5
=	Vietnam (90)	71	0.9 =	0.7
=	Yemen (61)	29	0.4 =	0.3
=	Zambia (73)	55	0.7 =	0.5
←	Zimbabwe (80)	57	0.8 ←	0.6

SOURCE:

Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Activity rate gap (women/men): Female economic activity rate (the share of the female population ages 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labour for the production of goods and services) as a percentage of the male economic activity rate. Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1990.

Estimated earned income ratio (women/men): Ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated by UNDP on the basis of data on the ratio of the female non-agricultural wage to the male non-agricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in USD). Last available data: 1991/2005.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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GENDER EQUITY

20th century debts, 21st century shame

Women's empowerment

References

CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- Stagnant
- Regression
- Major regression

Complete table at: **www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008**

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS (%)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS (%)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL (%)		SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN (%)	
—	Afghanistan (52)	—					27.3	
←	Albania (94)	56			5.3	←	7.1	←
→	Algeria (94)	52	32		10.5	→	7.7	=
→	Andorra (—)	—					28.6	→
→	Angola (62)	53			5.7	=	15.0	→
←	Antigua and Barbuda (—)	—	55	45	15.4	←	10.5	→
→	Argentina (98)	72	53	33	8.3	→		
→	Armenia (96)	—					9.2	→
→	Australia (99)	76	56	37	20	←	24.7	→
→	Austria (—)	73	49	27	35.3	→	32.2	→
→	Azerbaijan (85)	62			15	→	11.3	=
←	Bahamas (99)	80	60	46	26.7	←	12.2	→
→	Bahrain (99)	46			8.7	→	2.5	
→	Bangladesh (57)	51	12	23	8.3	→	15.1	→
→	Barbados (99)	77	52	43	29.4	→	13.3	→
→	Belarus (99)	66			10	→	29.1	
→	Belgium (99)	73	49	32	21.4	→	34.7	→
=	Belize (93)	64	50	41	6.3	←	6.7	→
→	Benin (68)	41			19	→	8.4	=
=	Bhutan (78)	—					2.7	=
→	Bolivia (80)	66	40	36	6.7	←	16.9	→
	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	—			11.1		14.3	
→	Botswana (92)	66	51	33	26.7	→	11.1	→
→	Brazil (92)	69	52	34	11.4	=	8.8	→
→	Brunei Darussalam (100)	63	44	26	9.1	→		
→	Bulgaria (99)	74	60	34	23.8	→	22.1	→
→	Burkina Faso (64)	52			14.8	→	15.3	→
→	Burundi (58)	62			10.7	→	30.5	
→	Cambodia (66)	60	33	14	7.1	→	9.8	→
→	Cameroon (70)	49			11.1	→	14.1	=
→	Canada (99)	76	56	36	23.1	→	20.8	→
→	Cape Verde (93)	51			18.8	→	15.3	→
→	Central African Republic (65)	42			10	→	10.5	→
←	Chad (42)	41			11.5	→	6.5	←
→	Chile (100)	62	52	25	16.7	→	15.0	→
→	China (90)	69	52	17	6.3	→	20.3	=
→	Colombia (90)	75	50	38	35.7	→	8.4	←
→	Comoros (79)	—					3.0	→
—	Congo, DR (69)	—			12.5			
→	Congo, Rep. (79)	43			14.7	→	7.4	→
→	Costa Rica (94)	68	40	25	25	→	38.6	→
→	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	37			17.1	→	8.5	=
→	Croatia (99)	74	50	24	33.3		21.7	→

SOURCES:

Female professional and technical workers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Female legislators, senior officials and managers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level: Human Development Report 1997, UNDP and Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Seats in parliament held by women: IPU Database, January, 2008. (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistic2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS (%)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS (%)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL (%)		SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN (%)	
→	Cuba (99)	70	62	34	16.2	→	36.0	→
→	Cyprus (99)	69	45	15			14.3	→
→	Czech Republic (99)	69	52	30	11.1	→	15.5	=
→	Denmark (98)	80	53	25	33.3	→	36.9	→
→	Djibouti (75)	46			5.3	→	10.8	→
→	Dominica (97)	—	55	48			12.9	→
→	Dominican Republic (88)	66	51	32	14.3	→	19.7	→
→	Ecuador (83)	71	48	35	14.3	→	25.0	
→	Egypt (88)	40	30	9	5.9	→	2.0	=
→	El Salvador (79)	67	45	33	35.3	→	16.7	→
→	Equatorial Guinea (59)	45			4.5	=	18.0	→
=	Eritrea (67)	45			17.6		22.0	=
→	Estonia (99)	74	70	37	15.4	→	21.8	→
→	Ethiopia (54)	52	30	20	5.9	←	21.9	→
=	Fiji (99)	—			9.1	=		
→	Finland (100)	85	55	30	47.1	→	42.0	→
→	France (99)	73	47	37	17.6	→	18.5	→
→	Gabon (82)	53			11.8	→	12.5	
→	Gambia (70)	49			20	→	9.4	
→	Georgia (89)	64	62	26	22.2	→	9.4	→
→	Germany (100)	—	50	37	46.2	→	31.6	→
=	Ghana (66)	58			11.8	=	10.9	
→	Greece (100)	66	49	26	5.6	=	16.0	→
→	Grenada (92)	—			40	→	26.7	→
→	Guatemala (68)	49			25	→	12.0	=
→	Guinea (66)	51			15.4	→	19.3	→
→	Guinea-Bissau (61)	48			37.5	→	14.0	→
→	Guyana (81)	61			22.2	→	29.0	→
→	Haiti (—)	—			25	→	4.1	=
→	Honduras (78)	69	52	41	14.3	←	23.4	→
	Hong Kong (—)	72	40	27				
→	Hungary (99)	71	62	35	11.8	→	10.4	=
→	Iceland (100)	78	56	27	27.3	→	31.7	→
←	India (71)	40			3.4	←	8.3	=
→	Indonesia (84)	52			10.8	→	11.3	=
→	Iran (91)	54	34	16	6.7	→	4.1	=
—	Iraq (83)	—					25.5	
→	Ireland (100)	70	52	31	21.4	→	13.3	=
→	Israel (100)	73	54	26	16.7	→	14.2	→
→	Italy (99)	65	46	32	8.3	=	17.3	→
→	Jamaica (95)	61			17.6	→	13.3	=
→	Japan (99)	61	46	10	12.5	→	9.4	→
→	Jordan (97)	47			10.7	→	5.5	→
→	Kazakhstan (98)	75	67	38	17.6	→	15.9	→
→	Kenya (71)	59			10.3	→	7.3	→
→	Kiribati (88)	—					4.3	→
→	Korea, Rep. (100)	54	39	8	5.6	→	13.4	→
=	Kuwait (98)	—					1.5	=
→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	71	57	25	12.5	→		
→	Lao, PDR (58)	—					25.2	→
→	Latvia (99)	76	65	42	23.5	→	19.0	→
→	Lebanon (95)	47			6.9	→	4.7	→

SOURCES:
Female professional and technical workers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.
Female legislators, senior officials and managers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.
Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level: Human Development Report 1997, UNDP and Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.
Seats in parliament held by women: IPU Database, January, 2008. (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistic2008
Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS (%)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS (%)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL (%)	SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN (%)
→	Lesotho (72)	64			27.8 →	23.5 →
→	Liberia (65)	—				12.5 →
—	Libya (98)	—				7.7
→	Liechtenstein (—)	—				24.0 →
→	Lithuania (99)	77	67	43	15.4 →	24.8 →
→	Luxembourg (97)	61			14.3 →	23.3 →
→	Macedonia (96)	68	52	29	16.7	28.3 →
→	Madagascar (61)	61			5.9 →	8.0 →
→	Malawi (62)	48			14.3 →	13.6 →
→	Malaysia (99)	58	40	23	9.1 →	9.1 ıı
→	Maldives (86)	62	40	15	11.8 ıı	12.0 →
→	Mali (69)	50			18.5 →	10.2 →
→	Malta (100)	59	38	20	15.4 →	9.2 →
—	Marshall Islands (93)	—				3.0
→	Mauritania (66)	49			9.1 →	17.9 →
→	Mauritius (98)	60	43	25	8 ıı	17.1 →
→	Mexico (94)	60	42	29	9.4 →	22.6 →
→	Moldova (96)	74	66	39	11.1 →	21.8 →
→	Monaco (—)	—				20.8 →
ıı	Mongolia (95)	70	54	50	5.9 ıı	6.6 ıı
—	Montenegro (	—				8.6
→	Morocco (79)	43	35	12		10.5 →
→	Mozambique (66)	64			13 ıı	34.8 →
→	Namibia (85)	71	55	30	19 →	26.9 →
→	Nepal (65)	44	19	8	7.4 →	17.3 →
→	Netherlands (100)	78	50	26	36 →	36.7 →
→	New Zealand (98)	78	53	36	23.1 →	32.2 →
→	Nicaragua (72)	52			14.3 →	18.5 →
→	Niger (52)	47			23.1 →	12.4
→	Nigeria (63)	43			10 →	7.0
ıı	Norway (100)	84	50	30	44.4 ıı	37.9 ıı
→	Oman (99)	48	33	9	10 →	
→	Pakistan (64)	42	26	2	5.6 →	21.3
→	Panama (91)	71	51	43	14.3 →	16.7 →
ıı	Papua New Guinea (68)	—				0.9 ıı
→	Paraguay (85)	67	54	23	30.8 →	10.0 →
→	Peru (86)	69	46	34	11.8 ıı	29.2 →
→	Philippines (77)	76	61	58	25 ıı	22.4 →
ıı	Poland (100)	71	61	33	5.9 ←	20.4 →
→	Portugal (99)	72	50	34	16.7 ıı	21.3 →
→	Qatar (96)	50	24	8	7.7 →	
→	Romania (96)	72	57	29	12.5 →	11.2 →
ıı	Russian Federation (98)	76	65	39		9.8 ıı
→	Rwanda (53)	80			35.7 →	48.8 →
ıı	Samoa (97)	50			7.7 ıı	6.1 ıı
ıı	San Marino (—)	—				11.7 ıı
ıı	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	47			14.3 →	1.8 ←
	Saudi Arabia (97)	47	6	31		
→	Senegal (71)	55			20.6 →	22.0 →
—	Serbia (—)	—				20.4
←	Seychelles (—)	51			12.5 ←	23.5 ←
→	Sierra Leone (61)	41			13 →	12.9 →

SOURCES:

Female professional and technical workers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Female legislators, senior officials and managers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level: Human Development Report 1997, UNDP and Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Seats in parliament held by women: IPU Database, January, 2008. (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at www.socialwatch.org/statistic2008

Definition of indicators at the end of this table.

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS (%)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS (%)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL (%)	SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN (%)
→	Singapore (91)	66	44	26		24.5 →
→	Slovakia (97)	74	58	31		19.3 →
→	Slovenia (99)	71	57	33	6.3	12.2 →
—	Somalia (—)	—				8.2
→	South Africa (89)	70			41.4 →	32.8 →
→	Spain (99)	77	48	32	50 →	36.0 →
ıı	Sri Lanka (98)	53	46	21	10.3 ıı	4.9 ıı
←	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	—				6.7 ←
→	St Lucia (98)	71	53	55	8.3 →	5.6 →
ıı	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	61			20 ←	18.2 →
→	Sudan (76)	41			2.6 ıı	18.1 →
→	Suriname (86)	56			11.8 ←	25.5 →
→	Swaziland (77)	50			13.3 →	10.8 →
→	Sweden (100)	89	51	30	52.4 →	47.3 →
→	Switzerland (97)	63	22	8	14.3 →	29.5 →
→	Syria (94)	—	40		6.3 →	12.0 →
→	Tajikistan (85)	52			3.1 ıı	17.5 →
→	Tanzania (73)	58	32	49	15.4 →	30.4 →
→	Thailand (96)	70	54	29	7.7 →	8.7 →
	Timor-Leste (60)	55			22.2	27.7
→	Togo (71)	39			20 →	7.4 →
→	Tonga (95)	—				3.3 →
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70	53	43	18.2 →	19.4 →
→	Tunisia (95)	49			7.1 →	22.8 →
→	Turkey (92)	46	32	7	4.3 ıı	9.1 →
→	Turkmenistan (—)	—			9.5 →	16.0 ıı
→	Uganda (59)	64			23.4 →	29.8 →
→	Ukraine (99)	74	64	38	5.6 →	
→	United Arab Emirates (99)	51	25	8	5.6 →	22.5 →
→	United Kingdom (99)	75	47	34	28.6 →	19.7 →
—	United States of America (99)	75				
→	Uruguay (96)	75	54	40		11.1 →
→	Uzbekistan (—)	57			3.6 ıı	17.5 →
→	Vanuatu (87)	56			8.3 →	3.8
→	Venezuela (95)	68	61	27	13.6 →	18.6 →
ıı	Vietnam (90)	71	51	22	11.5 →	25.8 ←
	West Bank and Gaza (—)	46	35	11		
→	Yemen (61)	29	15	4	2.9 →	0.3 ıı
→	Zambia (73)	55			25 →	14.6 →
→	Zimbabwe (80)	57			14.7 →	16.7 ıı

SOURCES:

Female professional and technical workers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Female legislators, senior officials and managers: Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level: Human Development Report 1997, UNDP and Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Seats in parliament held by women: IPU Database, January, 2008. (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)

For more detailed on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistic2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Female professional and technical workers (as % of total positions): Women's share of positions defined according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) to include physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals (and associate professionals), life science and health professionals (and associate professionals), teaching professionals (and associate professionals) and other professionals and associate professionals.
Latest available data taken from ILO Laborsta Database (March, 2007) as published by Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Female legislators, senior officials and managers (% of total positions): Women's share of positions defined according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) to include legislators, senior government officials, traditional chiefs and heads of villages, senior officials of special interest organizations, corporate managers, directors and chief executives, production and operations department managers and other department and general managers.
Latest available data taken from ILO Laborsta Database (March, 2007) as published by Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP.

Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level (% of total positions): Women as a percentage of total decision-making positions in government. Data were provided by states based on their definition of national executive and may therefore include women serving as ministers and vice ministers and those holding other ministerial positions, including parliamentary secretaries.
Last available data: 2005; evolution since 1995.

Seats in parliament held by women (% of seats): Seats held by women in a lower or single house, where relevant, as percentage of total seats.
Last available data: 2008; evolution since 1997.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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GENDER EQUITY

20th century debts, 21st century shame

Gender equity refers no more and no less than to justice in the treatment of men and women according to their respective needs. This means equal or different treatment based on the perfect equivalence in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In most societies inequalities are expressed in the non-recognition of this equivalence and therefore in the assignation of different responsibilities, rights, benefits and opportunities for men and women, whether in the activities they engage in, the access and control of resources or in the decision making process. It must be understood that the resolution of these inequities, as well as affecting the life of the world population, of which women are at least half, is essential for the economic and social development of all countries.

The tables produced by Social Watch highlight three basic dimensions: education, economic activity and empowerment. These dimensions bring out gender inequity and the situation of countries in a series of indicators that reflect them. The indicators reveal the gap between men and women, uncover the deficiencies and show the evolution of the countries' situation.

Equity in education

Education is the field where the gender equity gap has narrowed the most and where the challenges will be smaller compared to the huge ones in other dimensions, like economic activity or empowerment.

However this better comparative performance is still far from achieving the goals established for equity and inequalities persist in many countries; what is even worse, there are significant regressions. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),[1] while in 2000 31% of women lacked school education, only 18% of men were in the same situation.

Inequity of access to education for reasons of gender is concentrated in few regions and therefore becomes invisible or at least 'opaque' when analyzed jointly. At regional level, major differences are found in North Africa and minor differences in South Asia, Latin America and Central Asia.

On the other hand, gender discrimination mechanisms in the area of education do not only refer to access, but also operate within the system itself, making access to the education system an important element but not the sole one.

These mechanisms are very often reiterative and become more elusive. For this reason, it is crucial to pay attention to the approaches to education and the running of educational organizations. In many cases it is precisely the teaching materials that perpetuate models of behaviour that reproduce negative gender stereotypes.

The summary of the Table "Equity in education" presented in Chart 3 shows the averages found in the gender gap in access to the different levels of education. The indicator for the literacy gap shows categorical differences: in countries in the worse situation there are two illiterate women for every man, while in those in the better situation the impact of illiteracy by sex is more even, though still not entirely equitable. This is because in countries in the better relative situation illiteracy is found in older generations, when the education system had not yet implemented equal opportunities for men and women.

This goes to show the inherent inertia that distinguishes gender inequality, a fact that alerts us to the importance of starting equity actions early on and in particular to keep them going over time. This conclusion is validated when we consider that the enrolment gaps in primary, secondary and tertiary education not only do not harm women but also show that they have higher enrolment figures than men. This tendency in countries in the better situation becomes particularly striking in tertiary level, where for every 5 people enrolled, 3 are women and only 2 are men.

If we analyze the situation by geographic zone (Chart 1), the most problematic region in absolute terms is Sub-Saharan Africa, although in relative terms the least equitable in terms of gender and education is South Asia, where half the number of countries is in the worse relative situation.

Finally, in an analysis of recent progress the situation is not very encouraging (Chart 2), since more than 60% of countries have remained stagnant, only 23% register progress and barely 3% have progressed significantly.

CHART 1. Current situation of the gender gap in education by region (number of countries)

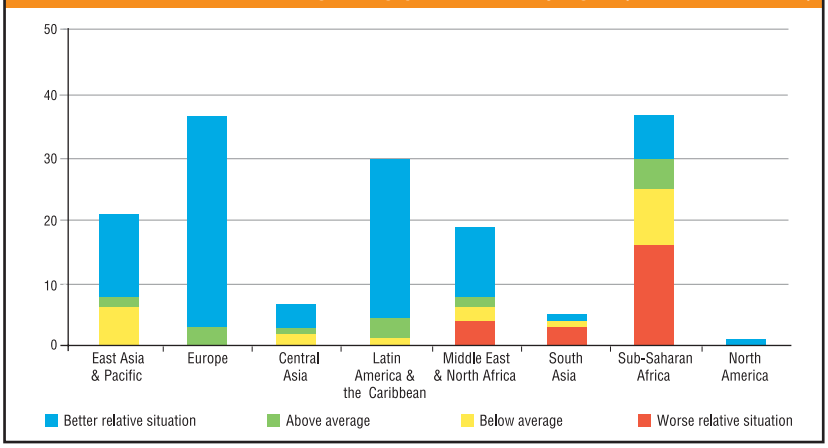

CHART 2. Current situation and evolution of the gender gap in education (number of countries)

	←	←	=	→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	0	2	9	9	3	23
Below average	0	4	8	7	1	20
Above average	1	1	13	2	0	17
Better relative situation	0	17	66	13	1	97
Total	1	24	96	31	5	157

1 See: <www.unfpa.org/swp/2002/english/ch7/page3.htm>.

CHART 3. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations of the gender gap in education

		Literacy ratio gap (women/men)	Net primary enrolment ratio gap (women/men)	Net secondary enrolment ratio gap (women/men)	Gross tertiary enrolment ratio gap (women/men)
Worse relative situation	Average	0.52	0.83	0.63	0.44
	Number of countries	22	24	19	26
Better relative situation	Average	0.97	1.01	1.06	1.48
	Number of countries	65	107	97	96
Total	Average	0.86	0.97	0.98	1.15
	Number of countries	113	152	135	149

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Equity in economic activity

The data in the Table "Equity in economic activity" shows the two indicators used to detect inequities in the workplace. One indicator is based on the differential participation rate of men and women in economic activity (not counting the agricultural sector); the other on the differential retributions received by men and women. Both indicators are presented as gaps (i.e., the quotient between the indicator values for women and men). After considering jointly the two gaps and summarizing the values available for the different countries (Chart 4), it is possible to appreciate that gender equity in economic activity has registered some advances. This is particularly marked in the proportion of remunerated female staff in the non-agricultural sector, which has registered a gradual increase. This is the reason why in 2005 almost 40% of remunerated labour in the non-agricultural sector of the world economy were women.

As occurs for each of the indicators related to social development, they will appear heterogeneous and disparate. On the one hand, there is a group of countries in the better relative situation where there is a narrow economic activity gap between the proportion of men and women workers (0.85). On the other hand, there is a group of 39 countries where the gap in the activity rate is twice as wide (0.43); in other words, there are more than two men for every woman who participates in an economic activity.

The reality of the salary gap is even more worrying: in global terms women on average receive half the income received by men. Extreme situations show that in countries in the worse situation women receive a third of the salary income of men. In countries in the better relative situation, the outlook is a bit more encouraging, and women's remunerations are two thirds of men's. In many social indicators the situation of the better qualified countries is closer to the desired indicator value. But this is not so with regard to gender equity in any of its dimensions; the economic activity in particular, shows a persistent and strong discrimination. As can be seen even in the countries with the better performance, there is still a significant gap (32%) in salaries between women and men.

Given the geographic distribution of gender inequity (Chart 5) in the field of economic activity, the trends are present as in earlier reports. In the Middle East and North Africa, 9 of every 10 countries are in the worse relative situation, while in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 of every 4 are in the group of the most unequal countries in gender equity.

A look at the regions according to their relative share in gender equity shows that, out of the total number of countries in the worse relative situation, nearly 44% are in the Middle East and North Africa. Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa have almost 18% of the countries in the world in the worse relative situation. To sum up, of the total number of countries in the worse relative situation, 80% of them are in the Middle East and North Africa. In contrast, almost half of the countries in the better relative situation are in Europe.

The recent evolution of all countries indicates a worrying situation: two thirds of them are either stagnant or regressing (Chart 6). It is discouraging to see that the proportion of countries that advances is nearly equal to that of countries that regress. Almost 70% of the countries with significant regression and 80% of those with slight regression can be found in the two poorest regions of the world, according to the classification by income done by the World Bank.

CHART 4. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse situations of the gender gap in economic activity

		Activity rate gap (women/men)	Estimated earned income ratio (women/men)
Worse relative situation	Average	0.43	0.33
	Number of countries	39	38
Better relative situation	Average	0.85	0.68
	Number of countries	47	47
Total	Average	0.68	0.52
	Number of countries	172	169

CHART 5. Current situation of the gender gap in economic activity by region (number of countries)

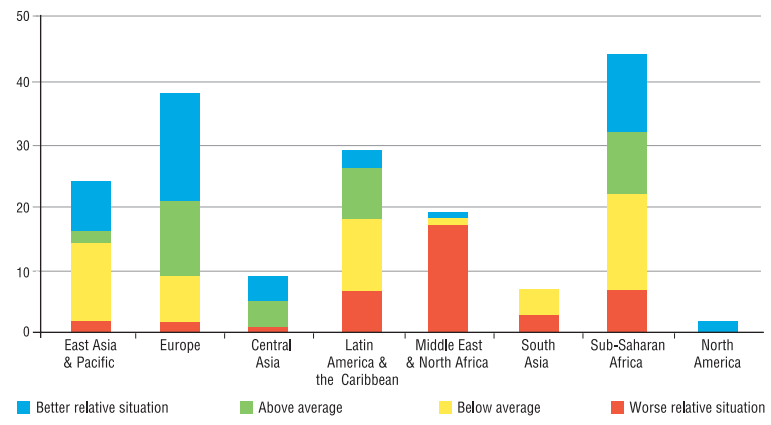

CHART 6. Current situation and evolution of the gender gap in economic activity (number of countries)

	←	←	=	→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	5	6	11	10	7	39
Below average	4	12	15	9	10	50
Above average	7	5	10	5	9	36
Better relative situation	3	13	18	11	2	47
Total	19	36	54	35	28	172

Equity and empowerment

The inequity between men and women is more evident in the access to power and its practice; there is no country in the world where women have the same opportunities as men for participating in political, economic and social decision-making. In the last decade there has been a faster growth in the number of women with parliament seats, reaching 17.5% in 2008.[2] However the process is slow and even if the present rate remained steady, it is estimated that parity between women and men in parliaments will not be reached until 2040.[3]

By 2015, the third Millennium Development Goal commits countries to attain an equitable representation between the two sexes in decision-making processes. Yet currently, indicators reveal that the interests and needs of women are not represented in the decision-making that is crucial to society or in the processes of policy formulation.

Even in countries in the better relative situation (Chart 9), women are behind men in exercising the power of decision; they occupy only 36% of senior official or manager positions, 33% of ministerial level

2 <www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

3 Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretaryw-General on Gender Issues, at a press briefing on occasion of the International Women's Day, March 2006. Available at: <www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2006/PressReleaseIWD8March.pdf>.

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posts and 29% of parliamentary seats. At the other extreme in terms of distribution are the countries in the worse relative situation, more distant from achieving the empowerment of women. Women occupy barely 13% of senior official or manager positions, 8% of ministry level posts and 10% of parliamentary seats.

Women's empowerment does not depend on the level of wealth of a country; high economic development does not necessarily lead to gender equity. It is necessary to take decisions and implement specific measures – such as a quota system for elections – to lessen inequity in the access of women to positions of power.

All the regions in the world show deficient situations (Chart 7); even in Europe there are countries in the worse relative situation below the world average. Likewise, in countries with a high income level, according to the World Bank classification, there are conditions of deprivation in relation to women and their access to power, such as in Japan and the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, the countries in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa are all in the worse possible position or below the world average.

Chart 8 shows recent evolution, where in most countries (140 in 158) the empowerment of women has made slight or significant progress. Some countries, however, register significant regression, such as Albania and Seychelles, which are in the worse relative situation and below the average, respectively. India and Chad, also in the worse relative situation, register slight regression. ■

CHART 7. Current situation in women's empowerment by region (number of countries)

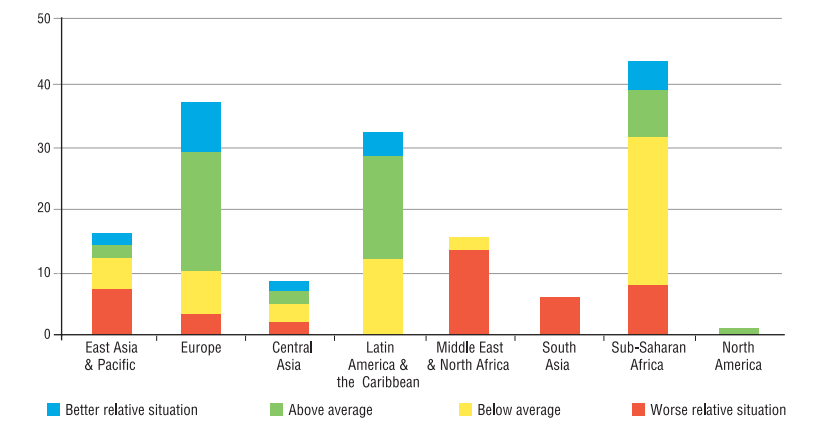

CHART 8. Current situation and evolution in women's empowerment (number of countries)

	⟵	←	=	→	⟶	Total
Worse relative situation	1	2	3	26	7	39
Below average	1	0	3	37	11	52
Above average	0	1	4	23	20	48
Better relative situation	0	1	2	3	13	19
Total	2	4	12	89	51	158

CHART 9. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in women's empowerment

		Female professional and technical workers (%)	Female legislators, senior officials and managers (%)	Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level (%)	Seats in parliament held by women (%)
Worse relative situation	Average	33.0	13.1	8.3	9.6
	Number of countries	24	22	37	36
Better relative situation	Average	56.7	36.4	32.9	29.4
	Number of countries	13	13	18	20
Total	Average	47.5	28.9	16.1	17.5
	Number of countries	99	97	153	154

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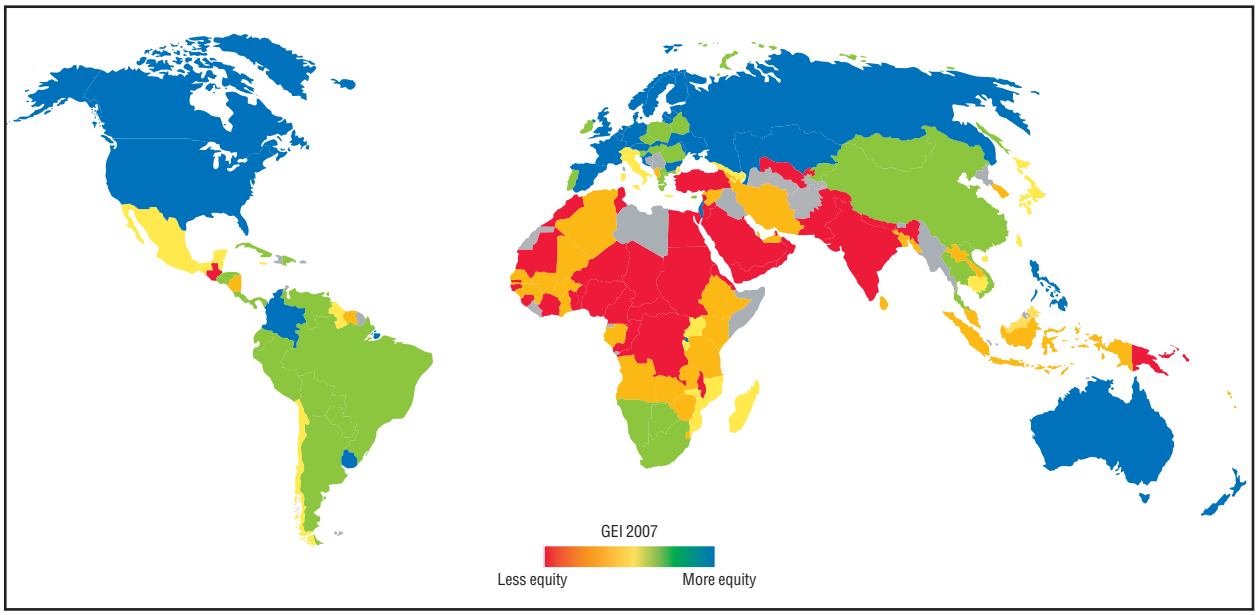
GENDER EQUITY INDEX 2008

20th century debts, 21st century shame



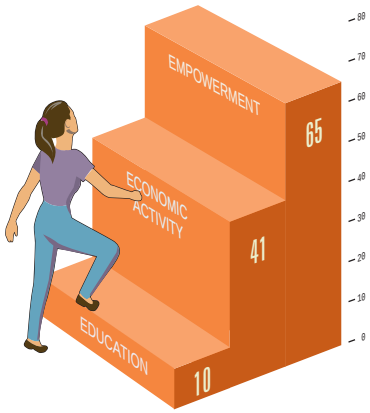
In order to contribute to the understanding of gender-based inequities and to monitor the status and its evolution, Social Watch has developed the Gender Equity Index (GEI). This index is based on internationally available comparable data and it makes it possible to position and classify countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity in three different dimensions: education, participation in the economy and empowerment.

In 2008, the GEI ranks the present situation of 157 countries, based on the most recent statistics available, and is able to determine evolution trends in 133 countries by comparing their present index with that of five years ago. (See the detailed methodology references and complete listings in www.socialwatch.org).

The index has a maximum possible value of 100%, which would indicate no gender gap at all in each of the three dimensions. The GEI measures the gap between women and men, not their welfare. Thus, for example, a country where both boys and girls have equal access to university studies would rank 100 in this aspect, and a country where both boys and girls are equally unable to complete primary school would also rank 100. This is not to imply that the quality of the education should not be improved. It just says that boys and girls suffer from the same lack of quality.

Education is the only component in the index where many countries have actually reached parity level. When parity has been reached, obviously no further progress is possible. But beyond the fact that many countries do not progress, the GEI education component reveals that many of them are regressing. In the two other dimensions, related to women's integration into economic and political life, no country shows complete parity yet.

The stairway to gender equity



Big steps ahead

The step leading to gender equity in education in all countries of the world is not a very big one. Yet, more countries are regressing in education than those making progresses. A larger number of countries show significant progress in economic activity, but the number of those regressing is also considerable and the global trend is therefore unclear. Evolution in empowerment seems promising, since most countries are showing progress, yet this is by far the largest gap to overcome.

Income alone does not generate equity

The GEI evidences that income differences between countries are no justification for gender-based inequities. Many poor countries have achieved a high level of equity, which is a positive achievement, even when that means an equitable distribution of poverty. In fact, the reverse is often true: many countries that have acceptable average figures in social indicators frequently hide behind those averages enormous disparities between men and women. The elimination of gender disparities can be achieved with active policies and does not require that countries improve their income levels in order to succeed.

Sweden, Finland and Norway continue to have the highest rankings in the 2008 GEI. Although the three countries do not lead in all the dimensions that make up the index (see gaps in Education, Empowerment and Economic Activity) they have good performances in all of them. Germany ranks fourth and Rwanda – one of the poorest countries in the world – takes the fifth place. In all these cases, the gender gap has been reduced through active policies, including gender quotas for political participation in elected bodies and pro-equity regulations in the labour market.

The GEI has been computed for 42 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 37 in Europe, 28 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 in the Middle East and North Africa, 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, 7 in Central Asia, 6 in South Asia and 2 in North America. Together these countries represent more than 94% of the world's population.

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Progress and setbacks

More than half the women in the world live in countries that have made no progress in gender equity in recent years. This is the main conclusion of the Social Watch 2008 GEI which, for the first time, shows recent evolution and trends in bridging the gap between men and women in education, economy activity and empowerment.

The GEI 2008 illustrates that the greater equity levels to be found in education are not paralleled by acceptable levels in the economic field nor in the empowerment of women. Political empowerment is the area where most progress has been made in recent years as a result of active policies, yet economic equity shows disparate results, with as many countries regressing as those where there is progress. In education the gap is comparatively closer, but the trend for many countries is to regress.

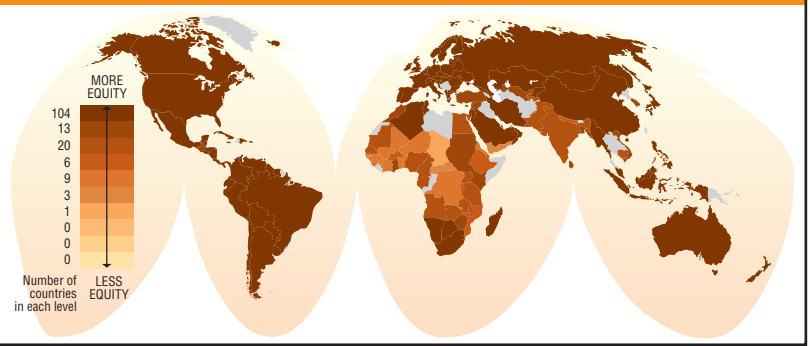
Difficulties in reaching equity cannot be justified by a lack of resources: the GEI mapping and that of each of its components show that – regardless of income levels – each country can reduce gender disparity through adequate policies. ■

GEI regional average by component

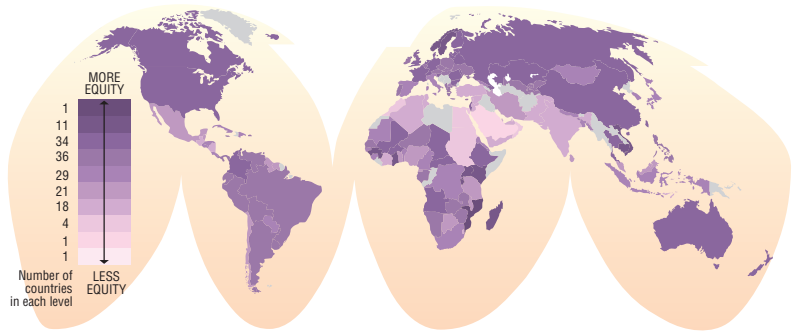
	Education	Economic activity	Empowerment
World*	90	59	35
Central Asia	92	65	30
East Asia	94	62	37
Europe	99	68	49
Latin America & Caribbean	99	57	45
Middle East & North Africa	90	35	19
North America	100	73	53
South Asia	80	47	20
Sub-Saharan Africa	73	61	24

* The size of the gap: Index points needed to achieve equity (100) globally in each dimension of the GEI.

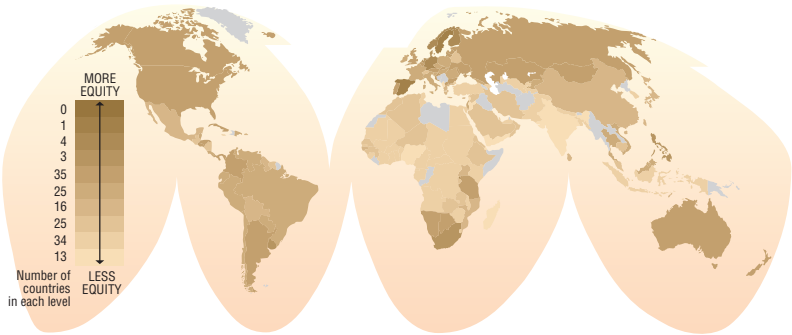
Education gap



Economic activity gap



Empowerment gap



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GEI VALUES IN 2008 AND RECENT GEI TRENDS (2004-2008)

Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)	Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)	Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)
Sweden	89	5.8	Peru	69	22.6	Angola	53	-18.7
Finland	85	6.9	Honduras	69	11.7	Gabon	53	-2.7
Norway	84	11.4	Czech Republic	69	-2.5	Tajikistan	52	-6.9
Germany	80		China	69	9.9	Indonesia	52	-6.5
Rwanda	80	13.3	Cyprus	69	13.3	Ethiopia	52	9.7
Bahamas	80	9.7	Venezuela	68	11.1	Burkina Faso	52	-2.3
Denmark	80	-1.1	Macedonia	68	8.8	Nicaragua	52	-10.0
New Zealand	78	3.4	Costa Rica	68	4.2	Algeria	52	11.0
Iceland	78	4.9	Paraguay	67	14.6	Bangladesh	51	-5.2
Netherlands	78	7.7	El Salvador	67	9.3	Cape Verde	51	-6.8
Lithuania	77	3.4	Greece	66	7.0	United Arab Emirates	51	9.3
Spain	77	16.8	Bolivia	66	12.5	Syria	51	9.6
Barbados	77	3.6	Botswana	66	-6.0	Guinea	51	-7.1
Russian Federation	76	5.6	Belarus	66	4.8	Mali	50	-6.5
Australia	76	6.6	Dominican Republic	66	6.5	Samoa	50	
Philippines	76	4.9	Singapore	66	4.5	Swaziland	50	-2.3
Latvia	76	1.6	Italy	65	5.4	Qatar	50	1.0
Canada	76	-2.7	Uganda	64	3.3	Cameroon	49	-9.1
Colombia	75	11.8	Georgia	64	-0.4	Gambia	49	-20.4
Kazakhstan	75	19.0	Lesotho	64	15.8	Mauritania	49	3.1
United States of America	75	-2.9	Belize	64	15.5	Tunisia	49	-4.1
United Kingdom	75	6.4	Mozambique	64		Guatemala	49	5.0
Uruguay	75	9.2	Switzerland	63	-0.4	Guinea-Bissau	48	2.9
Slovakia	74	0.5	Brunei Darussalam	63	15.5	Oman	48	14.2
Bulgaria	74	1.5	Chile	62	6.1	Malawi	48	-22.5
Moldova	74	2.1	Maldives	62	-8.7	Lebanon	47	2.2
Ukraine	74	6.7	Azerbaijan	62	0.2	Saudi Arabia	47	13.2
Estonia	74	1.2	Burundi	62	2.2	Jordan	47	0.2
Croatia	74	7.1	Luxembourg	61	3.1	Sao Tome and Principe	47	
Belgium	73	10.1	Jamaica	61	-8.5	Niger	47	1.3
Austria	73	4.6	Japan	61	2.8	Bahrain	46	-1.0
France	73	15.0	Madagascar	61	-4.1	West Bank and Gaza	46	-2.6
Israel	73	9.2	Guyana	61	6.0	Djibouti	46	
Portugal	72	4.3	St Vincent and Grenadines	61		Turkey	46	-8.6
Hong Kong	72	2.1	Cambodia	60	-1.3	Equatorial Guinea	45	9.2
Romania	72	4.1	Mauritius	60	16.8	Eritrea	45	-26.1
Argentina	72	22.7	Mexico	60	2.6	Nepal	44	3.3
Kyrgyzstan	71	12.2	Kenya	59	-5.2	Morocco	43	
Poland	71	-2.3	Malta	59	25.3	Congo, Rep.	43	-3.5
Vietnam	71	7.7	Ghana	58	-6.4	Nigeria	43	-18.0
Panama	71	14.3	Tanzania	58		Central African Republic	42	-12.2
Slovenia	71	0.9	Malaysia	58	-7.9	Pakistan	42	-0.3
Ecuador	71	22.3	Zimbabwe	57	-3.4	Sudan	41	-11.5
Hungary	71	2.7	Uzbekistan	57	-10.2	Sierra Leone	41	-3.1
Namibia	71	3.2	Suriname	56	-11.1	Benin	41	-16.7
St Lucia	71		Vanuatu	56		Chad	41	-13.0
Mongolia	70	9.0	Albania	56	-8.1	India	40	-8.8
Ireland	70	10.2	Zambia	55	-2.4	Egypt	40	-20.0
South Africa	70	4.3	Timor-Leste	55		Togo	39	-5.5
Thailand	70	0.3	Senegal	55	-2.1	Côte d'Ivoire	37	-7.1
Trinidad and Tobago	70	2.5	Korea, Rep.	54	-4.5	Yemen	29	1.8
Cuba	70	6.4	Iran	54	18.6			
Brazil	69	10.5	Sri Lanka	53	-13.1			

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STATUS OF RATIFICATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL ILO CONVENTIONS

Up to July 2008

C87: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948.

C98: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949.

C100: Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951.

C105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957.

C111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958.

C138: Minimum Age Convention, 1973.

C182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999.

Countries that have ratified all these conventions:
Albania; Algeria; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bahamas; Barbados; Belarus; Belgium; Belize; Benin; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cambodia; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; Colombia; Comoros; Congo, DR; Congo, Rep.; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Equatorial Guinea; Estonia; Ethiopia; Fiji; Finland; France; Gambia; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guyana; Honduras; Hungary; Iceland; Indonesia; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Latvia; Lesotho; Libya; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macedonia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mali; Malta; Mauritania; Mauritius; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Mozambique; Netherlands; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Rwanda; San Marino; Sao Tome and Principe; Senegal; Serbia; Seychelles; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; St Kitts and Nevis; St Vincent and Grenadines; Swaziland; Sweden; Switzerland; Syria; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Togo; Trinidad and Tobago; Tunisia; Turkey; Uganda; Ukraine; United Kingdom; Uruguay; Venezuela; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe.

	FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING		ELIMINATION OF FORCED AND COMPULSORY LABOUR	ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION		ABOLITION OF CHILD LABOUR			FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING		ELIMINATION OF FORCED AND COMPULSORY LABOUR	ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION		ABOLITION OF CHILD LABOUR	
	C 87	C 98	C 105	C 100	C 111	C 138	C 182		C 87	C 98	C 105	C 100	C 111	C 138	C 182
Afghanistan	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	Liberia	■	■	■	□	■	□	■
Australia	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Malaysia	□	■	●	■	□	■	■
Bahrain	□	□	■	□	■	□	■	Mexico	■	□	■	■	■	□	■
Bangladesh	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Morocco	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Brazil	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	Namibia	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Burma/Myanmar	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	Nepal	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Canada	■	□	■	■	■	□	■	New Zealand	□	■	■	■	■	□	■
Cape Verde	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Oman	□	□	■	□	□	■	■
China	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	Qatar	□	□	■	□	■	■	■
Cuba	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	Samoa	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
Eritrea	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	Saudi Arabia	□	□	■	■	■	□	■
Gabon	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Sierra Leone	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
Ghana	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Singapore	□	■	●	■	□	■	■
Guinea-Bissau	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	Solomon Islands	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Haiti	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	Somalia	□	□	■	□	■	□	□
India	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	St Lucia	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
Iran	□	□	■	■	■	□	■	Sudan	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Iraq	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	Suriname	■	■	■	□	□	□	■
Japan	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	Thailand	□	□	■	■	□	■	■
Jordan	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	Timor-Leste	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Kenya	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	Turkmenistan	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
Kiribati	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	United Arab Emirates	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Korea, Rep.	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	United States of America	□	□	■	□	□	□	■
Kuwait	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	Uzbekistan	□	■	■	■	■	□	■
Lao, PDR	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	Vanuatu	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
Lebanon	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	Vietnam	□	□	□	■	■	■	■

Source: ILOLEX. ILO website Database (www.ilo.org/).

■ Convention ratified
□ Convention not yet ratified
● Convention denounced

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STATUS OF RATIFICATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Up to July 2008

A: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), 1966. Entry into force: 3 January 1976.
B: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), 1966. Entry into force: 23 March 1976.
C: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1965. Entry into force: 4 January 1969.
D: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979. Entry into force: 3 September 1981.
E: Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984. Entry into force: 26 June 1987.
F: Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989. Entry into force: 2 September 1990.
G: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948. Entry into force: 12 January 1951.
H: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951. Entry into force: 22 April 1954.
I: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC), 1990. Entry into force: 1 July 2003.

	UN Member since	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I		UN Member since	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Afghanistan	1946	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Croatia	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Albania	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Cuba	1945	❍	❍	●	●	●	●	●		
Algeria	1962	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Cyprus	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Andorra	1993		●	●	●	●	●	●			Czech Republic	1993	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Angola	1976	●	●		●		●		●		Denmark	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Antigua and Barbuda	1981			●	●	●	●	●	●		Djibouti	1977	●	●	❍	●	●	●		●	
Argentina	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Dominica	1978	●	●		●		●		●	
Armenia	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Dominican Republic	1945	●	●	●	●	❍	●	❍	●	
Australia	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Ecuador	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Austria	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Egypt	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Azerbaijan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	El Salvador	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bahamas	1973			●	●		●	●	●		Equatorial Guinea	1968	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Bahrain	1971	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			Eritrea	1993	●	●	●	●		●			
Bangladesh	1974	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		❍	Estonia	1991	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Barbados	1966	●	●	●	●		●	●			Ethiopia	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Belarus	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Fiji	1970			●	●		●	●	●	
Belgium	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Finland	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Belize	1981	❍	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	France	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Benin	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	❍	Gabon	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Bhutan	1971			❍	●		●				Gambia	1965	●	●	●	●	❍	●	●	●	
Bolivia	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Georgia	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Germany	1973	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Botswana	1966		●	●	●	●	●		●		Ghana	1957	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Brazil	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Greece	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Brunei Darussalam	1984				●		●				Grenada	1974	●	●	❍	●		●			
Bulgaria	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Guatemala	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Burkina Faso	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Guinea	1958	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Burma/Myanmar	1948				●		●	●			Guinea-Bissau	1974	●	❍	❍	●	❍	●		●	❍
Burundi	1962	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Guyana	1966	●	●	●	●	●	●			❍
Cambodia	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍	Haiti	1945		●	●	●		●	●	●	
Cameroon	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		Holly See				●		●	●		●	
Canada	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Honduras	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cape Verde	1975	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	Hungary	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Central African Republic	1960	●	●	●	●		●		●		Iceland	1946	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Chad	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		India	1945	●	●	●	●	❍	●	●		
Chile	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Indonesia	1950	●	●	●	●	●	●			❍
China	1945	●	❍	●	●	●	●	●	●		Iran	1945	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Colombia	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Iraq	1945	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Comoros	1975			●	●	❍	●	●		❍	Ireland	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Congo, DR	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Israel	1949	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Congo, Rep.	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		Italy	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Cook Islands					●		●				Jamaica	1962	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Costa Rica	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Japan	1956	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Côte d'Ivoire	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		Jordan	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		

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	UN Member since	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Kazakhstan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Kenya	1963	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Kiribati	1999				●		●			
Korea, DPR	1991	●	●		●		●	●		
Korea, Rep.	1991	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Kuwait	1963	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Kyrgyzstan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lao, PDR	1955	●	❍	●	●		●	●		
Latvia	1991	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Lebanon	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Lesotho	1966	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Liberia	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Libya	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Liechtenstein	1990	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Lithuania	1991	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Luxembourg	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Macedonia	1993	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Madagascar	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Malawi	1964	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Malaysia	1957				●		●	●		
Maldives	1965	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Mali	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Malta	1964	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Marshall Islands	1991				●		●			
Mauritania	1961	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Mauritius	1968	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Mexico	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Micronesia	1991				●		●			
Moldova	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Monaco	1993	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Mongolia	1961	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Montenegro	2006	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Morocco	1956	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mozambique	1975		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Namibia	1990	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Nauru	1999		❍	❍		❍	●			
Nepal	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Netherlands	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
New Zealand	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Nicaragua	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Niger	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Nigeria	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Norway	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Oman	1971			●	●		●			
Pakistan	1947	●	❍	●	●	❍	●	●		
Palau	1994						●			
Panama	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Papua New Guinea	1975	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Paraguay	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Peru	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Philippines	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Poland	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Portugal	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

	UN Member since	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Qatar	1971			●		●	●			
Romania	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Russian Federation	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Rwanda	1962	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Samoa	1976		●		●		●		●	
San Marino	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Sao Tome and Principe	1975	❍	❍	❍	●	❍	●		●	❍
Saud Arabia	1945			●	●	●	●	●		
Senegal	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Serbia	2000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Seychelles	1976	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sierra Leone	1961	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	❍
Singapore	1965				●		●	●		
Slovakia	1993	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Slovenia	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Solomon Islands	1978	●		●	●		●		●	
Somalia	1960	●	●	●		●	❍		●	
South Africa	1945	❍	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Spain	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sri Lanka	1955	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
St Kitts and Nevis	1983			●	●		●		●	
St Lucia	1979			●	●		●			
St Vincent and Grenadines	1980	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sudan	1956	●	●	●		❍	●	●	●	
Suriname	1975	●	●	●	●		●		●	
Swaziland	1968	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Sweden	1946	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Switzerland	2002	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Syria	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Tajikistan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Tanzania	1961	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Thailand	1946	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Timor-Leste	2002	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Togo	1960	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	❍
Tonga	1999			●			●	●		
Trinidad and Tobago	1962	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Tunisia	1956	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Turkey	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Turkmenistan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Tuvalu	2000				●		●		●	
Uganda	1962	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ukraine	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
United Arab Emirates	1971			●	●		●	●		
United Kingdom	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
United States of America	1945	❍	●	●	❍	●	❍	●	●	
Uruguay	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Uzbekistan	1992	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Vanuatu	1981		❍		●		●			
Venezuela	1945	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Vietnam	1977	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Yemen	1947	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Zambia	1964	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Zimbabwe	1980	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	

Source: Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (www2.ohchr.org).

● Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance, consent to be bound or definitive signature.
❍ Signature not yet followed by ratification.

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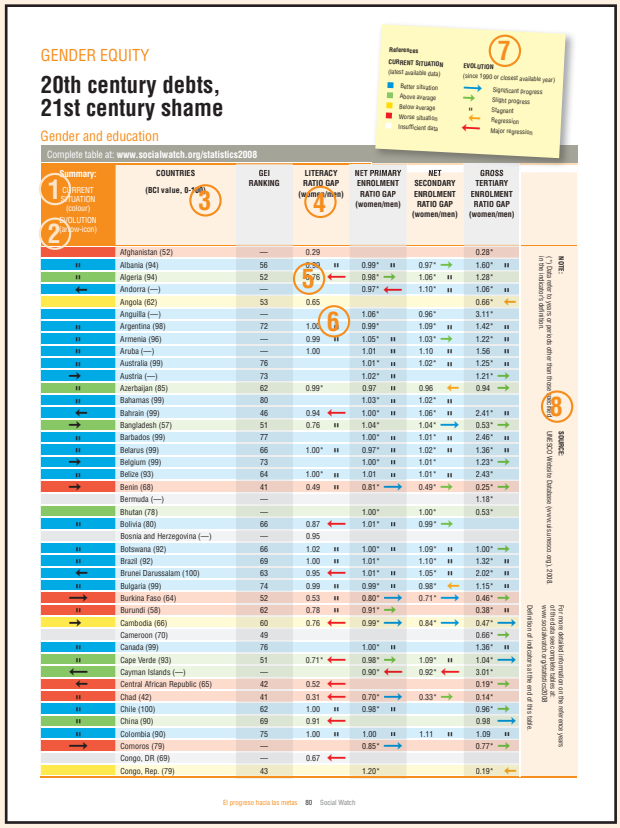
How to read the Social Watch tables



GENDER EQUITY

20th century debts, 21st century shame

Gender and education

Complete table at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

References: CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data): Better situation; Above average; Below average; Worse situation; Insufficient data. EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year): Significant progress; Slight progress; Stagnant; Regression; Major regression.

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
	Afghanistan (52)	—	0.29			0.28*
"	Albania (94)	56	0.99 "	0.99* "	0.97* →	1.60* "
"	Algeria (94)	52	0.96 ←	0.98* →	1.06* "	1.28*
←	Andorra (—)	—		0.97* ←	1.10* "	1.06* "
	Angola (62)	53	0.65			0.66* ←
	Anguilla (—)	—		1.06*	0.96*	3.11*
"	Argentina (98)	72	1.00 "	0.99*	1.09* "	1.42* "
"	Armenia (96)	—	0.99 "	1.05* "	1.03* →	1.22* "
"	Aruba (—)	—	1.00	1.01 "	1.10 "	1.56 "
"	Australia (99)	76		1.01* "	1.02* "	1.25* "
→	Austria (—)	73		1.02* "		1.21* →
"	Azerbaijan (85)	62	0.99*	0.97 "	0.96 ←	0.94 →
"	Bahamas (99)	80		1.03* "	1.02* "	
←	Bahrain (99)	46	0.94 ←	1.00* "	1.06* "	2.41* "
→	Bangladesh (57)	51	0.76 "	1.04*	1.04* →	0.53* →
"	Barbados (99)	77		1.00* "	1.01* "	2.46* "
"	Belarus (99)	66	1.00* "	0.97* "	1.02* "	1.36* "
→	Belgium (99)	73		1.00* "	1.01*	1.23* →
"	Belize (93)	64	1.00* "	1.01 "	1.01* "	2.43*
→	Benin (68)	41	0.49 "	0.81* →	0.49* →	0.25* →
	Bermuda (—)	—				1.18*
	Bhutan (78)	—		1.00*	1.00*	0.53*
"	Bolivia (80)	66	0.87 ←	1.01* "	0.99* →	
	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	—	0.95			
"	Botswana (92)	66	1.02 "	1.00* "	1.09* "	1.00* →
"	Brazil (92)	69	1.00 "	1.01*	1.10* "	1.32* "
←	Brunei Darussalam (100)	63	0.95 ←	1.01* "	1.05* "	2.02* "
"	Bulgaria (99)	74	0.99 "	0.99* "	0.98* ←	1.15* "
→	Burkina Faso (64)	52	0.53 "	0.80* →	0.71* →	0.46* →
"	Burundi (58)	62	0.78 "	0.91* →		0.38* "
→	Cambodia (66)	60	0.76 ←	0.99* →	0.84* →	0.47* →
	Cameroon (70)	49				0.66* →
"	Canada (99)	76		1.00* "		1.36* "
"	Cape Verde (93)	51	0.71* ←	0.98* →	1.09* "	1.04* →
←	Cayman Islands (—)	—		0.90* ←	0.92* ←	3.01*
←	Central African Republic (65)	42	0.52 ←			0.19* →
"	Chad (42)	41	0.31 ←	0.70* →	0.33* →	0.14*
"	Chile (100)	62	1.00 "	0.98* "		0.96* →
"	China (90)	69	0.91 ←			0.98 →
"	Colombia (90)	75	1.00 "	1.00 "	1.11 "	1.09 "
→	Comoros (79)	—		0.85* →		0.77* →
	Congo, DR (69)	—	0.67 ←			
	Congo, Rep. (79)	43		1.20*		0.19* ←

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete table at www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Definitions of indicators at the end of this table.

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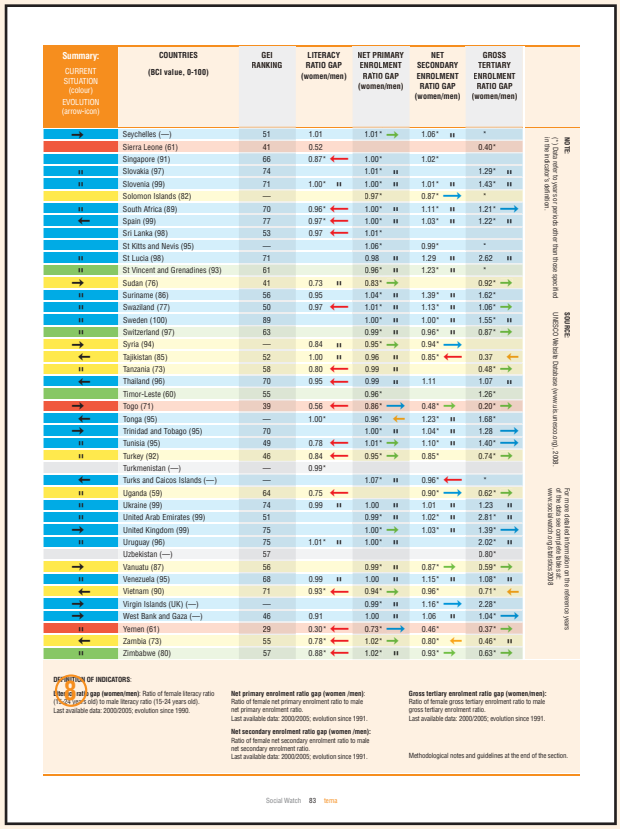

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	GEI RANKING	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men)
→	Seychelles (—)	51	1.01	1.01* →	1.06* "	*
	Sierra Leone (61)	41	0.52			0.40*
	Singapore (91)	66	0.87* ←	1.00*	1.02*	
"	Slovakia (97)	74		1.01* "		1.29* "
"	Slovenia (99)	71	1.00* "	1.00* "	1.01* "	1.43* "
	Solomon Islands (82)	—		0.97*	0.87* →	*
"	South Africa (89)	70	0.96* ←	1.00* "	1.11* "	1.21* →
←	Spain (99)	77	0.97* ←	1.00* "	1.03* "	1.22* "
	Sri Lanka (98)	53	0.97* ←	1.01*		
	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	—		1.06*	0.99*	*
"	St Lucia (98)	71		0.98 "	1.29 "	2.62 "
"	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	61		0.96* "	1.23* "	*
→	Sudan (76)	41	0.73 "	0.83* →		0.92* →
"	Suriname (86)	56	0.95	1.04* "	1.39* "	1.62*
"	Swaziland (77)	50	0.97 ←	1.01* "	1.13* "	1.06* →
"	Sweden (100)	89		1.00* "	1.00* "	1.55* "
"	Switzerland (97)	63		0.99* "	0.96* "	0.87* →
→	Syria (94)	—	0.84 "	0.95* →	0.94* →	
←	Tajikistan (85)	52	1.00 "	0.96 "	0.85* ←	0.37 ←
"	Tanzania (73)	58	0.80 ←	0.99 "		0.48* →
←	Thailand (96)	70	0.95 ←	0.99 "	1.11	1.07 "
	Timor-Leste (60)	55		0.96*		1.26*
→	Togo (71)	39	0.56 ←	0.86* →	0.48* →	0.20* →
←	Tonga (95)	—	1.00*	0.96* ←	1.23* "	1.68*
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70		1.00* "	1.04* "	1.28 →
"	Tunisia (95)	49	0.78 ←	1.01* →	1.10* "	1.40* →
"	Turkey (92)	46	0.84 ←	0.95* →	0.85*	0.74* →
	Turkmenistan (—)	—	0.99*			
←	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)	—		1.07* "	0.96* ←	*
"	Uganda (59)	64	0.75 ←		0.90* →	0.62* →
"	Ukraine (99)	74	0.99 "	1.00 "	1.01 "	1.23 "
"	United Arab Emirates (99)	51		0.99* "	1.02* "	2.81* "
→	United Kingdom (99)	75		1.00* →	1.03* "	1.39* →
"	Uruguay (96)	75	1.01* "	1.00* "		2.02* "
	Uzbekistan (—)	57				0.80*
→	Vanuatu (87)	56		0.99* "	0.87* →	0.59* →
"	Venezuela (95)	68	0.99 "	1.00 "	1.15* "	1.08* "
←	Vietnam (90)	71	0.93* ←	0.94* →	0.96*	0.71* ←
→	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)	—		0.99* "	1.16* →	2.28*
→	West Bank and Gaza (—)	46	0.91	1.00 "	1.06 "	1.04* →
"	Yemen (61)	29	0.30* ←	0.73* →	0.46*	0.37* →
←	Zambia (73)	55	0.78* ←	1.02* →	0.80* ←	0.46* "
"	Zimbabwe (80)	57	0.88* ←	1.02* "	0.93* →	0.63* →

NOTE: (*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator's definition.

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2008.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete table at www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Literacy ratio gap (women/men): Ratio of female literacy ratio (15-24 years old) to male literacy ratio (15-24 years old). Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1990.

Net primary enrolment ratio gap (women /men): Ratio of female net primary enrolment ratio to male net primary enrolment ratio. Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Net secondary enrolment ratio gap (women /men): Ratio of female net secondary enrolment ratio to male net secondary enrolment ratio. Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Gross tertiary enrolment ratio gap (women/men): Ratio of female gross tertiary enrolment ratio to male gross tertiary enrolment ratio. Last available data: 2000/2005; evolution since 1991.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

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The thematic area tables present the statistical information available for each indicator.

1. Current situation in the area: Illustrates the current situation of the countries in the corresponding dimension through a summarizing measurement that evaluates countries based on their performance on the set of indicators included for which information is available (see box "Methodological notes: Thematic tables"). The different categories are colour coded (see References: 7).The categories are: Better situation, Above average, Below average, Worse situation.

2. Evolution in the area: Presents the evolution of country situations as an average of the evolution in indicators for which sufficient information is available (see box "Methodological notes: Thematic tables"). The categories are indicated by symbols (see 7). Categories are: Major regression, Regression, Stagnant, Slight progress, Significant progress.

3. Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) value: Presents the values of the BCI for each country, a measurement designed by Social Watch that evaluates country status with regard to the basic conditions of development (for more information, see the box "Technical notes: BCI design in countries" in the "Basic Capabilities Index 2008" article in this Report). Countries with the highest BCI scores are listed first.

4. Indicator: Each thematic area includes indicators that are pertinent to evaluating the dimension in question and for which information is available from a large number of countries. This makes it possible to visualize the situation in each country while comparing the distances between them. The definitions of each indicator can be found on the right or at the foot of the corresponding table (see 8).

5. Current situation: This column presents the latest data available for each country according to the source consulted. These figures allow us to evaluate and compare the present situation in the countries of the world. Given that in many cases, the latest available figures are not up to date, it is important to take into account the time period to which the data correspond.

6. Evolution: Based on current and initial data,[1] the rate of progress or regression over the intervening time period is calculated for each country with reference to the evolution of all of the countries in this indicator (see box "Methodological notes: Thematic tables"). The result is expressed graphically (see 7), facilitating the reading and evaluation of performance in the indicator during this period. The categories are: Major regression, Regression, Stagnant, Slight progress, Significant progress.

7. References: Shows the categories of the CURRENT SITUATION in a country in the area and the RECENT EVOLUTION for each indicator and for the whole area. These variables are constructed by Social Watch to facilitate the evaluation of countries in each area based on the information available (see box "Methodological notes: Thematic tables").

8. Definitions, Notes and Sources: The definition of each indicator as well as the source(s) of the information used are provided on the right side or at the foot of the corresponding table. The information used for the indicators is obtained from recognized international organizations that compile the statistics produced by the countries. Notes have been added with information needed to read the tables.

1 Initial data or starting point: Presents the available information from as close as possible to 1990 (the year that is taken as the starting point in the international commitments that set quantitative goals in different aspects of social development).

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Methodological notes: thematic tables

Measurement of the current situation of countries and the rate of change

The **situation** a country is in, according to each indicator, is given by the latest available value for that indicator.

Each country is assigned a value from 1 to 4 (1 indicates the worst situation and 4 indicates the best situation) according to the distribution of values on each indicator,[1] and an average of these values is then given for all the indicators in that area. In this way a self-referential ranking is obtained, independent of distance from goals or from specific conceptually defined levels.

This ranking was only applied to those countries with information available for at least half the indicators that make up each overall thematic area.

To avoid giving a false impression that the data are exact values, the average values were rescaled[2] to create four country categories:

Countries in better situation

Countries above average

Countries below average

Countries in worse situation

Countries for which sufficient information to be included in the ranking is lacking (*Countries with insufficient data to summarize the area*) are also shown.

Recent evolution

For each country, evolution in each indicator is evaluated between 1990 (or the closest year for which information is available) and the most recent year for which information is available.

In order to assess the evolution of each indicator, two aspects were taken into account: initial[3] and final levels, and the rate of change of progress or regression.

The **rate of change** for each country is obtained by considering the variation in the values of the indicator over the time period within which the measurements were made. The ratio between the variation in the indicator and the time period reflects the rate of change for the item in question.

In the case of information from a specific period (e.g. 1990-1994) rather than a specific year, the criterion adopted was to use the data for the middle of the interval (e.g. 1992) as a means of calculating the rate of change.

The values for this rate of change have also been rescaled in sections (using a reference scale of 1 to 5), and in the tables these appear in a column to the right of the current indicator value. A series of symbols are used to illustrate changes in order to make the information easier to read (numerical values are not used because they would tend to give the impression that the information is exact, which in this case it is not).

The categories defined in this rescaling are as follows:

→	*Significant progress*
→	*Slight progress*
"	*Stagnant*
←	*Regression*
←	*Major regression*

Significant progress applies to those countries which are progressing at rates above the average for all countries making progress.

Slight progress applies to those countries which are progressing at rates below the average for all countries making progress.

Stagnant refers to those countries where no changes (or quantitatively insignificant changes) have been recorded over the period in question.

Regression applies to those countries which are regressing at rates below the average for all countries regressing (i.e. they are regressing more slowly).

Major regression applies to those countries which are regressing at rates above the average for all countries regressing (i.e. they are regressing more rapidly).

In addition, an average of progress and regression of the indicators is built for each dimension for which information on recent evolution is available. The average appears in the column "Recent evolution" of the area, and values are also rescaled to obtain the aforementioned five categories.[4] ■

1 For this, the variable was normalized (by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation) and then the mean positive values and the mean negative values for the normalized indicator were calculated. The four categories were established according to the values above and below the mean positive values for the normalized indicator, and the values above and below the mean negative values for the normalized indicator.

2 The possible range for the average of the area was divided into four groups as follows: group 1 (between 4 and 3.26); group 2 (between 3.25 and 2.6); group 3 (between 2.5 and 1.76); group 4 (between 1.75 and 1).

3 See initial values in the complete version of the tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

4 The five groups were divided as follows: major regression (1 to 1.8), regression (1.81 to 2.59), stagnant (2.6 to 3.39), slight progress (3.4 to 4.19), significant progress (4.2 to 5).

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NATIONAL REPORTS

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More market and fewer rights: the State's response to the housing crisis

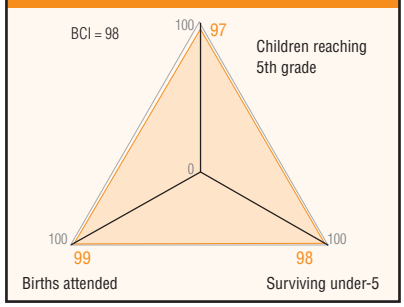
Despite being recognized normatively, the right to housing has systematically been harmed by the action of the State. What is more, the market appears to be the central sphere of satisfaction and the market's logic seems to have a direct influence on the housing situation of the more vulnerable sectors, encouraging massive evictions and generating direct and indirect obstacles for obtaining dwellings.

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)[1]

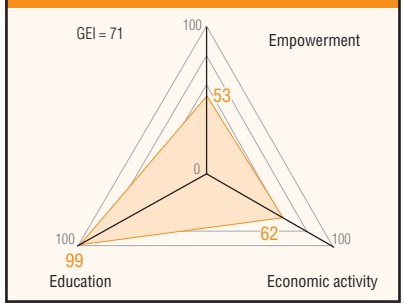
The right to adequate housing is guaranteed in article 14bis of the Constitution and, as of the 1994 constitutional reform, numerous international treaties that guarantee the right to adequate housing[2] have been granted constitutional hierarchy. Among the most relevant is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which in article 11 proclaims that "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."

In view of its international commitments, the Argentinian State is not only obliged to generate egalitarian conditions for access to housing, but must also, with the maximum resources available, respect the minimum contents of these instruments, and the dispositions established by the UN body that monitors implementation of the Covenant. In the particular case of the ICESCR, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has established, under General Comments No. 4 and 7, the international standards for the right to adequate housing. The State must therefore (on the principle of non regressiveness) improve the conditions for its enjoyment and exercise; guarantee the participation of the groups affected in the decision making for the design and implementation of public policies on housing and guarantee access to information, as well as provide suitable and effective channels that can make legal claims possible when the State does not meet its obligations.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Norms and reality

The above is the normative framework, but it does not coincide in practice. According to the National Census of Population and Housing 2001, there were more than 2.6 million households, of a total of over 10 million, living in inadequate housing.[3]

To complete this overview of the housing situation, apart from the state of the dwellings, the tenancy system should also be considered. A considerable part of the population lives in dwellings under irregular tenancy situations[4] (15.7% of households). From this it can be inferred that a part of this population, who live in dwellings in a good state of repair, do not have enough income to find adequate dwelling should they have to move from the dwelling they currently inhabit. This implies that an additional number of households should be added to the housing deficit mentioned above.

The State and the market are the two main sources for the satisfaction of needs, and they propose intervention regulations that in many cases are complementary but in others are in open conflict. As Esping Andersen[5] says, "In the history of social policies, conflicts have focused on the extent to which the degree of market immunity is permissible; that is, the resources, the extension and the quality of social rights". The concept of 'demercantilization' is central to this discussion. It involves extracting a social relation from the commercial circuit and ascribing it to the State's intervention. How then have these spheres operated in the last few years? In order to find out, we will go over the situation in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA in Spanish).

Specifically, in the CABA, which is the capital and one of the richest districts in the country, there is a significant part of the population whose right to adequate housing has been violated. This process became more pronounced after the 2001-2002 socioeconomic crisis, owing on the one hand to the omission of the State in planning pertinent policies, and, on the other (directly related to the first), due to the construction boom, in which the real estate market fixes prices and conditions, restricting the access to adequate housing, especially to the less privileged members of society.

What are we talking about when we talk about the housing crisis in Buenos Aires?

In late 2001 and early 2002, Argentina went through a difficult socioeconomic crisis, which in the first semester of 2003 raised the poverty rate to 54% and the extreme poverty rate up to 27.7%. In spite of being one of the richest districts in the country, the CABA became seriously deteriorated: poverty grew from 1997 to 2002 from 6.8% to 21.2%; and in the second semester 2007, still 21.8% of the people in the CABA and neighbouring zones were living under the poverty line.[6] The rate for people living under the

1 Written by Pilar Arcidiácono and Laura Royo, director and member of the Programme for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), and Facundo Capurro Robles, member of CELS. Our thanks to Gustavo Gamallo (Universidad de Buenos Aires).

2 The right to adequate housing is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 11); American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man (Art. XI); American Convention on Human Rights (Art. 26); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Art. 5.e.iii); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Art. 14.2.h); and Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 27.3).

3 This housing deficit is defined in terms of the number of households that fall under some of the following categories: Dwellings with inadequate conditions that are also condemned; dwellings with inadequate conditions that can be restored; dwellings in suitable conditions but the number of persons per room is higher than two and/or they share the dwelling with one or more other households/families (overcrowding).

4 Irregular situations include: owner of a single dwelling, tenant by loan, de facto dweller and other situations.

5 Esping Andersen, Gosta, 1993, *Los tres mundos del Estado del Bienestar*, Valencia, Edicions Alfons el Magnanim, p. 60.

6 INDEC, "Incidencia de la pobreza e indigencia en el total de aglomerados urbanos y por región estadística, Primer semestre 2007".

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line of extreme poverty rose to 6.3% in May 2002 and by the second semester 2007 was at 8.2%.[7]

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC in Spanish) by 2001, there were 14.3% households in the country with Unmet Basic Needs.[8] As stated by the Municipal Committee for Housing, the housing deficit in the CABA in 2002 was 400.000 for a total of 2.776.138 inhabitants;[9] data that reflects the housing crisis is the number of people who receive some type of state assistance for lacking dwelling. While in 1999 the Government of the CABA assisted 2,285 people, in 2002 the number rose to 8,090. After various changes in housing policy, by the first semester 2007 the number of households assisted by the Programme for Assistance to Families living in the street was much higher than the number of households assisted in previous years.

In 2002, it was estimated that more than 100,000 people were living in emergency housing[10] (between 1991 and 2001 the number of people living in these settlements and in transitory housing centres rose by 100.3%), 200,000 were squatters, 70,000 lived in rented rooms (50% of whom were in an irregular situation because they did not pay the rent), 70,000 lived in hostels and 120,000 lived in family homes or in their own overcrowded homes. Although these data indicate that around 20% of the population of the CABA were in a deficient housing situation, the annual census of street people for 2007 shows that 1,029 people were in this situation. Given that more than 85,000 families were in deficient housing situations, the Government of the CABA designed the Programme for the Assistance of Street People of the CABA,[11] by which families benefited from a 6-month subsidy This programme oversaw the situation of 4,146 households in emergency housing in 2006 and in the first semester only of 2007 assisted 3,657 households (almost the same amount assisted in the previous year). Therefore, by August 2007, the programme had almost entirely used up the budget allocations for the full year.

The number of families who were left to live in the street and obtained housing subsidies to be able to pay for a hotel or transitory lodging grew by 274% between the first and the second semester 2006. However the number of evictions the Programme was notified about affected 2,339 families, which proves the failure of this policy, since these families were left without any state protection.

The State's omissive and regressive response

The other side of the coin of economic changes was the growth of the real estate and construction businesses in the CABA. From 2002 onwards, these became the two safe options for savings and a good deal for private operators. The sector's boom exponentially increased the value of land and real estate, making the restrictions to access to housing more severe for the sectors with the least resources.[12] The real estate market aimed the construction of housing at upper middle and upper social sectors; the new dwellings therefore had scarce or nil effect in reversing the housing deficit.

The new urban initiatives changed the purpose of many dwellings, especially houses, occupied by the lower middle and lower sectors through renting or irregular tenancy, causing them to move elsewhere. At the same time, as a consequence of the increase in the price of dwellings, there was a steep rise in rent values and increased requirements demanded by the owners for the potential tenants to be able to access the dwellings, which excluded the middle and lower middle sectors from the rented housing market.[13]

A direct consequence of this was the strong increase in the number of eviction proceedings in the courts of justice[14] while in the state agenda no space for discussion was made that would take into account the dimensions of the housing problem. Although the proceedings are mostly private in nature, there is also a great number of evictions that have been taken to court by the Government of the CABA and by the National Institution for the Administration of the Properties of the State.

None of the three powers

Although so far reference has been made to the Government of the CABA, there is nothing to indicate that the other powers of the State, whether at the level of the CABA or at national level, have behaved differently. It is worth remembering that according to the ICESCR, and the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in questions of economic, social and cultural matters, the three powers of the State are obliged to use all means at their disposal to guarantee these rights.

In the case of the Judiciary, the judges in charge of eviction proceedings only took into account the rights of those who requested the eviction in order to dispose freely of their property, without bearing in mind the social rights of the evicted tenants, or that most of them had no alternative housing. The judges' position may explain why, in general terms, they understood that participation of other institutional actors was unnecessary, whether they were public juvenile defenders, or liaising with other divisions of the Government of the CABA or other jurisdictions involved in the matter.[15] In all, practically the entirety of the judiciary measures were focused on facilitating the eviction of tenants and not to finding answers – whether permanent or transient – to the housing problems of the evicted, or to involve the other two state branches in the sphere of their competencies.

Nor has the legislative branch produced a holistic approach to the problem, and on occasions has exhibited markedly regressive behaviour, e.g., in the framework of the 2001 crisis different changes were made to the eviction procedure, and new legal tools were created that speeded up the eviction process and involved the loss of legal guarantees for the evicted. This power was aimed at accelerating the eviction process in view of the recent increase in value of land in the CABA, with no consideration given to the situation of thousands of families and family groups whose right to adequate housing is not guaranteed, thus aggravating their current problems.

A final word

Instead of leading to the design of increased State intervention to satisfy people's rights, State solutions to the housing crisis seem to have led to the creation of zones more suitable for private investment. Real 'opportunity areas' were created as market incentives, allowing the market to regulate the sector without designing or implementing policies that would intervene in the free-for-all commercial relations that leave out the more disadvantaged sectors.

Instead of 'demercantilizing' or making it the responsibility of the State to provide certain goods and resources normally defined as social rights, or to facilitate access to them to sectors that are unable to satisfy them on the market, the State seems to have gone in the opposite direction. On the one hand the market is considered the central sphere of satisfaction; on the other, for sectors that do not make it to this modality, the logic of the market seems to directly affect their housing situation, with the massive evictions and the direct and indirect obstacles to access to dwellings that it brings about. It is not in the market's nature to provide housing to those who cannot buy it; it is the State's responsibility to broach this problem as public policy. ■

7 According to the National Census of Population, Households and Housing 2001 and the housing situation report 2001, of the total number of household with a housing deficit, 31,587 (29%) live in condemned dwellings; 11,099 (10%) live in dwellings with different levels of precariousness (some of which could be recuperated); and the remaining 65,569 (61%) households live in good quality dwellings although in overcrowded rooms, i.e., more than two persons per room.

8 INDEC (2001). "Total for country per province. Households and Population: total and with Unmet Basic Needs (UBN)". UBN were defined according to the methodology used in "La pobreza en la Argentina" (Serie Estudios INDEC No. 1, Buenos Aires, 1984). UBN households show at least one of the following deprivation indicators: 1. Overcrowding: households with more than three persons per room; 2. Dwelling: households living in inconvenient types of dwellings (rented rooms, precarious dwelling or others, which excludes houses, apartments or shacks); 3. Sanitary conditions: households that have no type of toilet; 4. School attendance: households with school-age children (6 to 12 years old) who do not go to school; 5. Capacity for subsistence: households with four or more members per person holding a job and whose head has not completed third grade in primary school.

9 Total population according to age groups. Censo Nacional 2001, Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

10 Neighbourhood of precarious dwellings, with serious lack of infrastructure.

11 Until that date, the policy of the Government of the CABA had consisted in lodging in hotels – subsidized by the government itself – to people or families in housing emergencies who lived in appalling hygienic and security conditions. Cf. "Programa de Atención en Casos de emergencia Individual o Familiar (ACEIF)", implemented by Ordinance 41.110 of January 1986; and "Programa Integrador para Personas o Grupos Familiares en Situación de Emergencia Habitacional", created by Decreee 607/97 (BOCBA No. 213) and Decree 690/06 (BOCBA No. 2463).

12 "Los desalojos y la emergencia habitacional en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires", report produced by the Social Rights area of the Ombudsman's Office of the CABA. September 2007.

13 *Ibid.*

14 The Ombudsman's Office's report shows that 4,833 eviction procedures were deposited with the National Justice during 2006. In the same year, the Judiciary pronounced 1.976 sentences of eviction.

15 For further information see CELS, Annual Report 2008, Chapter 7, "El acceso a la justicia y el papel de la defensa pública en la promoción de derechos sociales. Una mirada sobre el derecho a la vivienda en la ciudad de Buenos Aires."

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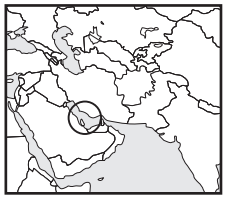
Economic reforms and uncertainty



In spite of remarkable achievements in economic and social development due to the unprecedented level of oil prices, mismanagement of economic and human resources has led to social marginalization and poverty. The projected economic reforms intended to make the kingdom less dependent on oil revenues may also be generating uncertainty among many residents.

Social Watch Bahrain[1]

Since he succeeded his father Sheikh Isa in 1999, Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Alkhalifa has introduced a series of political and economic reforms in response to popular discontent with the prior order. These efforts have ended the era of social unrest that erupted in 1994, sparked by a deep economic crisis that left thousands of Bahrainis either unemployed or without hope.

In January 2001, the new ruler granted amnesty to all political detainees and exiles. In February 2001, a National Charter was passed and approved in a referendum by 98.4% of the population. Municipal and parliamentary elections were held in May and October 2002, respectively, a time of widespread hope that the reconciliation process would lead to improved economic and social life.

Along with political reforms, the new regime introduced initiatives aiming at restructuring the state-controlled economic model that had been in place since the declaration of independence in 1971. Under that model, the Government had taken over all economic and social aspects of development. Whatever its limitations, this system had maintained a minimum level of economic and social stability, enabling a middle class to emerge.

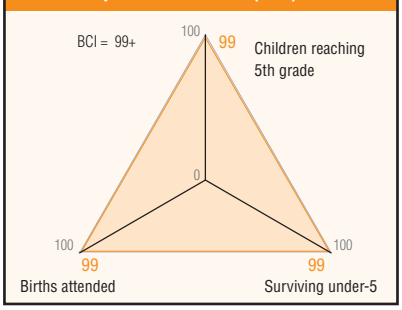
As part of the reform process, the Government asked the American consultant company McKinsey & Co. to present a new model for Bahrain's economy. Based on its research, McKinsey proposed a series of economic, educational and labour market reforms. According to projections, around 10,000 nationals would be entering the labour market each year, starting in 2003; this meant that a total of 100,000 nationals would be seeking jobs during the next decade.

The proposed reform

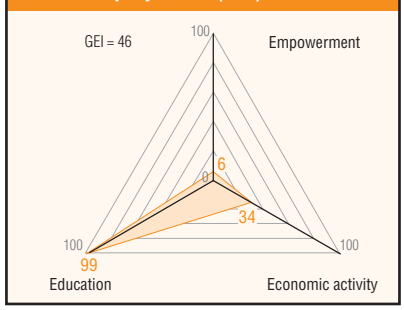
Since the public sector, the largest employer of nationals in the past, has almost reached its growth potential, the private sector – traditionally the employer of low-productivity/low wage foreign workers - will have to absorb a majority of the Bahrainis entering the labour force. Nevertheless, nationals are not attracted to most of the jobs in this sector due to their poor remuneration (low pay, low benefits) and highly stressful physical demands.

1 Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS) email: <bhrs@bhrs.org>; phone: +973-17825425; fax: +973-17825825.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Foreign workers constituted 70% of the private sector workforce in 2002 and now make up 80%.[2] Their percentage is likely to increase even further in the future as the country's projected economic growth requires more foreign workers to fill low skilled jobs in sectors such as construction and manufacturing.

To ensure that Bahrainis became the best hiring option and the private sector the engine for the economy's growth, McKinsey outlined a comprehensive approach, proposing the introduction of six reform policies simultaneously. Four were aimed at reducing the attractiveness of foreign workers to employers.

First, the McKinsey experts proposed imposing a levy on each foreign worker hired and a ceiling restricting the total number of foreigners permitted to work in the country. The goal was to eliminate the cost differential between national and foreign workers and reduce the private sector's dependence on cheap labour while maintaining a stable rate of economic growth.

Second, they recommended establishing a labour fund, outside governmental control, to be utilized in various employment support programmes such as subsidizing the wages of nationals, providing educational and training programmes and training of the unemployed and support for businesses that could contribute significantly to the overall growth of the economy.

Third, they proposed elimination of the "sponsorship" law that tied foreign workers to their sponsor. This made them more attractive to many employers than Bahrainis, who could switch jobs more freely.

2 Bahraini Economic Development Board.

Fourth, they proposed imposing regulations that conformed to ILO standards. This would eliminate harsh labour conditions that foreign workers tolerated but Bahrainis would never accept.

McKinsey proposed two policies that it predicted would spur adaptation to changing market conditions and give the private sector the flexibility to grow and create jobs: 1) elimination of "Bahrainization" targets that legally require economic entities to employ a fixed percentage of Bahrainis, who therefore have no incentive to be productive, and 2) elimination of all minimum wage rules.

Finally, the McKinsey consultants recommended the introduction of clear and predictable termination processes for all employees. This was suggested to help the employees understand their rights and duties and increase their productivity while liberalizing the market and creating a competitive environment.

The path to uncertainty

These looming reforms will lead Bahrain into a disruptive period. Applying labour levies in every part of the economy regardless of its ability to absorb these extra costs may have devastating repercussions. Sectors highly dependent on cheap, low-skilled labour, such as construction and manufacturing, will not be able to reduce the impact of the levies through higher productivity and will pass the extra costs to the consumer. The changes will not help to increase the employment of Bahrainis either, since they are not interested in low-category jobs.

Small and medium enterprises will be the most affected by these levies. Most of them have limited resources to improve productivity, and will have to pass the extra costs to consumers. No longer able to compete against other companies based in countries

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in the region that do not impose such fees, many will go out of business. The price increases posted by the remaining companies will push up the rate of inflation, which was approximately 3.5% at the time McKinsey was conducting its study. Imposing a ceiling on the inflow of foreign workers will increase the cost of labour, sending the inflation rate even higher.

Nationals do not possess many of the requisite labour skills. Restricting the supply of labour is not going to solve that problem. Rather, it would be more efficient and less costly to invest in innovation and technology in certain sectors and making it possible for nationals to learn the skills that any new jobs generated will require.

Diversification

Crown Prince Shaikh Salman Bin Hamad Bin Isa Alkhalifa established the Economic Development Board in April 2000 with a mandate to end the Government's role as the major force in the economy and employer of the vast majority of nationals. The board has been gradually assuming authority; its main aim has been to make the private sector the engine of growth. The economy is to be diversified. Rather than remain a country relying heavily on exports of oil and its derivatives, the goal is to create an economy capable of attracting investments from abroad, primarily in the following industries:

- Manufacturing
- Tourism
- Telecommunications
- Finance
- Trade and Services

This second aspect of the reform programme, economic restructuring, is based on selective initiatives with uncertain outcomes. They require a combination of reorganization and privatization. We will elaborate on this process in next year's report.

Social network institutions

Since independence, and continuing to date, one of the hallmarks of Bahraini social development has been the social support provided by a variety of bodies, involving several governmental and civil institutions. The largest outlays have come from the Ministry of Social Development, which gives financial aid to thousands of Bahraini families and some non-governmental charity societies. In addition, dozens of non-governmental charity funds provide support to local communities. Their activities, however, are religiously driven; their aid plays a very negative role, creating social divisions among the Bahrainis.

Among the social reforms introduced by the King was the recent establishment of the Royal Charity Association (RCA), headed by one of his younger sons. Through financing diverse projects, the RCA has played a positive role in ameliorating the living conditions of numerous Bahraini families.

Wealth and mismanagement

There is no doubt that Bahrain has achieved remarkable successes in economic and social development over the past five years, due in large part to oil prices that have reached levels unprecedented since the second oil shock in 1979. Public spending has increased by 54.8% in five years (2001-2005) from BHD 832.8 million (USD 2,214.9 million) to BHD 1,289.2 million (USD 3,428.7 million), thanks to the efforts of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Nevertheless, the level of poverty and social marginalization does not reflect the wealth accumulated in the last four years. This disparity can only be attributed to mismanagement of economic and human resources. ■

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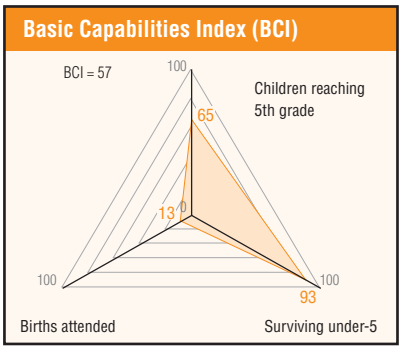
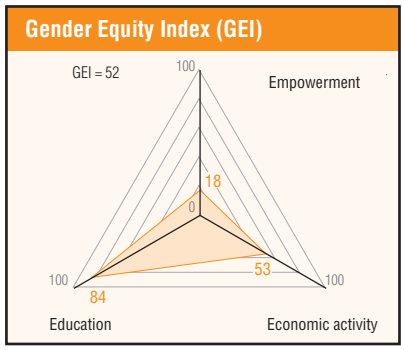
BANGLADESH

Inequality on the rise

Economic globalization is severely damaging economic and social rights. GDP growth has been accompanied by increasing inequality, mounting food insecurity and constraints on "positive" human rights (as defined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). Trade liberalization has provoked a decline in agriculture as well as in food security.

Unnayan Shamannay
Taifur Rahman





Accelerating economic growth has been touted as a major benefit of globalization in Bangladesh. However, this increase has been accompanied by sharply widening inequality. For a majority of the population, the advantages of a higher gross domestic product (GDP) have been hard to discern. The rate of poverty reduction has been slower than the population growth rate, indicating that the absolute number of poor people has been rising.

These trends have a direct impact on human rights, particularly the "positive" ones enumerated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICESCR does not condemn countries where the poor lack many of these positive rights, but it does require that every State use "all appropriate means" (including international cooperation) "to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively [their] full realization". In a country where the absolute number of poor people is increasing, the State is not respecting their rights or the ICESCR.

While the GDP has been climbing at a healthy rate since the early 1990s (an average of 5% annually), most of this new wealth has flowed to those who need it the least (Osmani 2004). The gap between rich and poor has widened considerably, as shown in Chart 1. The share of the bottom 5% households in the national income plunged from 1.03% to 0.77%, while the share of the top 5% soared from 18.85% to 26.93%. This growing imbalance is reflected in the rising Gini coefficient, the measure of inequality used worldwide, which jumped from 0.39 to 0.47.

Opening up the economy

After gaining its independence from Pakistan, Bangladesh, like many other developing countries in that era, was strongly influenced by the political and economic philosophy of the Socialist Bloc. The State quickly nationalized 92% of total fixed assets, which had been abandoned by Pakistani entrepreneurs (Rahman 1994). For many years, domestic industries were protected by selectively high tariffs, which were also a major source of State revenue (CPD 1997). In 1978 the country had 36 different rates, ranging from 0% to 400%.

During the early 1990s, the State executed a 180-degree turn. Reforms in the financial sector were among the most rapid in the world. The Trade and Industrial Policy Reform programme simplified tariffs, phased out of quantitative restrictions on imports, and slashed the nominal rates of protection (Rahman 2008).

The pace of liberalization has not let up. Since the mid-1980s successive governments, supported by the World Bank, have steadily reduced the number of products subject to quantitative restrictions, from 574 in 1985-1986 to 124 in 1998-1999. The average tariff dropped from 89% in 1990-1991 to 28% in 1998-1999, and the maximum rate was slashed from 350% in 1993 to 32.5% in 2003. During the same period, the number of tariff rates dropped from 8 to 5 (Rahman 2008).

Radical as these changes are, the World Bank complains they are insufficient: "While trade liberalization occurred in fits and starts in Bangladesh, stronger and more decisive commitment to trade liberalization was seen in the majority of the rest of the world. As a result, Bangladesh lags behind on most measures of trade openness. Even after the reduction in nominal protection in the FY07 budget, Bangladesh has the highest level of trade protection in the region, which itself is the most trade restrictive region in the world." (World Bank 2007).

Other critics think the country's high-speed demolition of barriers has been a mistake. They point to industries that have been destroyed or are on the verge of destruction as their protection has disappeared. The jute industry once provided most of the world's jute exports. It is virtually gone. Although this collapse has generally been blamed on poor management, the industry's sudden exposure to international competition without much preparation certainly played a role. The sugarcane industry is suffering a similar fate, due to competition from neighbouring countries that provide more support. Some of the tottering industries had huge potential. Poultry, for example, was booming, but has been recently crippled by a series of crises, including avian flu and a sharp rise in the price of feed (Rahman 2008). The blows to these and other agricultural industries have contributed to growing inequality in rural areas (Rahman 2007).

Liberalization of the agricultural sector and growing food insecurity

As a founding member of the World Trade Organization, Bangladesh has been obligated to agricultural protection. Historically, the agricultural sector was sheltered in both developed and developing economies. Bangladesh was no exception; the barriers to competition were even higher than in other sectors. Much of this protection has been whittled away since the early 1980s by market reform and trade liberalization. However few of the promised benefits have materialized. For example, yield per hectare remains lower than in other Asian countries with comparable conditions. In 2001, average rice paddy production per hectare was 6,062 kg in China, 4,515 kg in Indonesia, 3,129 kg in Malaysia, 2,856 kg in the Philippines, 2,811 kg in India and 2,792 kg in Bangladesh (FAO 2001).

Weakness in agriculture has major repercussions for the population. It remains the most important sector of the national economy, responsible for 21% of the GDP; 77% of the population live in rural areas; 63% of the labour force are employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (BBS 2007).

Trade liberalization has hit agriculture indirectly as well as directly. Sugar imports destabilize domestic

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CHART 1. Trends in household income distribution

Income group	Proportion of per capita income (all income groups = 100)			
	1991-1992	1995-1996	2000	2005
Bottom 5%	1.03	0.88	0.93	0.77
Top 5%	18.85	23.62	28.34	26.93
Gini Coefficient	**0.39**	**0.43**	**0.45**	**0.47**

Source: Zaman (2006)

sugarcane prices. Growing imports of fertilizer and seeds expose farmers to the vagaries of the marketplace, such as sharp increases in fertilizer prices and unavailability of seeds, at the same time that they have contributed to increasing the agricultural production of major crops, particularly rice.

Overall, liberalization has resulted in a significant decline in food security. Succumbing to pressure from donors, who insisted that in a globalized economy any shortage of food grains could be made up on the international market, Bangladesh ended its policy of building up large stockpiles. This year the bill came due. Floods and cyclones caused significant crop losses and Bangladesh had to buy rice on the international market at a time when supplies were down and prices had soared. ■

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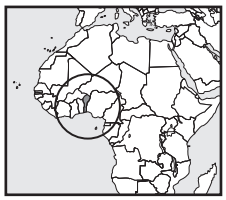
BENIN

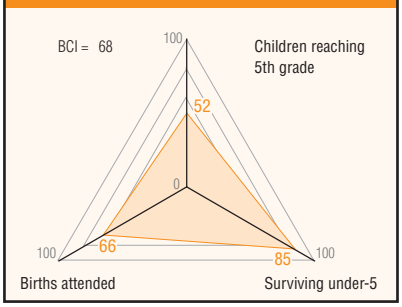
Fulfilment of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



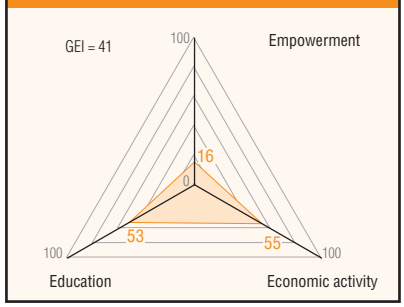
The good will shown by the State in recognizing economic, social and cultural rights has not been translated into specific actions producing tangible results. Revising the Constitution is essential to guaranteeing that each Beninese can enjoy the rights that it enumerates. In addition, strengthening the North-South relationship would enable the country to obtain the transfer of technologies and resources that is necessary for development.

Social Watch Benin

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Until now, the development policies based on the strategic development orientation of the 2006-2011 Government, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have had two primary objectives. One has been to improve the living conditions of the population. The other has been to create durable and decent job opportunities by establishing effective links between economic policies, economic performance, and the use of local resources that will improve income distribution, and at the same time have a significant social impact.

Based on the past 18 years of experience, an ad hoc committee set up by the President of the Republic on 20 February 2008, will produce a systematic study of the way the present Constitution operates. The committee will consult all sectors of Beninese society before writing a new draft. Civil society, which plays a very important role in the protection, defence and promotion of economic and social rights, must sift through the text of the Constitution to see that it is consistent with these rights. This process will also be informed by several conventions developed by international and regional bodies to implement the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that Benin has ratified.

This report evaluates the implementation of some of the articles of the ICESCR, focusing on the last few years.

The right of the peoples to determine their own lives

The decentralization of government begun in 2003 has given territorial communities managerial and administrative autonomy to define their local priorities and the means necessary to respond to them. However the State has yet to give them the capacity and financial resources to implement their plans. Despite its limited staff, the State retains centralized control over many of the activities already ceded to the communes. Consequently, in 2007 there was no public development aid, nor were national resources assigned for investment.

Pressed by civil society organizations, the Government was compelled to increase its financial support of the so-called intercommunal solidarity funds and channel various subsidies allocated to local communities through the 77 communes. This funding increased has from XOF 675 million (USD 1.6 million) in 2003, XOF 2 billion (USD 4.9 million) in 2008. However, the needs of the communes remain far from satisfied.

Article 2 of the Covenant: no discrimination

Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees foreigners and residents the same rights and freedoms as nationals. However, even though native peoples coexist without apparent problems throughout the country, a strong tendency towards regionalism is evident in elections. Voters show preference for "sons of the land". A similar phenomenon occurs in government appointments, where religion and political affiliation often take precedence over technical competence. At times tension has surfaced between followers of monotheistic religions and adherents of traditional religions.

Discrimination also occurs in the area of rights that the ICESCR recognizes for men and women. In the vast informal sector – a main pillar of the national economy – women form a majority and have no social protection. Their contribution is neither recognized nor valued. The situation is similar in the agricultural sector, where women have little access to either produce or the means of production, nor to credit, although they contribute their time and physical labour.

At the social level, despite the introduction of an Individual and Family Code in 2004, role stereotyping remains common, reflecting the mentality predominant among women as well as men in a patriarchal setting. This phenomenon is evident in the relatively low level of participation of women in public life and national politics: of the 26 Government ministers, 6 are women; of the 83 parliamentary representatives, 9 are women; of the 6 mayors, 2 are women.

Protection and help provided to the family

The State has passed laws providing protection for the family, childhood, girls, people with HIV/AIDS and widows and widowers. However it does not have the resources necessary to implement these laws. Campaigns by NGOs and religious groups to win adherence to them have had limited impact.

Female circumcision, ritual infanticide based on superstition and the trafficking of children still occur in many regions. With the sole exception of a vaccination campaign against polio, programmes for the early detection of handicapped children have been non-existent. The 2007 budget for the education, training and development of these children is XOF 4,095.65 million (USD 10 million), that is, 0.70% of the state budget. For 2008, it is estimated that the allocation will be XOF 4,193.34 million (USD 10.28 million), 0.62% of the state budget.

The right to a satisfactory standard of living

Poverty. In 2006 households headed by men were poorer on average than households headed by women. The non-monetary poverty index is 42.3% for men and 34.6% for women. Overall, 1.33 times as many poor people live in households headed by men as live in those headed by women. Despite Government measures to combat corruption, absenteeism and embezzlement, the cost of living soared in 2007 due to the jump in the international oil prices and increases in the cost of basic consumer products.

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As a result, living conditions have deteriorated significantly.

Housing. While 33.9% of the population live in comfortable homes, the homes of 24.6% are inadequate. Housing policies are not applied properly. Real estate development focuses on the wealthy.

Electricity. According to the Third Census of Population and Housing 2002, one household in five (22.4%) has access to a public source of electricity. The remaining 77% illuminate their homes with kerosene lamps – 94.9% use them in rural areas, whereas nearly half (46.8%) of urban households have electricity. Frequent power cuts disrupt public administration activities, but have an even greater impact on the general population. Poor organization of the distribution and sale of kerosene hits the more destitute sectors hardest.

Fresh water. Water is more accessible, thanks to public works projects from 2003 to 2005, however desertification is increasing steadily in rural areas. By 2005, 41% of the country was desert.

Food. Inadequate nourishment is common in rural areas, particularly among the elderly, children and women. The young of both sexes have to abandon their homes to search for employment in the towns. Agriculture, which employs around 70% of the population, is not a priority investment for the State, which is only interested in profitable products, such as cotton and palm oil. Agricultural policies are not in harmony with the curriculum in educational institutions. The high cost of living in relation to salaries, especially in the large cities, impedes access to good food. The guaranteed minimum professional salary is, officially, XOF 27,500 (USD 67) – less than XOF 1,000 per day. Workers are compelled to take informal jobs to meet basic needs.

The right to enjoy better physical and mental health

Each year, the population suffers from a variety of tropical illnesses. The most common are malaria (36% of all medical consultations), followed by gastrointestinal diseases (7%). Both most frequently afflict children under the age of five.

The State has implemented the following measures to reduce mortality:

- Launching campaigns to distribute mosquito nets with repellent to women who seek prenatal care.
- Distributing mosquito nets with repellent to vulnerable populations and access to inexpensive nets at health centres and pharmacies.
- Launching campaigns to eliminate mosquitoes and larval habitats.
- Constructing and equipping health centres.
- Making generic medicines available at a minimal cost in pharmacies.

On the other hand, although health personnel follow the standards of the World Health Organization, their working conditions leave much to be desired. This has a negative influence on the quality of patient admissions and treatment at medical facilities. Strikes to demand better working conditions bring hospital activities to a complete halt.

The right to education

The educational system is comprised of a literacy programme, general schooling (pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education), technical instruction and professional training. A ministry was created for the literacy programme. One of its current priorities is promotion of local languages.

Pre-school education is more widespread in urban centres and other highly populated areas. Access to primary education is more or less universal in urban zones; in rural areas, 86% of boys but only 64% of girls have access to schools. The overall primary school graduation rate is 70% for boys and 47% for girls; in rural areas the rates are 39% for boys and 14% for girls.

The education system suffers from poor working and living conditions for the teaching staff, lack of qualified teaching staff, deterioration in the quality of teaching and student discipline, a mismatch between the system and the needs of the labour market, a lack of infrastructure and equipment, absence of laws regulating education, constant strikes and general malaise.

Compulsory and free primary education

The current Constitution does not guarantee compulsory primary education. At this point in the country's development, much needs to be done to provide for universal, compulsory preschool and primary school. The institution of free preschool and primary education by the President of the Republic for the school year 2006-2007 created major disruption. Schools were apprehensive that they would not receive subsidies in time to prepare and confronted major challenges in logistics and mobilizing the necessary human resources.

Some actions of civil society

Benin civil society contributes a great deal towards the implementation of the ICESCR by improving living conditions. It has encouraged, at the global level:

- Dissemination of the final recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child by the NGO Solidarity for Children in Africa and the World (ESAM).
- Citizen oversight of government actions through monitoring of MDG implementation and examination of the State budget by Social Watch Benin.
- Re-establishment of workshops and training on topics such as economic, social and cultural rights by the Research and Action Group for the Promotion of Agriculture and Development (GRAPAD).
- A campaign by the Platform of Civil Society Actors of Benin (PASCIB) to win Government approval of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union.
- Economic, judicial and political advocacy for women, especially to increase their participation in decision-making bodies and appointment to highly responsible positions, by networks such as the Integration Network of Women in NGOs and African Associations (RIFONGA), Social Watch Benin and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF). ■

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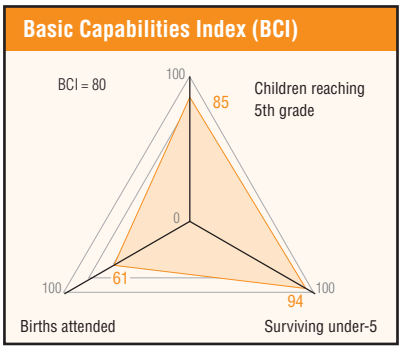
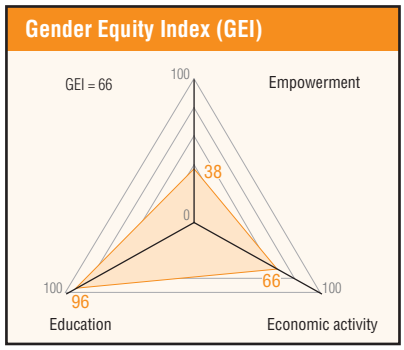
BOLIVIA

"The laboratory mouse of international institutions"

This is a country with a long history of signing international agreements that have been presented as solutions to the economic and social crisis that has devastated much of the developing world. Unfortunately, the policies it has introduced to implement these agreements efforts have not led to the structural changes necessary to improve living conditions for the impoverished majority.

CEDLA
Javier Gómez





In March 2005, ministers from developed countries gathered with directors and officials from aid organizations to reaffirm the commitment they had made in Rome in 2003 to harmonize and align their development aid. The delegates established five principles for assistance: ownership, alignment, harmonization, management geared to results and mutual responsibility.

This initiative is part of a broader strategy promoted by international lending institutions and creditor nations in response to widespread discontent with policies they had promoted in indebted countries and the economic crisis these countries are mired in. Two earlier iterations – the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief – have produced very controversial results in the countries that have 'benefited' from them. Rather than bring the prosperity the creditors had promised, the policies they imposed have renewed the cycle of debt and dependency. Bolivia, a country that implemented these policies and was bailed out, is an extreme case, but a similar process has unfolded in many other developing countries – Latin American and Caribbean countries in particular.

Brief overview of aid to developing countries

In the 1970s, private money poured into developing countries (Chart 1) far faster than foreign government and institutional lending.[1] Most of the private loans went to oil exporting countries. The gap between net private and official flows narrowed during the global recession and external debt crisis of the 1980s. In the 1990s the net official flow dwindled once again while net private funding flooded in, averaging USD 125 billion a year between 1990 and 1994. This was 40% faster than the official flow and 220% more than the net private money that streamed in annually during the last five years of the 1980s.

Between 2000 and 2005, the disparity yawned larger than ever. On average, net private flow reached almost USD 297 billion per year, around ten times greater that the net official flow during the same period.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Net private and official flows to Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) followed a similar pattern, with some differences: structural reforms in LAC countries that reduced barriers to free flow of goods, services and financial transactions and privatized state companies, attracted heavy foreign direct investment. This accounted for much of the net private capital coming in.[2]

In contrast, capital flows from governments and international institutions tailed off during the same years, from an average of USD 4 billion annually in the early 1990s to little more than USD 1.5 billion between 2000 and 2005. This was far less than the sums they pumped into other developing countries, particularly in Africa. In 2004 and 2005 net official flows were actually negative (USD -5.5 billion and USD -33.3 billion, respectively) – which meant their financial contribution to development in the LAC countries was negative as well.

These patterns suggest two issues in Official Development Assistance (ODA) that merit debate and reflection. First, if its purpose is to improve living conditions in developing countries, the harmonization and alignment initiative is attempting to level a mountain by removing a few stones. It does nothing to regulate private capital, which weakens economies more than any other factor. Whether invested in the financial, commercial or industrial sectors, it takes advantage of the poverty of developing countries to extract their economic surplus and at the same time makes them vulnerable to external shocks.

Secondly, if we consider the legitimacy crisis enveloping institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and the liquidity squeeze among multilateral banking and bilateral organizations, the major role these lenders have been awarded by the Declaration of Paris seems questionable at best.

In the current environment, alignment of external resources does not seem so necessary. LAC countries would benefit far more from national strategies that help them manage resources more efficiently than from policies that encourage them to increase their debt.

The case of Bolivia

Bolivia has a long history of following alignment and ownership policies that have not included the kind of structural changes necessary to improve the living conditions of the overwhelming majority of its population.

In response to the political, economic and social crisis of the 1980s, the State introduced a variety of economic initiatives. To deal with a crushing foreign debt, it suspended payments to 127 creditor banks and asked the IMF for a standby agreement that would provide access to new external funding to support stabilization policies, primarily multilateral and bilateral financing.[3] The IMF laid down a series of conditions that would have to be met before international organizations opened their check books. Bolivia agreed to them.

1 This considers the debt flow of private creditors, Foreign Direct Investment and the stock investment portfolio, all of them in net values.

2 Figures from *Global Development Finance 2006* show that in the 1980s on average Foreign Direct Investment to LAC was USD 6 billion, while in the 1990s and early years of the 21st century, it was USD 38 billion and USD 60 million respectively (all net figures).

3 *La Intencionalidad del Ajuste en Bolivia*, CEDLA, 1992.

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CHART 1. Net external financing. Annual average during the period, USD billions

	Towards developing countries						
	1970-1974	1975-1979	1980-1984	1985-1989	1990-1994	1998-2000	2000-2005e
Net private flow	11.98	44.97	54.02	38.97	124.81	195.1	296.98
Net official flow	7.67	17.72	31.59	33.6	51.67	42.2	25.44
	Towards Latin America and the Caribbean						
Net private flow	-	-	-	-	49.98	93.3	58.26
Net official flow	-	-	-	-	4.05	3.3	1.66

Source: Based on information produced by the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the *Global Development Finance 2006* (GDF) Report, World Bank.
Note: The data registered between 1970 and 1974 is by SELA; figures between 1998 and 2005 are from the GDF Report.

The standby agreement and others that complemented it could be considered the country's first alignment experience, since they helped establish parameters for multilateral and bilateral financing. The State agreed that the new capital would be spent primarily to support the stabilization policies and secondarily to promote structural reforms. One example was the introduction of macroeconomic policies designed to eliminate the balance of payments deficit. Toward the end of 1986, Bolivia signed a Structural Adjustment Facility, followed a few months later by an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility. These agreements gave Bolivia access to credits for investments in road construction, telecommunications, trains and electric energy, as well as for financial sector reforms.[4]

These measures and similar ones in other developing countries failed to alleviate the profound social crisis. In response, the wealthy nations developed the Structural Adjustment and Poverty Alleviation Facility of 1999, once again billed as a way for developing countries to generate sustained economic growth and reduce poverty. Other initiatives have followed, including the Millennium Summit, which established the Millennium Development Goals, the High Level Forum on Harmonization in Rome and the Paris High Level Forum.

Bolivia has subscribed to all of them. By now it has vast experience in policies meant to harmonize aid for development. As an official of the Sub-Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing put it, Bolivia is the "laboratory mouse of international institutions that try out new modalities for combating poverty".[5] So far, none of the modalities have achieved their goal. Poverty remains pervasive. ■

4 *Ibid.*

5 De Grave, Jennie (2007). *Estado Boliviano y cooperación internacional: malestar, responsabilidades, aperturas.* Available from: <www.revistadesarrollohumano.org/noticias-0150.asp>.

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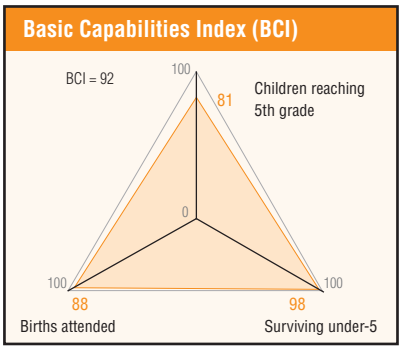
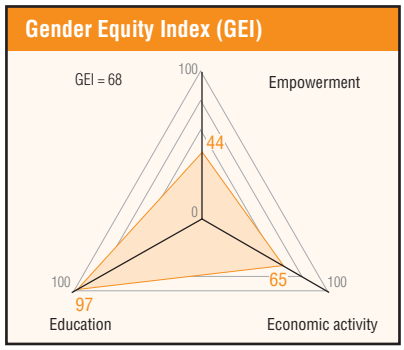
BRAZIL

Public budget: financial expenditures devour rights

To pay off debt, the Government has cut funding for policies that ensure rights. In the last four years, debt interest and amortization payments have been double the total expenditures for social work, health, jobs, education and culture, citizen rights, housing, sanitation, environmental management, agricultural organization, sports and entertainment. Whether through direct levies or indirect taxes added to the price of goods, the beneficiaries of social expenditures are paying the cost themselves.

Social Watch Brazil[1]
Evilásio Salvador
Iara Pietricovsky





The public budget: fulfilment of ESCE rights

In 1992 Brazil ratified the UN International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the OAS American Convention on Human Rights. It has also ratified various other international agreements on the subject. Article 2 of the ICESCR affirms that nation states should spend the highest possible amount of (human and financial) resources available to realize the rights stipulated in the covenant, in progressive stages and without regression. At the national level, the 1998 Federal Constitution includes a set of principles and rules that incorporate the rights enumerated in the international treaties ratified by Brazil.

Implementing the economic, social, cultural and environmental (ESCE) rights enumerated in the various documents requires resources, as well as legal frameworks, laws, functioning institutions and a judiciary. This means the public budget is a privileged instrument for ensuring these rights. Also, rights have a 'cost'. Making them a reality – respecting their essential characteristics of universality, indivisibility and interdependence – requires that the State make the right political and economic decisions regarding the production and distribution of goods and services.

Therefore, scrutiny of the public budget must go beyond looking at how equitably it distributes available resources to include assessing how effectively planning for resource accumulation and policy implementation promotes human rights. A wide range of services, such as security, health and social security, depend to a great extent on State policies. If tax revenue is insufficient it is likely that these essential services will not be adequate to meet needs, or that they will be financed through printing money or increasing the public debt.

From a political perspective, the budget and the public debt can be seen as a focal point of dispute or struggle (or cooperation) among different interests that gravitate around the political system.

We have studied the budget process for the period 2004-2007,[2] bearing in mind that the public budget should provide enough resources to promote progressive consolidation of rights. This will ensure that Brazil complies with the international treaties that it has signed and, most importantly, guarantees the rights codified in the Constitution and in legislation.

Ignored ESCE rights

For this study, budget functions[3] were selected from areas where expenses are directly related to implementing ESCE rights.[4] Total expenditures for these functions rose 17.26%, after inflation during the period examined. This was a smaller increase than the 25.26% recorded for the entire budget, which suggests that other expenses were given priority over the implementation of ESCE rights.

Total budgetary expenses related to ESCE rights made up 44.7% of the combined fiscal and social security budgets in 2004. By 2007 they were down to 41.9% of the total. Social security benefits for the private and public sectors accounted for 67% of budget expenditures related to ESCE rights. If this spending is subtracted, expenditures for rights totalled only 14.25% of the budget. As a proportion of GDP, ESCE rights expenditures were 12.52% in 2004 and 12.65% in 2007. Excluding social welfare, they represented only 4.31% of GDP in 2007. This indicates that ESCE rights have not been a high priority in the budget.

Social security challenges

Social security is by far the largest expense related to implementing ESCE rights. The General Social Security System pays out benefits to 21 million people for retirement, pensions and subsidies. However citizens can only obtain social security by contributing to the fund directly, which ties the system closely to the formal labour market. Primarily for this reason, in 2005 more than half (52.4%) of the economically active population made no contribution to social security. This poses huge challenges to the universalization of social security rights.[5] It is worth noting that 67% of social security funding in the 2007 budget came from direct contributions by employees, employers and state workers. Thus taxes (fiscal revenues) play a relatively small role in financing social security (Salvador, 2007).

Low health expenditures

Health expenditures are the second largest budget item related to ESCE rights. In spite of an increase of 12.9% in real terms,[6] funding dropped from 1.7%

1 Evilásio Salvador is an economist and fiscal and budget advisor at the Instituto de Estudios Socioeconómicos (INESC); Iara Pietricovsky is INESC's Co-director. The authors are grateful to Alexandre Ciconello, human rights advisor at INESC, for his invaluable collaboration in the writing of this report.

2 This period coincides with the latest Pluriannual Plan (PPA 2004-2007). The data was taken from Siga Brasil database, available at: <www.senado.gov.br>.

3 A function is the classification of budget expenses whose objective is to register their allocation. Function can be defined as the highest level of grouping of the diverse areas of action in the public sector. It is related with the institutional mission, mainly of the executing body, such as, culture, education, health or defence. The specification of the functions is fixed, at the national level, by Resolution MPOG 42, of 14 April 1999.

4 Social welfare, health, work, education, culture, citizen rights, housing, special planning, sanitation, environmental management, agrarian organization, sports and entertainment.

5 Data from the latest Household National Survey (PNAD 2006, IBGE).

6 General Price Index-Internal Supply.

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of GDP in 2004 to 1.57% in 2007. The level of funding for health is clearly insufficient to achieve the mission set out in the 1998 Constitution: to set up a universal, effective and free public health system.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), total Brazilian public expenditures on health, including the budgets of states and municipalities, come to only 3.45% of GDP. The situation is even worse than this indicates, since 24% of the population use private health coverage and insurance. When combined with family spending on medicines, expenditures on health total 4.1% of GDP (IPEA, 2007).

Decreasing social functions

The real increase of 48.53% in social security funding from the 2005 to 2007 budget was due to programmes involving income transfers, such as *Bolsa Família* (Family Help), as well as an increase in the number of people who receive the Continuous Income Benefit[7] due to a reduction in the age at which people qualify[8] and a real increase in the minimum wage. At the same time, funding for universities went down.

Funding for other programmes that guarantee rights also declined.[9] For example in 2007, 82% of budget allocations were disbursed during the same year. However the rate was far lower in categories such as Urban Planning (15%), Housing (0.037%) and Sanitation (2.24%). Other areas with low levels of actual spending included Environmental Management (35.9%), Citizen Rights (49.3%), Culture (43.2%) and Agrarian Organization (67.1%). On the other hand, the disbursement rate is high in sectors where spending is compulsory under the Constitution or through legislation, such as Social Security, Social Welfare, Health, Education and Labour.

While budgetary expenses in areas that ensure the material conditions essential to ESCE rights were being reduced, Brazil was paying more than BRL 795 billion (USD 408.74 billion) in interest, surcharges and amortization on the debt in the 2004-2007 period. These resources were transferred to the financial sector of the economy, primarily benefiting 20 thousand individuals living on income from property or investments. (Pochmann *et al.*, 2004).

The lion's share of finances

Debt payments, were 26.84% of the budgets for social and fiscal security in 2004 and climbed to 30.71% in 2007. With interest and amortization, in the four years of the 2004-2007 Pluriannual Plan, they totalled twice as much as funding related to ESCE rights.

To finance this massive transfer of wealth to the owners of the financial surplus, mainly in the banking sector, the Government had to turn over a considerable portion of the revenues it collected while starving public programmes that ensured rights.

One of the mechanisms that permitted this transfer is the Release of Federal Government Entitlements (DRU), which allows the Government to allocate 20% of all taxes and social contributions collected "freely" within the budget. The social policies suffering most from this diversion have been Social Security and Education. For example, in 2006, data from the Secretariat of the National Treasury showed that total income transfers from Social Security via the DRU reached BRL 33.8 billion (USD 15.8 billion); in 2007 the Ministry of Education lost BRL 7.1 billion (USD 4 billion). These were funds collected for social welfare, social security and health programmes and diverted to the fiscal budget, mainly to make up the primary surplus.

The poorest pay the bill

Another factor affecting social justice is the source of the taxes, tariffs, contributions, and other revenues used to pay for public expenses. Although Brazil is among the ten richest economies in the world,[10] it has one of the highest income disparities on the planet. This skewed distribution of income helps perpetuate inequality among social classes. In 2000, salaries accounted for 32.1% of GDP; in 2005 that proportion was down to 31.7%. In the same period, earnings from gross operational surplus rose from 34% to 35.2% of GDP.

Rather than mitigate this concentration of wealth, the tax system reinforces it, aggravating the fiscal burden of the poor and alleviating that of the rich.

Low income families are the most heavily burdened by the tax structure as their consumer expenses are proportionately higher. It has been estimated that families with incomes of up to two minimum salaries have an indirect tax burden equal to 46% of their earnings, while families with an income equal to 30 minimum salaries pay only 16% of their income in indirect taxes (Zockun, 2005).

Between these indirect taxes, direct contributions to the social security system required for eligibility to its benefits and the diversion of some of that money to other purposes, the people who finance the programmes that promote ESCE rights are the beneficiaries themselves. ■

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Zockun, M. (Coord.) (2005). *Simplificando o Brasil: propostas de reforma na relação econômica do governo com o setor privado.* São Paulo: FIPE.

7 The Continued Income Benefit, which substituted the old Monthly Income For Life, guaranteed by the Social Welfare Organic Law, aims at ensuring an income equivalent to a minimum salary to all citizens who through old age or disability cannot support themselves. The benefit is extended to old persons and persons with disabilities for leading an independent life, whose per capita monthly family income is below a quarter of the minimum salary, regardless of their contribution towards social security.

8 The first age limit for qualifying for the Continued Income Benefit was set at 70 years (1996) and was lowered to 67 years in 1998. With the passing of the Old Age Statute in 2003 the limit was lowered to 65 years.

9 The follow-up of budget execution is carried out by relating disbursed amounts against authorized amounts in the budget. The result shows what proportion of the planned expense became rendered services or acquired goods. This relation shows the level of efficiency of the Government.

10 World Bank. World Development Indicators database. Available at: <siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP_PPP.pdf>.

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BULGARIA

Stagnation of socioeconomic rights

In 2007, the country's first year as a full member of the European Union, the Government failed to present a consistent policy for better protection of citizens' socioeconomic rights, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and improving access to education, employment, health, housing and decent living standards. One immediate result of EU membership has been a growing appetite for "more efficient" ways of absorbing EU structural funds. More positively, EU membership is making the Government more familiar with the concept of Development Cooperation Policy and the population more familiar with the concept of civil action.

The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation in cooperation with the Bulgarian-European Partnership Association

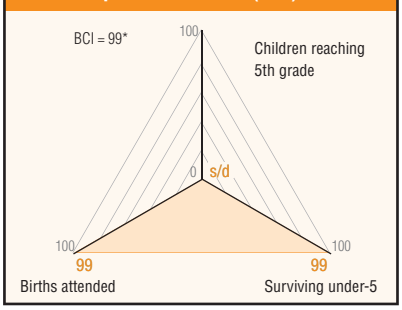
Last year was Bulgaria's first as a full member of the EU. However, as far as the Government was concerned, implementation of the human rights guaranteed in the Constitution and compliance with related international instruments remained minor concerns. In fact, corruption, judicial inefficiency and low administrative capacity continued to have a negative impact on human rights and the mechanisms for implementing them. This has severely restricted the socioeconomic rights of Bulgarians and made raising their income to the level enjoyed by other EU countries more difficult.

In 2007, the Government failed to propose a consistent policy to strengthen protection of citizens' rights, particularly socioeconomic rights such as the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and improving access to education, employment, health, housing and decent living standards. It showed far greater interest in absorbing EU structural funds. Similarly, the fall 2007 local elections became a fierce battle for access to these funds; the level of corruption they generated was unprecedented. The massive vote-buying constituted a serious violation of human rights, according to the 2007 US State Department "Human Rights Report" for Bulgaria; about EUR 100,000 was distributed, according to the Centre for the Study of Democracy. The money came from business circles and organized crime elements seeking access to European funds.

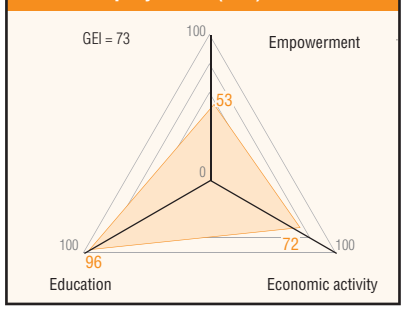
When citizens make legitimate claims for rights, the Government reacts with complacency and even dismissal, based on the premise that Bulgaria is now in the EU, has passed major laws for protecting human rights and has more or less harmonized its legislation with EU standards. However, the Government has no interest in putting those laws into practice and no real concern that Bulgarians continue to be at the bottom of EU living standards. According to EUROSTAT 2008, the per capita GDP in Bulgaria is the lowest in the EU – considerably below that of other East European members: EUR 2,764, compared to EUR 3,667 in Romania, EUR 13,834 in Slovenia, EUR 6,385 in Poland, EUR 9,758 in the Czech Republic, EUR 8,794 in Hungary, EUR 7,082 in Slovakia, EUR 8,208 in Estonia, EUR 6,020 in Lithuania, and EUR 5,642 in Latvia.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The overall positive impact of national human rights institutions – the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, both established in 2004 – cannot compensate for the lack of adequate governmental policies aimed at fulfilling socioeconomic rights. The alarming number of overdue Government reports to the Treaty Bodies that the government had failed to submit by the end of 2007 exemplifies its lack of commitment to complying with internationally recognized standards of human rights. The Government did not present two reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, three reports to the CEDAW Committee, and five reports under the UN Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on time or at all. (It finally presented a consolidated CERD report February 2008.)

The Government's policies regarding the right to education and the right to work, with a focus on ethnic minorities and gender, are indicative of its low level of commitment and respect for human rights.

Education, an overlooked right

Government policies reveal a lack of appreciation of the empowerment that education provides as a basic social and economic right, and its essential role in the realization of other human rights and in protecting citizens from poverty and exploitation. UNESCO Institute for Statistics' *Global Education Digest 2006* noted a shift from public to private financing, and encouragement of schools to rely on their own resources during the transition period. Increasing costs reduced enrolment beyond the fourth year of compulsory education to 87%.[1] As in other countries of the region, compulsory education has been de-universalized. Those with low or no purchasing power could no longer attend. The ultimate result of this reform was the economic exclusion of vulnerable groups with distinctive ethnic characteristics. This systemic problem cannot be remedied through financial incentives such as free textbooks, free meals, etc.

These negative trends have continued over the last two years, with more and more schools closing down and continuing lay-offs. More than 1,500 schools have closed down and more than 13,000 schoolteachers and 8,000 auxiliary personnel have been laid off in the last ten years, according to data from the Trade Union of Teachers.

The lack of effective integration policies for children and students from minorities remains a severe human rights issue. The 2004 Strategy and Action Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), aimed at the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities, and the National Programme for the Development of School Education and Pre-school Upbringing and Preparation (2006-2015) have achieved no positive results. Nor have the MES 2004 National Plan for the integration of children with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases in public education, the work of the Centre for Education and Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities, and the special Consultative Committee – an advisory body to the Ministry, established in May 2006 within the MES.

Trends identified in previous years remain a problem: In 2004, when 95% of girls and 96% of boys of primary education age were enrolled, only 46.2% of Roma children finished primary education. The overall secondary school completion rate was 87% for girls and 90% for boys; for Roma children

1 OECD (2003). *Reviews of National Policies for Education: South East Europe*, Vol. 1, Paris, pp. 176-178.

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the rate was 7.4%. The overall tertiary education enrolment rate was 41%, but only 0.2% for Roma.[2]

Roma women finish secondary education four to five times less frequently than Roma men. Although this gender gap in Roma literacy is still ignored, closing it is essential to poverty eradication and the realization of the human rights of children and women.

These alarming trends reflect the very low percentage of GDP allocated to education: 3.9% in 2007 and a planned 4.22% for 2008. The slight increase is due to a teachers' strike in the fall of 2007, a unique civil action: teachers from all over the country struck for 40 days, demanding better pay and an increase in budget allocations. An additional result was a promised increase in the average teacher salary to up to BGN 650 (about EUR 325), due to start in mid-2008.

Despite its agreement to these increases, the Government, which is not used to citizen pressure, adopted a package of proposals for further reforms in the educational system that will have the effect of penalizing civil action. These measures, in keeping with a progressive adoption of principles of efficiency and competitiveness in this highly sensitive sector, altered the mechanism for financing public education. From 2008 on, the Government budget will distribute all education funding through the municipalities, which will have to decide how to survive within tight financial parameters. Teachers' salaries will depend on the 'efficiency' of their work and on the 'entrepreneurship' of school directors. 'Inefficient' schools will have to close down, and teachers will be even more insecure about their remuneration and overall status.

In this sphere as well the gender implications are being neglected. More than 80% of teachers are women; their marginalization by the State represents a severe case of labour segregation and gender discrimination.

Ineffective policies for guaranteeing the right to work

Programmes and projects implemented over the last 15 years have had very little success in improving the status of the Roma population. The protection and integration of minorities has remained an issue of major concern since Bulgaria joined the EU. According to official statistical data, 87% of Roma households live at or below the poverty threshold of BGN 102 (USD 80) per month (as of 1 January 2009, the poverty line will be increased to BGN 166 -USD 130). Life expectancy for the Roma is five to six years shorter than for the other Bulgarian groups; their child mortality rate is twice the national average.[3] Although the Roma have a settled lifestyle, most do not possess land or housing or have a regular income.

The problems faced by the Roma received more attention from state institutions, political parties, and NGOs during the first year of EU accession. The main criticism of the Government, raised also by the European Commission (EC), has been that the documents and actions it has adopted remain largely on paper, while related programmes and plans lack adequate coordination and finance and a strategic approach. Despite some trends towards better coordination and more comprehensive planning in the last two-three years, the issues of major concern have not changed: the Roma's high rate of unemployment, poverty and deteriorating education and healthcare.

In 2006 the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe expressed concerns about discrimination and exclusion suffered by the Roma in employment.[4] In fact, in regions with a concentrated Roma population, 65% to 75% of adults are still out of work. The rate is 49% for men and 71% for women, reflecting both gender differences in labour market trends and the absence of concrete, gender-sensitive policies.

The low level of education and professional training is the main factor contributing to unemployment and isolation.[5] Unless this situation is ameliorated, the Roma workforce will remain unqualified and without training – that is to say, non-competitive.[6]

This situation reveals the shortcomings of the National Programme for Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma for the period 2005-2015 (aimed mainly at ensuring the right to housing for the Roma population), adopted in March 2006 by the Council of Ministers. Other initiatives for promoting training, job opportunities and entrepreneurship, such as the National Action Plan on the Decade for Roma Inclusion, have achieved no better results.

One of the reasons for the Government's failure in this area, identified in the *State of the World's Minorities 2007* report,[7] was insufficient participation of the Roma in formulating policies that directly affect them. The appointment of 27 experts of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues on minority issues in the regional administrations and the nomination of experts in half of all 264 Bulgarian municipalities[8] have had no visible impact.

Challenges and new trends in the protection of human rights

The 2007 Government budget surplus amounted to 3.8% of GDP and the projected surplus for 2008 is again quite high, at 3%. This tight financial policy was recommended by the EC, which replaced monitoring in previous years by international financial institutions. The EC recommended that Bulgaria put aside any revenues obtained from over-fulfilment of budget forecasts and strict adherence to expenditure ceilings. The EC also urged the Government to resist inflationary pressures by keeping a tight lid on wage increases, especially in the public sector, and increase efficiency in public outlays, mainly through strict programme budgeting, more rigorous administrative oversight and healthcare reform. This means keeping the personal income as low as possible and thus, as the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions declared, ensuring that the absence of "socialization of economic growth" would continue. Public investment in social sectors such as education and health will continue to be well below the rate of 5% to 6% that is required.[9] As a result, progress toward basic human rights will be frozen or be reversed.

A new challenge and positive impetus emerged with full accession to the EU: adoption of the Concept on Development Cooperation Policy in mid-2007.

Given the financial constraints noted above, the planned Official Development Assistance of 0.17% of GDP for 2010 and 0.33% by 2015 seems unrealistic. However, Bulgaria, like the other New Member States, is required to align itself with the EU development policy and the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The main goal of the Bulgarian Development Cooperation Policy will be poverty eradication through good governance, protection of human rights and gender equality. The EU will give priority to the countries of Southeast Europe and the Black Sea region. At the same time, Bulgaria will support the African development initiatives. Priority areas of support will include education, economic, social and health reforms, cultural diversity and tolerance, and preservation of the environment. The Inter-Ministerial Council on International Development Cooperation, created in July 2007, will develop the Development Cooperation Policy and be open to talk to civil society representatives, media representatives, etc.

Another positive outcome of the first year of EU membership was the emergence of public protests. These included strikes by health professionals, public transport drivers, teachers and other workers seeking more just remuneration for their work and actions to protect the environment, especially by environmentalist youth groups. ■

2 Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics and from *Monitoring Education for Roma*, a statistical report for Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe of the Open Society Institute, Education Support Programme, December 2006.

3 Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. "Can a demographic policy be put in place?" in Obektiv, Obektiv Discussion Club,Issue 131, April 2006. Available at: <www.bghelsinki.org/obektiv/2006/131/131-13.pdf>.

4 Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Opinion on Bulgaria, Adopted on 27 May 2004, Strasbourg, 5 April 2006, available online at: <www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/2._monitoring_mechanism/4._opinions_of_the_advisory_committee/1._country_specific_opinions/1._first_cycle/1st_OP_Bulgaria_eng.asp#TopOfPage>.

5 About 70% of Roma have no training and can only engage in the most menial professions. Eighty percent have a fourth-grade or lower educational level and experience difficulty in finding any job, given the enhanced requirements of today's labour market.

6 Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Sofia Regional Bureau (April 2007). "The Roma population in Bulgaria: the new challenges (Analytical report)", Sofia.

7 Minority Rights Group International (2007). *State of the World's Minorities 2007*, pp. 101-102.

8 Data from National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues.

9 Opinion of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions on the Draft Law on the Bulgarian Budget for 2008.

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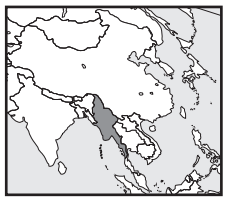
BURMA

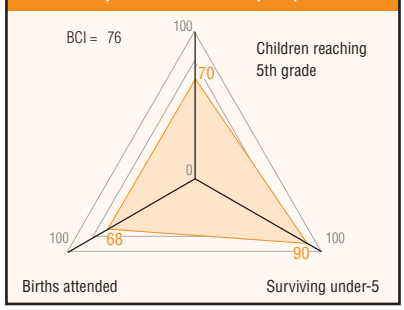
No social, cultural or environmental rights



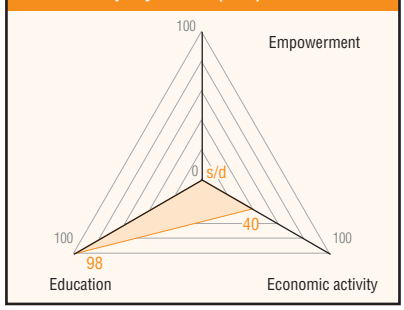
Government policies and increasing globalization have lessened economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and contributed to an increase in poverty. Accountability, rule of law, freedom, transparency and security are all non-existent. The corrupt Government and foreign companies that have invested in the country since the 1988 transition to a market-driven economy have destroyed the livelihoods of much of the population. Burma urgently needs policies that promote the rule of law and good governance, as well as institutional and administrative reform.

Burma Lawyers' Council

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Forty-six years of military rule have ground Burma down into one of the poorest countries in the world. Rather than create an environment in which the people can fully participate in the decisions on how their country is run and enjoy growing prosperity, the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has imposed economic policies that enrich its supporters but impoverish most of the population. According to the UN, around one-third of the country struggles to survive on less than USD 1 a day.[1]

Even the transition to a market economy has been crippled by the absence of the rule of law. Private ownership is never secure. Property is vulnerable to Government expropriation at any time. In a country where land is the primary source of income for more than half the population, illegal confiscations have deprived hundreds of thousands of farmers of their land. The military regime and its military and law enforcement agencies abuse the SPDC's own tax laws, demanding far more money than people legally owe. These excessive costs are passed on to consumers, miring them even deeper in poverty.

Government policies make it almost impossible for the average person to run a profitable business. Burma does not have any anti-trust law preventing monopolies. In many important sectors of the economy, the market is dominated by a small group of SPDC-controlled companies. Travel and commerce have been severely restricted by a series of laws, such as one that prohibits trading from one region to another. Possession of foreign currency is illegal. The Government makes little or no investment in badly needed infrastructure in transportation, electricity, water supply and other vital sectors. Access to communication, such as email and the Internet, is extremely limited. During the September 2007 people's uprising, the government shut down all telecommunication service.

After SPDC mismanagement led to a leap in prices of up to 400% and even 500%, massive peaceful demonstrations broke out in August and September 2007. Rather than accede to popular demands for relief, the armed forces responded with an iron fist, violently dispersing the demonstrators and arresting hundreds of monks and civilians. By January 31, 2008, the regime was holding 1,864 political prisoners, roughly 700 more than in 2006. This total excludes detentions since the crackdown. Political prisoners are subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment; many of them have been denied access to essential medical care.[2]

Under-funding health and education

For many years, the military regime has not revealed its budget allocations. Based on the information it could gather, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates that in 2007 the SPDC devoted 40% of the total budget to the military, while spending a mere 0.4% on health and 0.5% on education.[3] Failure to provide adequate funding for essential services deprives citizens of their rights to education, health care and an adequate standard of living. Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school; half the country's children fail to complete primary school, according to the UN.[4] The poor have no access to hospitals or adequate medical attention. Other basic social services are totally inadequate to meet public needs. Private foundations and religious groups fill some of the gap by providing social centres for the disabled, orphans and the elderly, however their activities are restricted to specific social services and a limited number of people.

Restrictions on international humanitarian work

SPDC regulations require that all forms of foreign aid come through the State. The military regime takes a substantial portion of any aid that enters the country, significantly reducing the amount available for the intended beneficiaries. It regards aid organizations with suspicion, and employs a variety of methods to limit their activities, including travel restrictions; examinations of all Burmese staff hired by international organizations; and administrative harassment, such as delaying or denying passport renewals for UN officials based in the country; and denial or revocation of permission to hold meetings.[5] The Global Fund, an international organization that provided extensive humanitarian assistance in Burma, especially in fighting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, withdrew its assistance in December 1995, when increased travel restrictions became too onerous.[6] Together with inadequate Government funding, these policies constitute a gross violation of the right to health.

Environmental impacts of trade

Burma's foreign trade is largely with neighbouring Thailand, China and India. The primary exports are timber, hydroelectric power, natural gas and other natural resources. Most foreign investors and domestic companies concentrate on exploiting these non-renewable resources rather than investing in services or manufacturing. Their activities wreak environmental destruction and abuse human rights, while depriving many Burmese of their livelihood and creating few jobs. Some examples of the negative impact SPDC policies have on human rights are described below.

Logging and mining

After reaching a ceasefire agreement with armed ethnic Kachin rebels in 1994, the military regime signed

1 <www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76279>

2 <www.aappb.org/release100.html>

3 *Mizzima News*, 1 January 2007.

4 <www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76279>

5 <www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75910>

6 <www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/summary/309/5739/1312a>

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a contract allowing China to s trip the Kachin forests of valuable hardwood and other timber. The resulting deforestation has raised the local temperature significantly and led to a devastating flood in 2004.[7] The Government also sold Chinese companies rights to extract gold along the Irrawaddy, Burma's longest river. Unencumbered by environmental controls, these companies have dumped large amounts of mercury into the river, endangering the health of much of the country's population.[8] Military authorities and mining companies reap the profits from the country's rich gem mines; Burma produces high-quality rubies and more jade than any other country in the world.[9] None of this wealth benefits the people. On the contrary, the mines have become a cesspool of pollution caused by careless use of machines and oil, as well as the scene of flagrant human rights violations, including widespread land confiscation, extortion, forced labour and child labour. HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are spreading rapidly in mining areas. Drug use and addiction are becoming more and more prevalent, spurred by despair and the ready availability of drugs.[10]

Dams and hydropower

Three years ago, the military regime signed a memorandum of understanding with Thailand and China permitting construction of a series of hydropower dams along the Salween River. Since then human rights violations - including forced relocations, rape, forced labour, illegal confiscation of property and murder – have become common in the region, according to Salween Watch. At one site alone, Tasang in Shan state, 300,000 people have been forced to relocate.[11]

The gas pipeline

A trade agreement authorizing construction of a pipeline to export natural gas also spawned appalling human rights abuses. To clear the way for the 260 kilometre-long Yadana natural gas pipeline from the Andaman Sea across Burma to Thailand in the 1990s, the Government relocated villagers and confiscated their land. The project infrastructure was constructed with forced labour. Villagers were compelled to carry arms and supplies for soldiers patrolling the pipeline route, and subjected to extra-judicial killings, torture, rape and extortion.[12]

Since 2000 the Korean company Daewoo has been developing underwater gas deposits in the Bay of Bengal off the coast of the western state of Arakan. The Government has greatly expanded military forces in the area to secure the pipeline, and employed forced labour and land confiscation to construct barracks, outposts and other infrastructure for the armed forces. Extortion, violence and other human rights abuses have increased dramatically.[13]

Farming

In December 2005, Burma signed an agreement with Thailand setting aside 17.5 million acres for the production of sugarcane, palm oil, maize, cassava and rubber to supply Thai factories.[14] To fulfil the agreement, the military regime confiscated land in Shan and Kachin states.[15] With SPDC assistance, the pro-junta Yuzana Company seized over 200,000 acres of land in the Hukawng Valley for the project.[16] Other land confiscations for a variety of purposes are taking place throughout the country, depriving hundreds of thousands of people of their livelihood.

Child labour and child soldiers

Burma ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991. As signatory of the CRC, Burma has a responsibility to respect the rights of children and fulfil its obligations. It doesn't. In fact, it frequently puts children to work on development projects and forces children into the army as well, sometimes through beatings and threats. Human Rights Watch estimates that country has 70,000 child soldiers.[17]

Children have no State protection from exploitation by private enterprises, either. Many work to help their families to survive. Employers frequently hire them to work at teashops, restaurants, construction sites, and as domestic servants, because they will do the job for less than adults. Children who should be in school instead wander through train and bus stations selling water, cigarettes, newspapers and journals.[18]

Gender inequality and women's rights

Not a single woman holds a high Government position. Their absence reflects traditional male prejudices, as well as SPDC policy. Unable to find employment elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of Burmese women seek jobs in border towns, mainly in the sex industry.[19] From there, they are easily trafficked to neighbouring countries as foreign brides or prostitutes.

The military regime signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997, obligating the Government to protect and promote the rights of women and provide them with adequate social security. Even so, the government has not taken any effective action to prevent the abuse and trafficking of women, nor has it done anything to fulfil its CEDAW obligation to establish programs that promote the empowerment of women.

Ethnic minorities and linguistic rights

Burma is a multi-ethnic nation with more than 100 spoken languages. The Government has never provided instruction in ethnic languages, let alone the literature of these minorities. Ethnic groups have kept their literature alive by teaching it in monasteries and churches at their own expense. In some cases, the authorities have banned these efforts at cultural preservation. Some observers and critics label this oppression "Burmanization".

Conclusion

All of the problems cited above reflect the absence of rule of law. Accountable and transparent governance, as well as institutional reform and administrative reform, are all prerequisites for the fulfilment of human rights. The success of a market-based economy requires that the Government cease its unbridled intervention.

Civil society is weak in Burma in comparison to neighbouring countries. The 1988 Law Relating to the Formation of Organizations restricts its growth. As a result, the country has no civil society campaigns to demand that the Government fulfil the needs of the people. International monitoring mechanisms are needed to ensure that people obtain the full benefits of foreign aid, rather than whatever is left over after the Government takes its cut. In addition, the country urgently a comprehensive development program that promotes human resource development, job creation, poverty reduction and social sector development. To be fully effective these policies must be formulated by the entire population, including socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities. ■

7 Global Witness (2005). "A Choice for China: Ending the destruction of Burma's northern frontier forests", available at: <www.globalwitness.org/reports/index.php?section=burma>.

8 Ningrang Tu Nan (n.d.). "Ecological Crisis: A Kachin Experience". KachinNet, available at: <www.kachinnet.com/Article/2007/ECOLOGICAL%20CRISIS%20A%20Kachin%20Experience.htm>.

9 Human Rights Watch (July 2008). "Burma's Gem Trade and Human Rights Abuses". Available at: <hrw.org/english/docs/2008/01/11/burma17729.htm>.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Salween Watch 2007, Volume 1, pp. 1, 3.

12 <www.earthrights.org/site_blurbs/yadana_natural_gas_pipeline_project.html>.

13 "Shwe Gas Report" by All Arakan Students and Youth Congress. July 2006, p. 22.

14 <ethnicvoices.civiblog.org/blog/Thailand>

15 Shan Herald Agency for News, 25 January 2006.

16 Kachin News Group, 17 August 2007.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 Kachin Women Association Thailand (2005). "Driven Away", pp. 18, 20.

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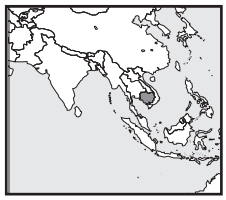
CAMBODIA

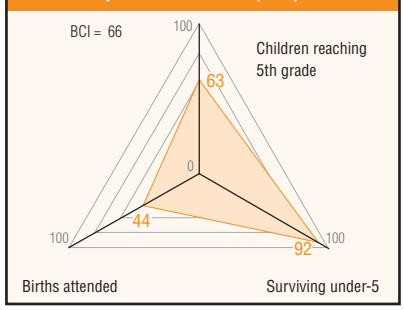
Accountability needed



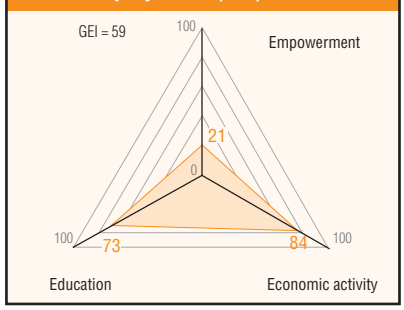
The Government disregards crucial rights, such as education or access to land. The economy still depends heavily on agriculture, but land reforms and investment incentives are provoking a mass exodus from rural areas to the cities and to other countries. Although progress has been made in the protection of women's rights, some indicators are alarmingly worse. Civil society has to play a decisive role in demanding and achieving equity in the distribution of wealth.

SILAKA
Committee to Promote Women in Politics
NGO Committee on CEDAW
NGO Forum on Cambodia
Thida Khus

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Fourteen years after the UN-sponsored national elections, Cambodia has been slowly emerging from over two decades of civil war. The country, now a constitutional monarchy, has seen three national elections since 1993 and in 2002, in a move toward decentralization, a local election to select the 1,624 communes and Sangkat councils. The Cambodian National Assembly recently passed legislation that further decentralizes government administration to the sub-national level of 24 provinces and municipalities.

Along with the Peace Agreement, Cambodia signed all human rights treaties in 1992, and after 1993, accepted the presence of the UN special representative for human rights. But, although the ratification of those treaties obliges the Government to periodically submit reports on the status of human rights, the country has so far submitted just one report on the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2006. The next report is due in 2009.

Cambodia joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1999, committed to eliminate all import duties for other ASEAN countries by 2015 and moved steadily to integrate its economy with that of 10 neighbouring countries. While joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004, it still needs to pass considerable legislations in order to meet WTO requirements.

The pace of reforms

During the last 14 years, Cambodia has relied on international aid for more than half of the national budget. In 2008, total revenue increased over 21.5%, public investment increased 25%, including domestic financing of 23.7% and 26.1% of foreign financing. Foreign donors and the multilateral institutions have been working with Cambodia for several important reforms, one of which is the public financial management, as it is expected to start generating considerable gas and oil revenues, starting in 2011. The country has received debt cancellation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and is working with Russia for the same deal. Negotiations have been underway for some time with the United States, to secure special consideration as a Least Developed Country and to receive an extension of special treatment for garment exports.

ASEAN obligated Cambodia to lift all import taxes by 2011. However, the benefit to the local economy and industries has not yet materialized. Cambodia's trade imbalance with ASEAN countries rose: exports to these countries rose from USD 80 million to USD 100 million a year between 2000 and 2005, while imports from the same countries climbed from USD 500 million to USD 800 million, in the same period.

Since 1993, the country has experienced sustained economic growth, mainly in three areas: garment industry, tourism and construction. The garment industry has grown steadily in the past decade, although the sector has been shaky for the past two years due to competition from Vietnam and China. This industry employs 284,000 people, 80% of them young women, mostly from the rural areas.

Nevertheless, 90% of the rural community, or 80% of the total population, is employed in agriculture, which saw a meagre growth from -2.8% of GDP in 2002 to 1.3% of GDP in 2005. It must be pointed out that most of the country's agricultural products are exported to Vietnam and Thailand, and mostly go unreported. Garments, shoes and textiles have been the main exports, amounting to 91% of GDP in 2005.

Between 1994 and 2008, 2 million youth, according to the Cambodian Economic Institute, sought employment, of which the local economy can only absorb 20%. The majority migrate to other urban areas, and overseas to find employment.

A mass exodus

With the deregulation of investments and imports, aimed at encouraging foreign investment, Cambodia has moved fast into land concessions and speculation. While the elite has benefited, the sustainability of the country's ethnic indigenous minority cultures, particularly in the northeast, is at risk. Rural land is being sold or appropriated to large businesses by powerful public officials, urban areas are rapidly growing and available land is exhausted, triggering large disparities between rich and poor.

Human rights and legal organizations have been monitoring the abuse and eviction of families from their land and homes to make way for urban construction by big companies and large land concessions for planting crops. Although the Government has set up a national committee to resolve land disputes, this has failed to resolve the problems because of the unregulated land titles and the judiciary bias in favour of the rich and powerful.

Unprotected migrant workers

Cambodians rely mostly on families as an economic unit, and most family members have to contribute to production; this is the reason why Table 1 shows such low unemployment. However, the rate does not reflect the liveable employment of the majority of the population, since the percentage of men seeking employment in other urban areas and/or other countries is estimated at 35%. There are 140,000 persons working abroad, and remittances to families and the national economy are significant.

The mass labour migration has made people vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking into slave labour or sex work. While this trend is increasing, the Government has adopted a policy of facilitating migration for employment in Thailand, Malaysia

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and Republic of Korea. The protection of migrant workers, many of whom are women, has been championed by women's civil society organizations, which have used CEDAW to demand Government to provide greater protection. The Ministry of Women Affairs responded to CEDAW recommendations by initiating a database to monitor the migration flow. The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training was created in 2004 to regulate the labour market and provide skilled workers. This ministry has adopted a strategic plan to facilitate legal migration overseas, but protection measures for migrant workers have yet to take shape.

The protection of women's rights

Some progress has been made on the protection of women rights through the use of international instruments such as the CEDAW, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Beijing Platform for Action. The reduction of domestic violence has been included in Goal 3 of the national Cambodian MDGs and incorporated into the National Strategic Plan for 2006-2010. A law for the Protection against Domestic Violence was passed in 2006, but the implementation of the law has not begun, owing to the slow pace of the national legal reform.

According to the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005, the maternal mortality rate has been increasing, rising to 472 per 100,000 live births in 2005, from 437 per 100,000 live births in 2000, primarily due to lack of access to pre-natal care, inadequate nutrition and education access for girls and women.

Cambodia has aligned with the other ASEAN countries on improving the rights of women and children. There have been few results to date, owing to the resistance to the use of affirmative action to address decades of inequality. Efforts to promote women's leadership in the public sector, led by the Committee to Promote Women in Politics, increased women's representation in commune councils from 8% to 15% in the April 2007 election.

However, girls are still disadvantaged in education beyond elementary school. They are still expected to do household chores and support family economic needs more than boys. Although the Ministry of Women Affairs has defined this sector as a priority, it received a 14% decrease in the 2008 budget, while other sectors average a 22% increase.[1]

CHART 1. Labour force (%)

Status	Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Rural
Labour force			
Both sexes	74.6	60.8	77.0
Male	78.9	65.1	81.4
Female	70.7	56.7	66.0
Employment rate			
Both sexes	99.2	96.7	99.5
Male	99.2	97.3	99.4
Female	99.1	96.2	99.5

Source: Summary Subject Matters Report, Cambodia Social-Economic Survey 2004, by the National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, September 2005. Table 2.1, p. 8.

Minorities and indigenous peoples

The Constitution states that all citizens must be treated equally, without discrimination. The Muslim, Chinese and Vietnamese account for approximately 6% of the total population. Minorities and indigenous groups are left on their own to practice their language and religious beliefs. The Chinese and Vietnamese are fairing well in business, but Cham Muslims and other indigenous ethnic groups are in a disadvantaged position. Their only source of livelyhood from the forest and land is being invaded by large land and forestry concessions and now the large mining concessions. The Government does not have a plan to help these ethnic minorities' communities in the transition economy for their survival.

Children, old people and the disabled still depend on their families as a safety net, while state institutions play a decreased role due to the drive to cut expenditures and increase tax collection.

The role of civil society

In order to ensure greater equality in the distribution of wealth, citizens have been proactive in demanding government accountability. The World Bank is currently undertaking a project to increase social accountability by building capacity among public institutions and civil society organizations, and engaging them in pilot projects. Civil society institutions have started to monitor specific rights, such as civil and political rights and access to land. A group of NGOs have campaigned to urge the Government to pass a corruption law to meet international standards. ■

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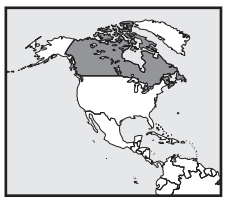
CANADA

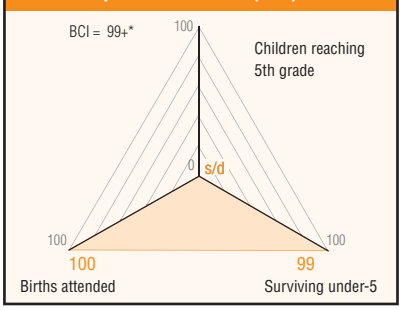
Rights, budgets and building alternatives



Over the years the Government has produced strong rhetorical commitments to enhance the lives of the most vulnerable, while the budgetary process attempted to all but remove the public from public policy, precisely when there has been more capacity to improve the lives of all Canadians than at any time in 40 years. NGOs and extra-parliamentary processes have connected the dots between the stated commitments, what has actually been achieved, and what is possible, and this report shows how divergent the results can be, depending on how resources and political will are marshalled.

The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action
Nancy Baroni & Nancy Peckford
The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Armine Yalnizyan
The North-South Institute
John W. Foster

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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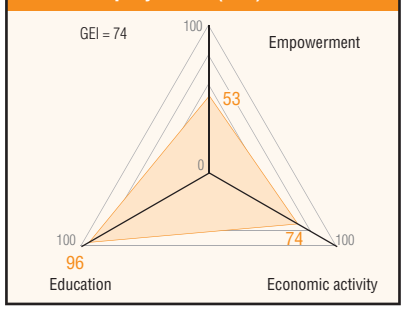

The Government of Canada, as a signatory to several key UN treaties, including the Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), has committed to ensure that Canada respects its human rights commitments to all its citizens. These rights include but are not exclusive to access to justice, affordable housing, access to education and employment as well as the appropriate provisions to ensure women's equality and implement "appropriate measures" to fulfill Canada's obligations under CEDAW.[1]

Canadian federal budgets from the last decade have ignored these obligations and have, indeed, made things worse for women and vulnerable populations. While Canada does hold limited open pre-budget consultations with non-governmental organizations and claims to do a high level of gender budgeting, the focus of federal governments have moved away from sustained social and strategic investments towards an aggressive tax cut agenda. This agenda, while in place for over a decade, has accelerated since the 2006 election of the current minority Conservative government.

The wealthy are benefiting most

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada is among a small group of nations that has reduced taxation levels in such a way as to most benefit those who are already the most affluent.

Among the 30 OECD countries, 13 have increased income taxes and 15 have cut them over the past decade. Of the tax-cutting nations, most have used tax reforms to redistribute more income to the poorest. In Canada, however, the opposite is true. The tax burden for those earning 150%-200% of the average wage dropped by 2.3%, whereas, those people who are earning one-third to two-thirds of the national wage only saw a tax reduction of 1.1%.[2]

Budget 2008 declares that by 2012-2013, the Government will have delivered CAD 200 billion (USD 196.45 billion) in tax cuts and at least CAD 50 billion (USD 49.11 billion) in debt reduction.[3] In 2004, 38% of female tax filers and 24% of men had incomes so low they did not pay taxes. Consequently they saw no benefit from the tax cut agenda.

Canada's economy doubled in size over the past 25 years. In the late 1970s, the bottom half of the families earned 27% of total earnings. Between 2001-2004, the bottom half's share dropped to 20.5% of total earnings, despite an increase in the hours worked per family, and rising educational attainment. The richest 20% increased their share of income with neither significant increases in education or work time. The top 10% saw the largest increase, 30% in inflation adjusted terms over the past 30 years.

The after-tax income gap in Canada has accelerated more rapidly in the past decade than at any time in the past 30 years, under economic conditions which should have seen it decrease. The gender gap, too, is widening, after decades of contraction.[4] Since 1998, Canada's top 100 CEO's (exclusively men) saw a 247% increase in compensation, earning an average of CAD 8.5 million in 2006 compared to an average CAD 3.5 million earned in 1998.

In contrast, the average worker earned almost CAD 39,000 in 2007, a 20% increase from the 1998 average of just over CAD 32,000. But inflation of 19.8% over this period wiped out any improvement in purchasing power for the average worker. Average earnings over this period of remarkable economic growth remained, essentially, flat.

In 1998, Canada's top executives were paid roughly 106 times as much as the average worker. By 2005, they were paid 218 times as much.[5]

The majority left behind

Canada has an unparalleled economic and fiscal record, producing 11 back-to-back surplus budgets. When the current minority government took power in 2006, it inherited a surplus of over CAD 13 billion from the previous government, and surpluses were poised to increase for the foreseeable future.

In just 25 months, however, the surplus was spent, primarily on tax cuts and debt reduction. New spending was not for social programmes but for defence and security and infrastructure for border-crossings and trade. Re-arranged fiscal relations with the provinces did entail marginal increases in transfers through a bizarrely complex new system of financing, but its essential purpose was to devolve responsibilities for social services off the agenda of the federal government.

If Canada is to be fully compliant with its UN human rights obligations, we must have a coherent national plan for providing such necessities as affordable housing, child care, post-secondary education, and for alleviating the dire situation of Aboriginal Canadians, to name just a few areas of critical investment.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Elson, D. "Budgeting for Women's Rights: Monitoring Government Budgets to Compliance with CEDAW", UNIFEM, May 2006.

2 Beauchesne, E., "Canada's wealthy benefit most from tax cuts, OECD finds", *Financial Post*, Canwest News Service, 24 March 2008.

3 Yalnizyan, A., "Budget 2008: What's in it for Women?", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, March 2008.

4 Statistics Canada, "2006 Census, Earnings, Incomes and Shelter Costs", *The Daily*, 1 May 2008.

5 Mackenzie, H., "The Great CEO Pay Race", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, December 2007.

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A 10 year overview of federal budgets from 1995-2005 by economist Armine Yalnizyan concluded that government spending and tax initiatives actually led to growing inequality and an increased income gap.[6] Budgetary measures were considered not for their human rights impacts but for their deficit-trimming capabilities.

This focus on spending less than taxes received began through a major budgetary initiative brought in under the Liberal government in 1995. The deficit-fighting strategy has not been reversed, though Canada has enjoyed more than a decade of surplus budgets. In the mid 1990s, reductions worth billions of dollars in supports to the provinces and territories for health, education and social services resulted in dramatically increased financial stress on lower levels of government; loss of national standards in public services; reduced access to public programmes, and significant erosion in eligibility for and the purchasing power of unemployment insurance and welfare benefits. Legislative protections for the most vulnerable were lost when the Canada Assistance Plan (the programme which the Government had previously claimed embodied its implementation of Covenant rights commitments) was ended.

Most of the budgetary cuts of the mid 1990s have not yet been reversed (with the exception of health spending). This has had a profound impact on low income Canadians, primarily women, Aboriginals, immigrants and persons with disabilities. Inequalities have accelerated, between the rich and everyone else, between regions of Canada, between men and women, and between older and younger generations.

Tax cuts vs. strategic social investments

In 2003, the UN CEDAW Committee reviewed Canada's compliance to the Convention and issued 23 recommendations to the Government of Canada to better comply with it. These recommendations encouraged the federal government to meet these human rights and equality obligations by investing in many of the social programmes on which women rely, programmes that were cut in the mid 1990s. Given the federal government's history of consecutive surpluses, the UN Committee was convinced of the Canadian government's capacity to act in a variety of areas, namely: social assistance rates that exceed the poverty line; eligibility rules that do not exclude women in need; creation of an affordable and accessible national childcare programme; increased investments in housing; addressing the extreme living standard gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians; and improving access to justice by investing in legal aid services.

There has been no action taken to address any of these recommendations.

Instead, the federal Government has increasingly used the tax system to deliver social policy, primarily by cutting taxes. Particularly since 2006, tax reforms have favoured those who can save, and those with non-earned income such as investment income and capital gains.

6 Yalnizyan, A. "Canada's Commitment to Equality: A Gender Analysis of the last ten Federal Budgets (1995-2005)", Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, 2005.

A DUBIOUS COMMEMORATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Canada's well-known commitment to human rights internationally has taken a dubious turn in the year that marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 2008 the Government of Canada voted against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and sought to organize others against it. A similar role is being played in inter-American debates on the same subject.

The Canadian Government's commitment to the Convention Against Torture also came under question over when it backed away from mention of United States and Israel as practicing torture. Its opposition to capital punishment has been questioned due to its unwillingness to negotiate the repatriation of Canadians facing that penalty in other jurisdictions. It leaves the only Western national, a Canadian, in Guantanamo. National implementation of protections were reduced when the current Government cut funding for the Charter Challenge programme which had been a resource for marginalized groups in clarifying human rights guarantees in the courts. Many outsiders are asking, "What's happened to Canada?".

In terms of spending, the new federal Government revoked a deal with the provinces for a national childcare plan, tabled at the 11th hour of the previous government's tenure in 2005, replacing it with a taxable CAD 100 monthly benefit to parents that used up the cash base for adding to the number of quality regulated childcare spaces and services. The new Government also rejected a long-awaited plan, finally agreed to in late 2005, to address Aboriginal peoples' need for investment in their communities.

Official budget vs. participatory budget

The current Government's tax cut and debt reduction agenda has drained the budgetary surplus and depleted its capacity to meet its human rights obligations. Of CAD 17.8 billion in surplus revenues in 2007-2008 the Government allocated CAD 4.8 billion in tax cuts; CAD 10.2 billion for debt reduction; and only CAD 2.7 billion in new spending.[7]

This spending plan ignores the basic needs of the people of Canada. In 2005, at least 1.5 million households (over 4 million people) were classified as being in "in core housing need". Core housing need can be defined as those living in a dwelling requiring major repair, living in a dwelling lacking sufficient bedrooms for the size and structure of the household and paying 30% or more of the household's gross income on housing. Despite these shocking numbers, budget documents have been virtually silent on housing. While higher education is identified as a major pathway out of poverty, since 1990 tuitions have tripled in most provinces, increasing seven times faster than the rate of inflation.[8] The average student debt load is now almost CAD 25,000 upon graduation. There are boil water advisories in hundreds of aboriginal communities, imponderable in a nation so blessed with water. Meanwhile the federal government delivers CAD 200 billion in tax cuts.

7 Yalnizyan, A., "Submission to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 13 March 2008.

8 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, "Alternative Federal Budget 2008".

A better world is possible

Every year the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives produces an Alternative Federal Budget (AFB) with input from dozens of civil society organizations. The process takes at face value the current economic situation as described by the Government in budget documents, but allocates available resources on spending initiatives to strengthen social security rather than tax cuts.

The AFB for 2008 laid out objectives for making progress on equality for women and improvements in all Canadians' quality of life, costing out platforms like action on climate change, rebuilding community infrastructure, pharmacare, addressing the needs of our First Nations communities, tackling a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, and playing a progressive role on the world stage.

The bill came to a total of CAD 17 billion in new spending for the current fiscal year.

The affordability of this plan is notable. The federal Government's own Budget 2008 allocated CAD 43 billion to new spending, tax cuts and debt reduction over a three year horizon – more than CAD 17 billion a year.[9]

The AFB's total three year plan would cost CAD 76 billion over the three year horizon, but that amount also would have been affordable within available resources, since the federal Government had allocated almost CAD 200 billion in tax cuts alone over the past three budgets, and has just promised a staggering CAD billion in resources to Canada's military over the next 20 years. We do not accept that this scale of tax cuts, and this direction of investment in spending, represent the best way to utilize the economic prowess of our nation at this point in our history.

All budgets are political because all budgets represent choices. Participatory budgeting is a critical tool for the mobilization of civil society because it animates serious discussion about what is important and what is possible. Without such discourse, we would be waiting forever for governments to make good on their political rhetoric to create a better world. With it, we can see how a better world is, indeed, possible. ■

9 *Ibid.*

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COLOMBIA

The economy is fine: the country is not

Sixty years after the Universal Declaration, for most Colombians human rights are goals yet to be achieved. Lately a system has been implemented in which there is economic growth and guarantees for investment, but nil distribution of riches and few guarantees for the rights of the entire population. While the armed conflict continues to cause constant violations to human rights, social mobilizations in various sectors of the country have intensified.

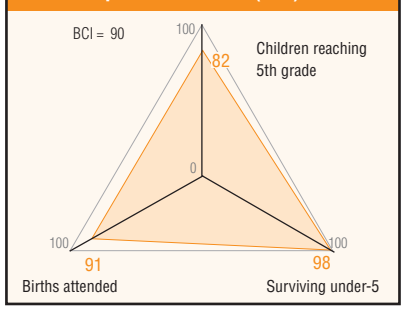
Corporación Región[1]

Maybe the clearest and most visible characteristic of the new economic model are the huge inequalities it produces, both between the rich and the poor, as well as between regions. According to Alianza por la Equidad,[2] "more than half the population of the city of Antioquia is poor. Around one million people live in poverty. More worrying still is that 80% of the population outside the Aburra valley is poor or very poor." There are regions and social groups with higher quality of life rates, while the situation in others is worse than in the poorest country in Africa.

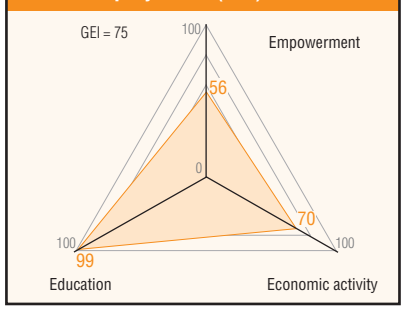
On 7 August 2002 president Álvaro Uribe took office and established "democratic security" as his government's policy, with the objective of "reinforcing and guaranteeing the rule of law throughout the national territory by strengthening democratic authority, the free exercise of the authority of the institutions, the observance of the law and the active participation of the citizens in matters of common interest."[3] In 2006, following a controversial constitutional reform[4] that allows immediate re-election, Uribe was elected to office once more.

Social policies during Uribe's two periods are based on two strategies: security and economic growth. For the period 2002-2007, the economy grew from 1.9% to 7.5% and the investment rate from 12% to 28.5%. This however does not imply a redistribution of wealth. According to the general balance produced by the National Planning Department, in the 2002-2006 period inequality decreased from 0.58 to 0.54 based on the Gini index; according to others[5] the Gini index has kept rising permanently reaching 0.58 at present. Poverty registered its lowest level in the last two decades (45.1%), while extreme poverty reached 12%; 27.6% of Colombians' have unmet basic needs, 10.4% live in inadequate housing, 11% live in critically overcrowded housing and 7.4% of households have inadequate public services.[6] The reason for this picture is that public social expense, as a percentage of GDP, grew from 14.27% in 2003 to 16.42% in 2007. However in 2003 the Government did not respect the regulation that prohibits percentage decreases in the investment budget in relation to the previous year regarding the total expense of the corresponding allocations law, when it reduced it by 1.6% in relation to 2002.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Budget and basic services

Plans for the 2008 budget allocate 48% of the resources to poverty reduction policies; 20% to democratic defence and security policies; 17% to sustainable growth policies and 15% to environmental management, improved State development and special development dimensions. By sector, social protection has been allocated COP 5.1 trillion (USD 2.93 billion) (24%), of which COP 682.8 billion (USD 392.65 million) are destined to the subsidized health system and COP 857.85 billion (USD 493.33 million) to education. Social action gets COP 1.6 trillion (USD 920.12 million) (7.7%), of which COP 211.48 billion (USD 121.61 million) to help displaced people; housing and environment, COP 843.62 billion (USD 485.14 million) of which COP 407.67 billion (USD 234.44 million) are for housing subsidies and COP 220.45 billion (USD 126.77 million) for culture, sports and recreation.

While the budget is thus organized, numbers show that for 2008, the value of the family basket is COP 898,346.19 (USD 516.61). Taking into consideration the legal minimum salary, the conclusion is that it would require 1.94 minimum salaries to have access to it: two people holding jobs per household. In fact 35% of salaried people in the formal sector are paid a legal minimum salary.[7]

Although there have been improvements in some areas, they are nowhere near satisfying the needs of the population. In the last few years the Government's assistance in educational matters has focused on increasing coverage, efficiency and quality, and has made progress in the former, at the level of basic education: an overall coverage of 90% and a drop-out rate of 5.8% in 2006. But in terms of quality the result is poor: the percentage of official institutions classified as belonging to the top category for high performance in the ICFES[8] State tests went from 7.6% in 2002 to 24.09% in 2006; official institutions classified as having superior performance or very superior performance went from 1.5% to 7.59%.

There has also been greater coverage in the area of health. Between 2002 and 2007 coverage for SISBEN[9] Levels 1 and 2 grew from 374,821 to 1,693,207 enrolled in the subsidized system, with a goal of 8,729,965 (19.39%) for 2010. With respect to public services and basic sanitation, fresh water coverage reaches 88.32% in the last four years and sewerage, 74.1%. The study of the quality of water reported by the Ombudsman in 2006 indicates that 801 municipalities do not provide water suitable for human consumption; this means that over 13 million people drink unhealthy water. The Ombudsman's office points out "the lack of compliance of the State

1 The following people took part in the production of this report: Natalia Muños, Martín Ossa, Astrid Torres, Antonio Javier Jaramillo y Rubén Fernández.

2 Department of Antioquia. Alianza por la Equidad. Medellin, 2006.

3 Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of National Defence (2003). "Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática", p. 12.

4 In the run-up of the project for constitutional reform in the first Committee of the House of Representatives, government representatives allegedly paid bribes to buy votes to pass the law that would allow consecutive re-election.

5 Sarmiento, L. (2006). "El proyecto social del uribismo" in: *Caja de Herramientas*. Year 15, No. 115, Bogota.

6 National Administrative Department of Statistics. Survey 2005.

7 Family Subsidy Office.

8 Colombian Institute for Higher Education Development.

9 System for the Selection of Beneficiaries for Social Subsidies.

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with its obligations, particularly in three aspects that should be taken into account in order to guarantee the supply of water, which according to the human right to water are: i) availability; ii) physical and economic accessibility, no discrimination and access to information; and iii) quality."[10]

Threats and violation of human rights

According to the Ombudsman's report 2007,[11] the rights that are most affected given the registered complaints are, in corresponding order, the right to health (denial to provide health service, deficient and inappropriate medical assistance and non payment of the health system fees); right to petition (not to resolve the petition, not to respond according to the terms dictated by the law, not to observe the procedures in the law or regulations); the right to life (death threats, arbitrary or illegal executions, multiple homicides); the right to personal integrity (cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, tortures) and the right of the displaced (denial of humanitarian food assistance, habitat and public sanitation, irregular process of enrolment of people displaced by violence, denial of humanitarian emergency assistance in transient lodgings).

Armed conflict and forced displacement

During the last ten years, with the intensification of the armed conflict, the human, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights of Colombians have been attacked. Crimes against humanity, massacres, torture, detainment, forced 'disappearance', political persecution and forced displacement, perpetrated either by the guerrilla, the paramilitary or the State's armed forces, have left an unprecedented number of victims in the recent history of the country; their systematic and massive practices have most seriously affected women, older people, children, peasants, Afro-descendants and indigenous people.

According to figures of the National Government (Acción Social), up to 6 August 2007 there were registered 2.15 million people in the System for Displaced Population, of which 66% were women and children; while according to the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, between 1985 and 2007 there were more than four million displaced people. The National Survey to verify the rights of displaced populations[12] shows that 3.7% of the displaced people identify themselves as indigenous; 21.2% as black or Afro-Colombian. Displaced households have 45.2% female heads of household; 54.8% have male heads and 78.8% have only one head (female heads of household). Generally speaking, most displaced people are women, girls and adolescents.

In a context of constant rights violation, it was due to the mobilization of the displaced population and the constant pressure of social organizations from civil society, and by introducing a writ of injunction, that was possible for the Constitutional Court to pass Sentence T-025 in 2004, in which it urges the National Government to eliminate all obstacles that may impede the enjoyment of human rights to forcefully displaced people. The Court ratifies that not enough budgetary efforts, whether national or regional, have been made and that there is urgent need to reaffirm the human rights approach in the strengthening of public policies.

Although the sentence has allowed progress in the State's financial and institutional commitments and has opened up spaces for participation of the population in policy-making, the follow-up made by the Constitutional Court and the social institutions shows that there is a great distance between a legal mandate and government actions.

The report by the Follow-up to Public Policy Committee on Forced Displacement (January 2008) established that only 19.3% of the population included in the Register of Displaced Population have received immediate aid, which is less than the humanitarian emergency aid provided in previous years.

The current government's agrarian policy[13] (Rural Statute - the 'Agriculture, safe income' Law) does not protect the traditional rural forms of production (indigenous, peasant, of Afro descent) and does not promote land reform or the protection of the possessions of the uprooted population. It can also be stated that the implementation of Justice and Peace law 975 of 2005 has not guaranteed the full indemnification of the victims of the armed conflict.[14]

The policies implemented so far have lacked a differential approach as pointed out in the eighth report of the Women and Armed Conflict Working Group. According to the report, "the formulation of policy towards forced displacement contained in the National Development Plan implies a regressive vision of the protection and reparation of women victims' rights. The National Development Plan establishes a 'family' approach as guide to its assistance, ignoring the obligation to provide special and different protection according to the specific characteristics of the victims, and more serious yet, ignoring the Constitutional Court's orders 'that the public policy of assistance to displacement be handled in observance with the specific criteria derived from the mandate to guarantee the rights of particularly vulnerable people'."[15]

Overall, the situation of the female population continues to be highly vulnerable. Their socioeconomic conditions do not allow for the development of their capacities and the gap in relation to job opportunities and gender policies is still significant. Women's unemployment is at 14.2% as opposed to 10.8% for men; for every 100 women who work, only 39 qualify for the pensions system; the salary gap is 14.28%.[16]

In much the same way the children's population has been seriously affected by the internal conflict. According to UNICEF, the political and social armed conflict has displaced around one million boys and girls. Among this group, chronic malnutrition among children under five is 22.6%, 10 percentage points above the national average; 18% of displaced children are breast fed on an exclusive basis for an average duration of 1.5 months, while WHO recommends a minimum of six months, which represents a violation of the right to life and physical and mental integrity of children.

Social mobilizations: 2002-2008

The last seven years in Colombia have seen the intensification of social mobilizations of the various sectors of the country. Quite frequently the rural population, the displaced, the indigenous people, Afro-descendants, women, the movement of the victims of crimes committed by the State, the unions and human rights activists, have pronounced themselves against the constant violation of rights, the need for a negotiated peace in the political and social armed conflict and the serious humanitarian crisis.

The actors who participated most in the mobilizations in the period 2002-2006 are urban inhabitants (49%); salaried employees (20.9%); women and LGBT-lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transvestites (12,6%); students (11.7%); ethnic groups (3.7%); rural inhabitants (3%) and displaced people (2.5%).

The year 2008 started with two large mobilizations, the 4 February demonstration in which civil society demanded the immediate release of all the hostages kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) guerrillas and a political ending to the armed conflict. The other great demonstration that took place on 6 March, convened by the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes and social organizations, condemned the crimes committed by paramilitary and State agents. ■

10 Ombudsman's Office (2007). "Decimocuarto Informe del Defensor del Pueblo al Congreso de la República". Bogota: Imprenta Nacional, p. 128.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

12 National University of Colombia. "Encuesta Nacional de verificación de los derechos de la población desplazada". November 2007.

13 Mondragón, H. "El estatuto rural: hijo de la parapolítica". <www.etniasdecolombia.org/actualidad étnica>.

14 Colombian Commission of Jurists. "Colombia: el espejismo de la justicia y la paz. Balance sobre la aplicación de la ley 975 de 2005". <www.coljuristas.org>.

15 Women and Armed Conflict Working Group (2007). "VII Informe sobre violencia sociopolítica contra mujeres, jóvenes y niñas en Colombia". Bogota.

16 Campaign "Comercio con justicia: mis derechos no se negocian".

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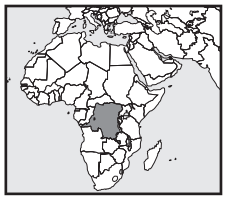
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Challenges and perspectives for the new government



Adoption of a new constitution in 2005 and elections in 2006 put an end to the transition period. The new Government must ensure that the benefits of democracy are enjoyed by the local population, which was forced to develop survival strategies during years of dictatorship, war and theft. This is an enormous challenge. The resources needed for reconstruction and development far outstrip the available income; the government depends for much of its income on foreign aid that comes with restrictive conditions.

Centre Africain d'Échange Culturel
Baudouin Schombe
Odie Kuamba
Monique Tshala

After a break with the international financial community lasting nearly a decade, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) 'regularized' its situation in 2001. The restructuring of the country's foreign debt, initiated in 2002, opened the way to a resumption of international aid but also required repayment. GDP growth, which had been negative in the 1990s, reached 6.5% per year between 2004 and 2006, however the local population did not benefit.

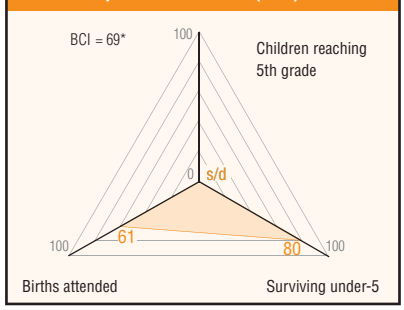
The country suffered a series of setbacks that disrupted economic plans. Regional instability led to security expenditures that squeezed the budget for social programmes. Several contracts to exploit natural resources were abruptly terminated, eliminating some of the income needed for reconstruction as well as financing for development. Debt relief, anticipated as part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, was postponed until the second quarter of 2007, which made it difficult for the Government to make full payments on its bilateral debts in 2006. In spite of the relief anticipated for 2007, debt payments will still require more than 10% of the country's income from exports and more than 15% of the additional aid funding. Since the Government is only able to make its payments thanks to an exceptional influx of aid, any reduction in external support would make meeting its obligations impossible, according to the International Monetary Fund's macroeconomic criteria.

The Government depends on foreign aid for more than 40% if its income. To mobilize the resources essential for developing both the country's productive capability and basic social services, the new Government must implement a number of strategies, some of which are suggested below.

Foreign aid and debt relief

According to the recommendations in the Millennium Project, fulfilment of debt obligations should be weighed against social objectives. The new Government could cite the 1953 London agreement, which set out conditions for debt relief. It allowed annulment of two thirds of the external debt of post-war Germany and had clauses that limited debt service to 5% of exports, guaranteeing massive additional help in the form of donations and suspending repayment while the debt is renegotiated if the original payments exceeded available resources. The Government could also cite the Belgian government's declaration of October 2006 cancelling the entire DRC debt, and call for expansion on the Club of Paris to accept a more substantial cancellation of its foreign debt than was agreed to in 2007. It could also request further aid without interest, calculated on the basis of the gap between the savings rate and the investment rate needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Regional integration and food security

The DRC borders nine countries. This makes a regional approach to reconstruction and development financing imperative, whether in matters of security, energy or agricultural policy, The security and stability agreement signed in December 2006 in Nairobi by 11 governments of the Great Lakes region includes respect for the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention, non-aggression and peaceful resolution of differences. It also stipulates ambitious objectives in development matters. Although the agreement can be described as fragile, it established a framework for implementation by the government and civil society in each country.

The DRC's location on the Equator makes it possible to cultivate crops all year long. This could facilitate adoption of a regional agricultural policy that would ensure food security for the entire region – in other words, food security for the people and an adequate income for local producers. This would require, above all, guaranteed common foreign prices high enough to prevent importation of products at lower prices, as well as setting external prices in commercial agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) that the European Union wishes to sign with regions in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

Trade and agricultural development policies

Due to a lack of productive capacity, the DRC runs a deficit in its balance of trade. Liberalization of import tariffs would eliminate any possibility of developing new industries. The ability to protect vital sectors and regulate trade in accordance with development strategies is essential. As a Least Developed Country, the DRC has privileged access to the European market ("Everything except weapons") and could also receive special and differential treatment within the World Trade Organization.

The Government, therefore, is not obligated to liberalize the importation of 90% of European Union products as is ordinarily required under an EPA in exchange for total access to the EU market. Instead, it should negotiate an EPA adapted to regional development targets, especially in agriculture, and insist that any commercial agreement be in conformity with them. In addition, it should suspend any international commercial agreements and devote itself to real regional integration. The history of development has shown that the trade policy of the East Asian countries, which liberalized imports in a progressive and selective way, has achieved better results than the sudden liberalization of imports recommended by international financial institutions.

Fiscal policy that promotes productive capacity

The fiscal reforms implemented by the transition government under guidelines imposed by the IMF consisted of centralizing income, reinforcing administrative capacity, rationalizing customs taxes, simplifying the monitoring of companies and introducing a VAT. These measures were designed to increase revenue collection, encourage private investment and enlarge the tax base. However tax revenues remain weak, among the lowest in Africa. A policy of strengthening productive capacity and the employment rate together with measures to obtain income from natural resources remain the best possibilities for long term growth in fiscal recipes.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

** There are no available data on GEI components.

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THE STATE OF CHILDREN

In 2001 the DRC had 900,000 children under the age of 5 orphaned (father or mother or both dead) due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In some towns around 15% of the population had contracted HIV/AIDS (the national level is 3.2%). In addition the war that destroyed the country produced a population of 'child soldiers' and caused massive forced displacement of boys, girls and women. Street children were nonexistent a decade ago. Now they are common. Poverty, which afflicts most families, bars children from access to basic social services. Net enrolment in primary education steadily declined after 1990 and has recently stabilized at around 58%. The infant mortality rate is 127 for every 1,000 live births. Immunization rates are generally low, although the rate for polio has significantly improved thanks to a strategy of holding national vaccination days. Inadequate nutrition is particularly notable in protein deficiency.

The Government reacted positively to the recommendations in Resolution 1621, of 25 August 1999, in which the Security Council asked the member states and relevant UN bodies to redouble their efforts to put an end to the recruitment and utilization of children in armed conflicts. To support this process, Law 066 of June 2000 established mechanisms for the demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable groups within combat forces.

In 2002, the country decided to implement the new world plan for children. The DRC sent a 36-member delegation to the UN General Assembly of May 2002, including 14 girls and boys representing the country's different provinces.

Nevertheless living conditions of children remain distressing. The Government established a legal and institutional framework within the Ministry of Social Security to guarantee protection of children's rights through the creation and implementation of multisectoral programmes for survival, development, protection and participation with the support of foreign partners, particularly UNICEF and international NGOs such as the Save the Children Fund.

Convincing results

Health

- 12 million children per year were vaccinated against polio;
- 1 million children and women had access to good quality medical attention thanks to a minimum service packet, including low-cost disease prevention and treatment.

Education

- 430,000 children received better schooling, reducing the dropout rate by more than 60%;
- 87,000 children and adolescents were given information on subjects like HIV/AIDS, peace, etc.

Protection of girls and boys

- Legislative reform regarding minors was supported by professional development in legal affairs and procedures applicable to minors provided to 120 staffers from the Ministries of Social Security and Justice;
- 20,000 street children received basic education and medical coverage;
- After consultation between the Government and UNICEF to promote and apply the rights of children, the number of children in the civil registry rose 5% in five urban centres in 2002; the national average is 34%.

Fiscal policy should serve these objectives, above all by revising the contracts for exploiting natural resources that the transition government signed with foreign companies. This should certainly be possible. The mining code permits expropriation when investors do not respect their exploitation commitments.

South-South cash flow

The rise of a well-administered South-South cash flow offers a wealth of opportunities, since it can generate competition that would ensure that agreements help the DRC achieve the MDGs. The concession loans without conditions that China has been offering Africa could facilitate this strategy, provided they are not linked to imports at low prices and do not produce a new cycle of foreign debt. Terms are not yet clear.

Already, a significant portion of the foreign currency flowing into the country comes from the South – the record investment of the South African company ESKOM in the Inga dam, for example. However establishing public policies that ensure foreign investments promote development and reinforce local productive capacity is essential.

Resource management

In a country where needs are so great and the image of politicians is far from favourable, the efficiency and transparency of resource management should become an imperative. Funding allocations should be made judiciously with the goal of strengthening productive capacity and so cial services. Coherent public policies, reinforcement of the capacity of decentralized administrative organizations, the independence of regulatory organizations and the maintenance of a regulatory system at the heart of civil society are just a few examples of the measures essential to optimizing management of resources for development.

The social dividends of democracy

The social situation in the country, which according to the UN Human Development Index is among the ten poorest in the world, has deteriorated over the past 30 years. In many areas the local population is barely able to pay the salaries of teachers. Medical services are the province of a privileged few. Social services barely exist. Reconstruction and development of the country depend above all on the degree to which the local population recovers its trust in political representatives, for whom they mobilized massively during the 2006 electoral campaign. The challenge for the new Government, at this level, consists in guaranteeing that the social dividends of democracy are quickly apparent by dedicating a portion of its resources to specific social objectives. A clear strategy of ensuring primary schooling for all girls and boys, or equivalent strategies that give access to essential medicines, to fresh water and sanitation, or to electricity, would meet this objective and help the country mobilize international financing in a cohesive way. ■

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COSTA RICA

Human rights and globalization: trinkets for gold

Following neoliberal prescriptions, government economic policy focuses on macroeconomic stability, attracting investment and exports and expanding infrastructure. This model has had a negative social impact, making it necessary to move towards a form of development that can generate wealth that will remain in the country, through productive chains. The State must revive its democracy-enhancing function, while at the same time articulating a vision of coexistence based on ethics, equality, inclusion and respect for diversity.

Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones Alforja[1]

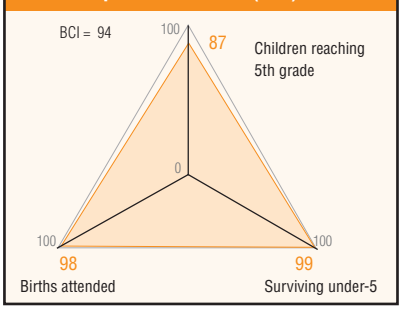
Historically, Costa Rica has scored well on social and human development indices, owing to political and social consensus that, starting in the middle of the 20th century, allowed greater public investment in areas such as health, education, roads and massive extension of electricity and telecommunications. It is the result of a holistic vision, in which a political coexistence model guaranteed the 'resolution' of conflicts among various social and economic sectors, and at the same time helped to strengthen people's awareness of human rights.

In the 1940s, a political alliance strongly supported by working class sectors produced a new type of state that was very different from other Central American countries and was characterized by strong state social intervention and the adoption of change-oriented policies. This period saw the creation of the Social Security Office, the Labour Code and the University of Costa Rica and the consolidation and expansion of secondary education.

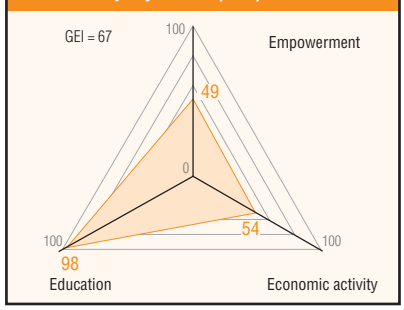
This Solidarity Model of the State abolished the army as a permanent institution, nationalized banks, put into operation an energy development policy, taxed capital as a means of strengthening public finances and encouraged national industries to substitute imports and guarantee development that was less dependent on unstable international markets. Thus, a financial platform was created, financed through domestic taxation, complemented by a legal framework to enable the implementation of policies to strengthen different social sectors, contributing to greater social mobility.

However, after liberalization was introduced in the 1980s, a substantial change took place, characterized by the opening up of the economy, financial liberalization, the promotion of exports, and the redefinition of the role of the State in the economy and society. The reduced size and functions of the State

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



together with market liberalization, including opening the economy to imports and efforts to attract direct and financial foreign investment – in line with international financial institutions prescriptions – have weakened the country's political and financial capability to sustain social reform, frayed the social protection network and hollowed out the principles guaranteed in the 1949 Constitution. Since then, Costa Rican development has followed a double track: although social indicators are still above average for Central American and many Latin American countries, declining social equality and cohesion will have a major impact on these indicators over the next 10-15 years.

Trade liberalization and human rights

The neoliberal model expanded after the negotiation of free trade agreements (FTAs) with Canada, Chile, Mexico, Panama, the United States and the Caribbean community, as well as current negotiations with the European Union. The successful conclusion of these has been presented as a choice between 'joining the world' or 'remaining in isolation.' In many fields, especially commerce, global processes require new instruments and mechanisms that favour the free transit of goods and persons, thus affecting specific legislation, constitutional frameworks and human rights. Goods become globalized, but not rights; we are witnesses to the construction of societies that are 'liberal' insofar as trade is concerned, yet conservative in terms of democracy and citizen participation, human rights, diversity, justice and equality.

It is within this framework that human rights in Costa Rica must be viewed. Following is an overview of the rights that various citizen networks regard as having deteriorated the most.

The right to political participation

Although the Government of President Oscar Arias elected in 2006 championed the FTA with the United States, a year later Costa Rica was the only signatory that had not ratified it, owing to a fiercely contested national debate about what it represented. For some, the FTA was the crowning of the neoliberal project; for others it was the final dismantling of the rule of law. In April 2007 the Supreme Electoral Tribunal permitted a citizen initiative to collect signatures to demand the first national referendum in the history of the country. However, FTA supporters violated the electoral law, the Constitution and the referendum law itself, greatly damaging citizens' political rights. All of this was justified by the Government and endorsed by a partisan, non critical majority' of magistrates in the Constitutional Chamber.

- Chambers of commerce conducted censuses of their workers and relatives of voting age in order to 'take' them to vote, intimidating them with the potential loss of their jobs should they not vote in favour of the FTA.
- Numerous bank accounts were opened in the names of pro-FTA leaders, in which thousands of dollars from Costa Rican, Central American and US companies were deposited to support the pro-FTA media campaign, in full view of the Electoral Tribunal.
- Local media owners agreed to present pro-FTA arguments as news reports, which saturated the media, with no intervention by the Tribunal.
- The Tribunal authorized the President to take part in the campaign in favour of the FTA, contrary to provisions in the referendum law. Arias

1 Several citizen networks contributed to this article: COSECODENI (Childhood and adolescence), Red de Control Ciudadano (Public policies watch), Mesa Intersectorial de Derechos Humanos (Non-exclusion and non-discrimination), Colectiva por el Derecho a Decidir (Sexual and reproductive rights), Centro Internacional para los Derechos Humanos de los Migrantes, Consejo Consultivo de la Sociedad Civil and Movimiento Diversidad. Special thanks to Rubén Chacón of the Costa Rican Lutheran Church for sharing his work. Compilation of contributions and final writing: Mario Céspedes from the Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones Alforja.

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visited communities and companies offering development projects or threatening to cancel those being implemented.

- The Tribunal approved new regulations to the referendum in which political parties were given the right to have observers, against the original citizen-oriented rules, and obliging people to 'belong' to a political party in order to use their right to become observers.
- The Vice-President and another government representative prepared a memorandum, later made public, suggesting some 'corrections' to the pro-FTA campaign, including, among other things, generating four types of fear:
  - Fear of losing one's job
  - Fear of democratic institutions being attacked
  - Fear of foreign interference in the campaign against the FTA
  - Fear that the vote against the FTA would win.

  Although the Vice-President resigned after being exposed, the pro-FTA campaign carried out each and every one of these suggestions.
- Visits by Chile, the US and Central American governments to factories, giving talks in favour of the FTA, which the media presented as 'expert' opinions.
- Violation of the electoral truce on the part of corporations and the media, which encouraged worker street demonstrations until the day before the referendum.

The right to work

The FTA threatens the right to work, guaranteed by articles 56 and 71 of the Constitution and articles 23 and 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, since it promotes two types of work: 'exclusive' for a minority, and cheap labour for the majority, modifying labour legislation and the rights of workers. A bill before the Legislative Assembly proposes a longer working day with no requirement to pay for extra hours. The bill therefore allows employers to keep employees at work more hours per day without taking on greater costs.

The right to food security

Following the neoliberal policies of the structural adjustment plan, Costa Rica abandoned the production of food for national consumption for the sake of an export oriented agriculture based mainly in single crop farming, which has high environmental and social costs. These policies, which would increase with the ratification of the FTA with the US and further agreements with Europe and China, on which negotiations have started, would result in the loss of national food sovereignty. Specifically, they would a) affect the right of Costa Rican society to define its agrarian and food policy; b) diminish or eliminate its capacity to define sustainable strategies of food production, distribution and consumption; c) reduce its capacity to guarantee the right to healthy food based on small and medium producers and respect for the diversity of indigenous and peasant agricultural production, trading and management of rural lands; and d) threaten the right to access to land, and to cultivate it using traditional practices and biodiverse local seeds that represent the indigenous cultural heritage and identity.

The right to inclusion and non-discrimination

Those that promote the predominant economic model appear to be interested only in the buying and selling of goods. Using unscientific ideas and a tendency towards social control, dominant interests encourage the exclusion of wide sectors of society, not only through reducing access to resources, but also through myths and stereotypes that support a culture of stigma and discrimination. This embraces large numbers of children and youths, women, migrants, indigenous peoples, peasants, people with visible handicaps, as well as people who are discriminated against because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. This trend will continue in the absence of political will for change in favour of inclusion.

The right to education

The FTA has turned education into a service, another good that is sold and bought. The Costa Rican educational model, an important factor in the country's human development indices, is threatened by the State's reduced capacity to support the right to universal free education – financially, technically or politically. Quite the contrary, the educational system suffers from a serious lack of coordination between levels, dramatically reduced enrolment in rural areas and among poor people, rising dropout and repetition rates, cultural curricular discrimination against indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and people with special needs, deteriorating infrastructure, and old-fashioned content and methodology.

Recommendations

The restoration of full human rights in Costa Rica would require the State to recover its democracy-enhancing function, including a progressive tax structure, equitable public spending and the production of decent work, based on social interest.[2]

Authorities must commit to an extensive revision of the legal and legislative framework (codes, specific laws, regulation of public institutions etc. others) that will allow a transition towards a new form of coexistence based on ethics, equality, inclusion and respect for diversity. There must be the political will to allocate the necessary financial resources and advance the passage of currently 'frozen' laws to benefit excluded social sectors.

Costa Rican citizens aspire to an equitable and balanced agenda of human rights that will also include handicapped people, same sex unions, the rights of women and poor people along with migrant and domestic workers, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, as well as the ratification of international treaties which will benefit society as a whole.

During the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008, human rights campaigns should be held with the goal of restoring full and inclusive democracy. Any law, decree, or institutional proposal aimed at any specific sector should be discussed and agreed upon by all citizens. The Human Rights Committee of the Legislative Assembly, as a multi-party space, should convene a Citizens Forum on Human Rights in which to debate the adoption of all human rights laws currently awaiting approval in the Legislative Assembly, along with the content and operation of the much-needed Action and Non Discrimination Plan that would contribute to political and cultural renewal. This Forum should provide the opportunity for citizens to demand that the Government comply with its constitutional and international obligations, as well as the construction of new models of coexistence in which respect for diversity is highlighted as central to the creation of a national culture that will protect, promote and respect human rights. ■

2 Minutes of the workshop: "Análisis crítico del informe nacional de los ODM desde la perspectiva de organizaciones sociales" Red de Control Ciudadano, Coronado, 2-3 February 2005.

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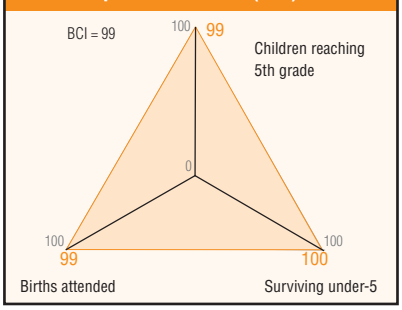
CYPRUS

Quest for cohesion: social policies and inclusive education

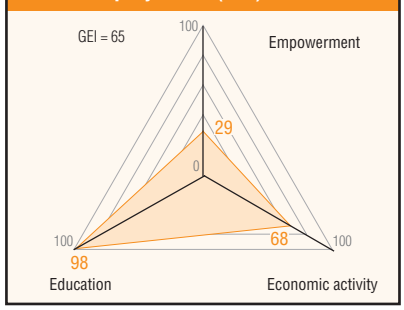
Human rights are often taken for granted. Legislation alone does not secure them; effective implementation of legislation and institutional initiatives is essential. The country has made progress in areas such as immigration, education and women's rights, however the EU harmonization process must be strengthened. So far, implementation of anti-discrimination laws and new policies adopted to address the social needs of immigrants has been minimal. Both procedures and the implementation process must become more efficient and effective.

CARDET
Charalambos Vrasidas
Myria Koushiappi
Michalinos Zembylas

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



In 1991, the Government created a Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) with a mandate to monitor and improve human rights laws. Subsequent legislation established a legal framework to ensure equal treatment and respect for diversity. Several NGOs have also played an important role in monitoring and reporting on the status of human rights.

Accession to the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 required many changes to the legal and legislative system, mainly to comply with the membership criteria laid down by the European Council. However, membership in the EU did not eliminate a major obstacle to human rights: Since the Turkish invasion in 1974, the island of Cyprus has been divided. The southern part, called the Republic of Cyprus, is internationally recognized as the sole legitimate State on the island, with sovereignty over its entire territory. However the northern part remains illegally under Turkish rule. Although this state of affairs violates the rights of all Cypriots, the focus of this report will be on issues related to human rights within the Republic of Cyprus, in the fields of education, gender, and migration. One of the major problems of the northern part of Cyprus is that, as an illegal state, it is not responsive to numerous international conventions, legal authorities and international bodies. Therefore, no official data are available regarding human rights concerns.

Migration

Migration, asylum and refugees are major EU policy concerns. One of the main factors responsible for illegal immigration is illegal employment. Cyprus relies on migrant workers, coming from many different countries, to compensate for labour shortages in a number of economic sectors; various national groups predominate in certain types of work. The Government issues work permits only in cases where employers can prove that no Cypriots are available; the permits are valid only for that employer. Complaints filed with the Ombudsman during 2005 focused mainly on issues involving working conditions, access to services, and equal treatment (Ombudsman, 2005).

The number of legal immigrants has risen to 130,000 (15% of the population), who have been joined by an estimated 20,000 illegal immigrants (CyStat, 2006). This is a massive influx in a country with less than a million inhabitants. In 2006, the population increased 1.6% over the previous year, primarily due to a net immigration of 8,671 people.

According to the 2001 and 2006 reports by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2006), migrant workers do not enjoy full rights in Cyprus. Policies concerning them are determined by outmoded legislation and ad hoc ministerial decisions, both formulated on the premise that immigrants only stay in Cyprus for a limited time to meet specific labour needs.

The National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 does not reflect immigrant needs for integration and inclusion, according to the Cyprus-based NGO Action for Equality, Support and Antiracism (KISA). Immigrants continue to face discrimination and human rights violations, especially in employment, housing, education, health care and access to goods and services. Addressing their needs for integration, participation and social inclusion requires new immigration and asylum policies. Better policies for monitoring and managing employment of third country nationals are also essential (Georgiou et al., 2006). Cyprus needs to adopt modern migration laws that conform to international human rights law and standards.

Gender issues

Human rights – women's rights in particular – are at a critical juncture, according to the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies[1] (MIGS). Despite extensive legislative reforms, political, socio-economic and cultural barriers to the advancement of women remain formidable. MIGS notes that migration policies are not gender sensitive and do not include any gender specific policies. Female migrant workers are "more vulnerable to exploitation and to double or even triple discrimination because of their gender, their status as migrants and, in the case of domestic workers, their employment status" (MIGS, 2006).

In a detailed report on trafficking of women, MIGS (2007a) states that many are "victimized in the process of migration for multiple reasons associated with gender" and that the "issue of trafficking women for the purpose of sexual exploitation takes unique and widespread dimensions". An estimated 2,000 foreign women enter the island every year with short-term "artist" or "entertainment" visas. The Government lacks a mechanism for identifying trafficking victims, which effectively denies them legal protection (MIGS, 2007b).

Female victims of trafficking may be granted permission to change employer or employment sector and are placed in homes for the elderly. However, research conducted by MIGS indicates "these *shelters* reinforce the victims' feelings of abandonment, hopelessness and helplessness and, therefore, they often do not want to testify against traffickers and employers". Protecting their rights requires a much more energetic response, including public education campaigns based on human rights and social justice principles.

Education for social justice

Few would disagree that improving the learning and life opportunities of typically marginalized students is the most basic social justice concern in education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995). Perhaps more

1 MIGS is a Cyprus-based NGO which carries out projects of social, political, and economic themes related to gender issues.

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controversial is the accompanying goal of empowering students to act as agents of change in response to societal injustice (Ayers, 1998; Freire, 1970). In addition to their disagreements on the basic meaning of social justice in education, theoreticians and practitioners espouse differing goals, domains, content, audience, and agents of socially just teaching. Each of these components intersects and influences the rest (North, 2006). For purposes of this report, we are embracing the following holistic definition of social justice in education: efforts to transform educational policies and introduce pedagogies that improve the learning and life opportunities of typically underserved students, while equipping and empowering them to work for a more socially just society themselves. This composite definition includes intra-personal development in the teacher, pedagogy and dispositions that support equitable access to learning for all, a curriculum that can empower all students to become agents of social justice themselves, as well as activist teachers engaged in challenging and transforming inequitable structures and policies in schools and society. This conception is particularly important in a country like Cyprus, which is becoming more multicultural and diverse day by day.

The number of migrant children enrolled in public schools has increased dramatically. According to the 2006 Annual Education Report published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), 6.7% of students attending public primary schools have a mother language other than Greek. Since then the percentage has climbed even higher. More than 8,000 students have a native language other than Greek (Kyriakidou, 2008). In some schools, a high proportion of the children face language barriers. At the Faneromeni Primary School in Nicosia, for example, 71 out of 87 students have a mother tongue other than Greek; many of them understand no Greek at all. This inevitably leads to their marginalization.

Current education policies have not resulted in concrete long-term initiatives; they tend to function as general guidelines and, at times, as quick fixes for emerging problems. Another deficiency is that many teachers lack a thorough understanding of human rights and genuine sensitivity to them, despite the availability of professional development opportunities at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (ECRI, 2006). MOEC has introduced a Zone of Educational Priority (ZEP) pilot programme in an effort to combat social exclusion of children in primary and secondary schools. The programme introduces a holistic approach to education that takes children's differing needs and backgrounds into account. The programme was extended to new zones in the 2008-2009 school year.

In another measure to assist educators with heterogeneous classes and encourage non-discriminatory practices among students, in 2006 the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, working in collaboration with the MOEC, implemented "Youth against Prejudice", an EU-funded project. This project, however, devoted little attention to migrants and racial discrimination or racism (Georgiou et al., 2006).

In an effort to cope with the heavy influx of migrant children in public schools, the Government requested that all children who wished to enrol had to provide documentation proving that their parents were legal residents. This policy barred a large number of children from school, with no the right to education. It was rescinded following the intervention of the Ombudsman. Another continuing problem is the absence of any educational opportunities for adult migrants, on the premise that they are in the country temporarily and employed in jobs requiring no skills. However, the new Government elected in 2008 has declared that ensuring a quality education for all will be one of its primary objectives. It is too early to know whether or not this promise will be kept.

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations that would significantly improve social justice:

- Establish closer collaboration between the Government and NGOs to create mechanisms that raise awareness, struggle against injustice and protect human rights.
- Implement all of the EU directives incorporated in the country's legislation in recent years.
- Improve the efficiency and speed of the asylum application review process. This is one of the major issues in illegal immigration.
- Develop a comprehensive policy that protects the human rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Fully integrating migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in all aspects of society, including the education system, requires a holistic approach.
- Enact gender-specific legislation against trafficking.
- Monitor and evaluate existing measures designed to ensure the rights of women.
- Provide professional development for teachers to give them the skills they need to reach out and serve the needs of all students.
- Invest in research on the educational experiences and needs of all children, especially those marginalized for social or other reasons
- Develop new curricula and educational approaches that respond to the complexities that diversity creates in schools. Current concepts of "inclusive pedagogies" should be re-evaluated and reconsidered, especially in the light of the increasing demographic diversity among Cypriot children. ■

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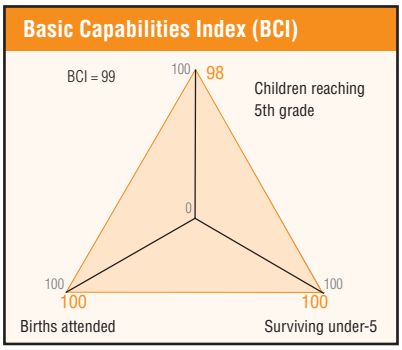
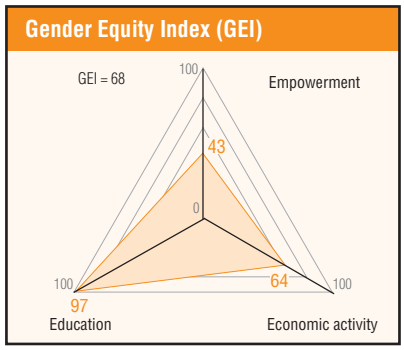
CZECH REPUBLIC

Back to the future

When the first republic was founded in 1918, all citizens were guaranteed equal voting rights, widely accessible health care and basic social services. In contrast, the present ultra-conservative right-wing Government, supported by the Greens and Christian Democrats, has reduced access to health care and social services. As a result of current policies to cut expenditures, the country will probably fail to meet its ODA commitment. NGO campaigns are attempting to make citizens and politicians take more responsibility on global issues.

Czech Social Watch Forum
Ecumenical Academy Prague
Edited by Tomáš Tožička





In the course of the 20th century, Czechoslovakia experienced dramatic changes in its economy and politics: from a developed but subordinated part of the feudalistic Austro-Hungarian Empire to 20 years as a successful democratic republic, to being annexed and crippled by the German Nazi regime and, after WWII, to the so-called real socialism. The 1989 revolution brought, first, a restoration of democratic values and later, the return of capitalism.

During the Bolshevik era, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was one of the most economically and culturally developed countries of Eastern Europe. Thanks to this status, and despite the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the country's transformation process was relatively calm. Nonetheless it has not been successful. Neoliberal privatization, imposed with little or no legislative framework, caused state property losses estimated at up to EUR 40 billion (USD 63.2 billion). The beneficiaries were a suspicious group of private parties, some of them former communist managers, others foreign 'investors'. A large share of the losses from bankrupted banks and funds was recouped from taxpayers. Former President Václav Havel characterized the privatization process with its corruption, linking the economic and political spheres as 'Mafioso capitalism'. The continuing pervasive corruption and economic criminality are gradually eroding confidence in the restored democratic institutions.

The legislative environment, however, is slowly being stabilized, largely due to the country's accession to the European Union in 2004. Membership in the EU has brought economic benefits and new export opportunities. The decline in the average living standard in the 1990s levelled off around the year 2000. However, in spite of last years' relatively favourable macroeconomic results, public services have been gradually shrinking as a consequence of budget difficulties and a changing conception of the role of the State. The current Government is implementing a far-reaching privatization of public services, including health services. Although the Czech Republic is still among the countries with the lowest Gini index of inequality (27.3 in 2007) the gap between rich and poor is growing.

Women's rights – maybe for the childless

Women's salaries are currently 25% lower than men's, according to the Czech Statistical Office (CSO). Women are also overrepresented in the secondary market, where labour positions are characterized by lower prestige, worse working conditions and higher insecurity. Those with children up to six years of age and women-breadwinners are particularly threatened by long-term unemployment and poverty. In a recent survey, 13.2% of Czech women reported that they had suffered sexual harassment at work.[1]

In 2007 women's representation was 11% in the Government, 15.5% in the Chamber of Deputies, 13.6% in the Senate, 15% in regional councils and 25% in municipal councils.[2] No measures for quota systems or other forms of affirmative action are being proposed.

Despite this situation, the current Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek, on the occasion of the inauguration of the European Year of Equal Opportunities in April 2007, declared: "As to women – who in my opinion do not represent a disadvantaged group, even though they are usually designated as such – we cannot talk about equal opportunities (…). A woman has the freedom to decide not to have children and by making that choice, I am convinced, she can have the same professional opportunities a man has."

Among women from ethnic and national minorities, a constellation of social and cultural identities – gender, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship and motherhood – all lead to discrimination in the professional, public and/or private sectors.

In 2007, the Government passed an amendment to the law concerning foreigners' residence and an amendment to the asylum law. Both will have negative impacts, especially on mixed marriages. Under the old legislation, the partner of a Czech citizen automatically obtained a permanent residence permit after the wedding. The new law allows this only after two years. During that time foreigners will have to apply for a work permit; if they do not work, they will have to get private health insurance and the couple will not be entitled to social welfare benefits.

The Roma – a dog's chance for equal rights

The Roma minority represents approximately 3% of the population. After the WWII Roma Holocaust, they had no 'bright tomorrow'. The State's introduced a forced assimilation policy. Although they became a recognized ethnic minority after 1989, growing inequality caught a significant part of the Roma population in the trap of social exclusion and ghettos started to spring up. The Roma suffer discrimination in the labour market and in education. Restaurants frequently refuse to serve them. Racist-based aggression, sometimes ending in the death of the victim, has increased. Migration of Roma to other countries obliged the Government to begin dealing with the problem in 1997.

Now, after ten years of effort to improve conditions, the mass media are again fomenting racist sentiment. In 2007, a man who holds blatantly racist opinions and as mayor of Vsetin, had moved the socially excluded Roma out of the city to abandoned and ruined houses, became a government minister. Even though he later had to resign due to a corruption

1 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, <www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/1699/obtezovani.pdf>, p. 82, only in Czech.

2 CSO, <www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/t/6B004ACCCA/$File/Kandidujíci%20a%20zvolení%20podle%20typu%20voleb.xls>.

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scandal, the level of vulgarization he helped to create in interethnic relations persists. Housing discrimination exacerbates spatial exclusion. More than 300 slums and slum-like housing estates are inhabited largely by some 80,000 Roma.

Tax reform – take from the poor, give to the rich

In 2007, the Government introduced a tax reform designed to reduce social expenditures. Although the income tax has been reduced for earners with lower salaries, this only partially compensates for the increase in the value-added tax (VAT) for basic commodities, on which they spend most of their income. Those with higher incomes have enjoyed far more significant tax reduction. The increase in social and health security taxes has a ceiling of four times the average income.

The tax reduction also affects businesses. By 2010, the tax on profits will drop to 19%. This means that from 1993 until 2010, business tax will have been cut 26%. The tax reduction for the rich will be partially replaced by an increase in the VAT, from 5% to 9%. This will raise the price of basic groceries, medicines, books and energy. The burden of this inflation will fall mainly on the low income sector of the population.

To cover for the balance of the loss of income caused by the decrease in taxes paid by businesses and the rich, the Government is using social expenditures as a 'financial reserve'. It reduced the number of weeks workers can receive unemployment benefits and introduced a so-called 'tighter control' of the unemployed register. This means that the Employment Office has a mechanism for eliminating the unemployed from the register. In addition to reducing expenditures, this will artificially shrink the unemployment rate.

A follow-up mechanism for cutting back social expenditures is the introduction of an 'allowance for basic needs' that will replace the current 'life minimum allowance'. Under the new system, the 'life minimum', currently at 30% of average wage, can be cut back to an 'existence minimum', of 10% of the average wage at the time of its implementation, for those 'not actively searching for work'. There is no clear definition of what 'active search for work' means, raising concern that, besides being used to accumulate savings, this policy could be applied with a racial bias, especially against the Roma.

Cutting the poor away from health

The provision of health care is only guaranteed for a period of five to ten years. After that period, and for the first time in history, private hospitals may take over public hospitals. The right wing regional governments are privatizing hospitals, selling medical facilities and land in city centres to rapidly emerging enterprises at a fraction of their real value. The results cannot be evaluated yet, but complaints about insufficient or unprofessional care in the private facilities are multiplying. More demanding patients seek care in public hospitals.

Until the last change in government, the State guaranteed health care free of charge at the point of need. Health insurance is paid through a compulsory tax on wages that goes to the State. However the present Government introduced fees for medical check-ups, prescriptions and hospitalization. This is the first time in the country's history that there is a real possibility that those who cannot pay will be cut off from health care. This threat applies not only to the poorest citizens, but also to retirees and to families with several children or with only one breadwinner. In addition, for the first time since the second half of the 19th century, the homeless are being systematically excluded from the health system.

Development cooperation – restriction from above

As a member of the EU and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the Czech Republic has obligations in the field of development cooperation. Actually, it had been terminated after the 1989 revolution and was re-established in the late 1990s. Currently, it is focused on meeting the Millennium Development Goals and bilateral development cooperation currently makes up nearly 50% of total official development assistance (ODA). The proportion of Czech bilateral development cooperation going to the least developed countries was 14.9% in 2004, 8% in 2005 and 12.8% in 2006.[3]

According to its EU obligations, as accepted on 24 May 2005 in the EU Council, the Czech Republic should increase the volume of ODA to 0.17% of GNI by 2010 and to 0.33% by 2015. Although Czech ODA reached nearly 0.12% of GNI in 2006, as part of the policy of shrinking expenditures, the Government has introduced radical cuts, resulting in a reduction to 0.09% of GNI.[4] This makes it evident that the country will not fulfil even its reduced obligations to the EU mandate.

The Government's attitude to development cooperation was revealed by Prime Minister Topolanek's declaration after the country failed in its bid to win election to the UN Security Council: "We have to reconsider our development and humanitarian aid. It is unacceptable for us to be sending millions of crowns to a country which will then obey our competitor."

In 2007 the Czech Republic was the only EU country that still had not ratified the International Criminal Court treaty.

3 Ministry of Foregin Affairs, <www.rozvojovestredisko.cz/files/ar07-cz_09-12.pdf>.

4 Svoboda, D. (2007). "Pledge or Empty Promises, MDGs - EU Development Days Debates", Educon 2007. <europeandcis.undp.org/mdgdebates/show/8A690836-F203-1EE9-BBADAB946BEA0347>.

Civil society – uneven development under political constraint

Civil society has experienced dramatic changes since the fall of the so-called real socialism in 1989, when a large number of movements and NGOs sprang up.

From the very beginning financing for civil activity has been problematic. Early organizations typically had very few members and supporters, and even the bigger ones were unable to survive through membership fees alone. There was no tradition of voluntary giving for civic activity and this had to be built from scratch. During the socialist era, the State was often behind voluntary activity, directing it; this fed widespread scepticism about collective action. Foreign donors initially financed civic activities. Later, this role was partially assumed by the State. After the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU, most foreign donors left, and NGOs became economically more dependent on state grants, EU funding and support from large foundations.

The increasing importance of state funding led to a diminution of advocacy work and campaigning by organizations fearful that they might lose state sponsorship (an ironic situation, considering the experience of state 'directionism' prior to 1989). In general, organizations with policies aligned to those of the State stabilized and grew. In this financial and political context, many social movements, such as ecological organizations, directed their activity toward political lobbying or specialized counselling.

Post-1989 NGOs have pioneered new types of social action and helped to bring about reforms in the social and public health systems. NGOs and social movements have also contributed significantly to the change in attitude towards women, minorities and marginalized groups. Joining forces with other bodies focused on human rights and environmental issues, NGOs and social movements have also had a positive influence on legislation.

At present the most important campaigns are "No to the Missile Bases" and "Czechs Against Poverty". No to the Missile Bases is primarily focused on opposition to locating a US radar base on Czech territory and new armaments. This campaign is under heavy political pressure. The right-wing party, the Greens and the Christian Democrats want to bring in the radar at all costs, even though 75% of citizens oppose the base. Czechs Against Poverty is part of GCAP (Global Call to Action Against Poverty) and seeks to persuade the Czech public and their political representatives to assume greater global responsibility, increase ODA and play an active role in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. ■

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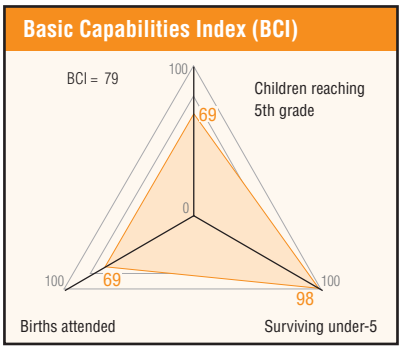
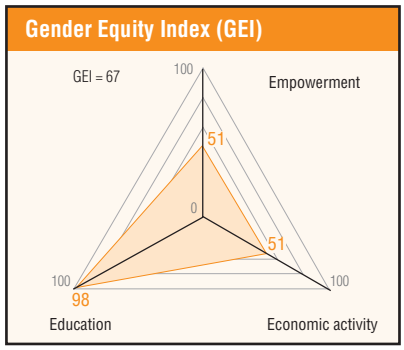
EL SALVADOR

Economic and social rights: there is no political will

In El Salvador, with its highly concentrated and unequal distribution of riches, poverty reaches more than a third of the population. The economy, which is concentrated on foreign investment, is kept afloat by remittances from abroad. Since a lack of political will, rather than a shortage of resources is what limits the reduction of poverty, the United Nations has made numerous recommendations to the Government regarding its lack of compliance with the economic, social and cultural rights of Salvadorans.

Social Watch El Salvador
Claudia Hernández
Armando Pérez





El Salvador is currently experiencing a dramatic rise in inequality in the concentration and distribution of wealth. Although GDP per capita for 2007 was USD 2,867[1], poverty reaches more than one third of the population. The Gini index puts El Salvador within the 20% of countries with the highest inequity in the distribution of wealth, with 0.54, compared to a worldwide average of 0.40 and 0.41 for Latin America. As a result, a poverty map shows that of the country's 262 municipalities, the average household poverty rate is as high as 49.9% in 32, located in 10 of the 14 departments in the country.[2] A total of 68 municipalities are in a situation of extreme poverty.[3]

A report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in 2004 concluded: "The consolidation of democracy in the country is hampered by lack of justice and security. The resistance of various stakeholders makes change particularly slow as a small elite class continues to control the wealth and resources with influence over security forces, politicians and the judiciary. This situation is an obstacle to achieving an inclusive and just society."[4]

By 1995, of total production by local companies, 66% was kept as profit while 34% went to worker salaries. Ten years later, profits jumped to 75% while salaries accounted for only 25%. This means that 113,000 business owners keep 75% of what is produced by 2,591,000 workers.[5]

The Attorney's Office for the Defence of Human Rights and various social organizations have expressed their concern over the economic and social inequalities, whose negative impact is felt most forcefully by children, women, older and handicapped people and indigenous peoples. The latter is a group not even recognized in national censuses and the Government has declared the Salvadoran society to be ethnically homogeneous, in spite of the existence of indigenous peoples like the Nahua-Pipil, the Lencas and the Cacaotera.

One example of the lack of attention to the economic, social and cultural rights of a good part of the population is the deplorable state of healthcare: preventable chronic illnesses like diarrhea and dengue fever, which each year become lethal epidemics, are tightly linked to poverty; shortage of medicines and increasing HIV infection. To this can be added the lack of will to rehabilitate public hospitals, in spite of the availability of loans for this purpose since 2005.

Trade deficit and remittances

Since 2002, the economy has hovered on the edge of recession, growing at an average of 2% between 2002 and 2006, although improving slightly to 4.2% in 2006 and 4.7% in 2007. These figures do not reflect the purchasing power of working people, which has steadily declined. Today, a minimum salary in the rural areas (USD 85.80) will not cover the basic food basket, which costs USD 118.80. The minimum salary for the *maquila* (manufacturing) sector (USD 162) barely covers the basic food basket, which for in urban areas costs USD 159.90, leaving barely USD 2.10 for other needs, including electricity, health, transport, water, housing and education.

The economic situation directly affects the population's enjoyment of its economic, social and cultural rights and contributes to increase the flow of migration leaving the country in search of better living conditions. According to UNDP, an average of 700 Salvadorans emigrate daily. In the absence of a policy for social investment, their remittances keep the economy afloat and allow many families to have access to housing, education and food.

The Government has focused its economic strategy on attracting foreign investment, in spite of which, after two years into the free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States, the figures show benefits have gone primarily to non-productive sectors, such as imports, banking and services.[6]

According to studies by the Centre of Research on Investment and Trade (CEICOM in Spanish), two years after the FTA was implemented, the trade deficit continues to grow, increasing by 18.5% in 2007 in relation to 2006. Meanwhile, foreign direct investment (FDI) has slowed down. From 2004 to 2005 it grew by USD 424 million, which represents a 14% increase, while from 2005 to 2006 it grew by barely USD 245 million, or a rate of 7%.[7] The sectors most damaged were the industrial (maquila) and agricultural sectors. The maquila industries grew by 2.1% in 2006, dropping to 1.4% in 2007, while exports declined by 1% compared to 2005.

In agriculture, exports have fallen by 3%, while imports have doubled. In early 2008, 40,000 tons of white corn and 70,000 tons of rice entered the

1 Banco Central de Reserva de El Salvador and Dirección General de Estadística y Censo: <www.bcr.gob.sv/estadisticas>.

2 Usulután, Sonsonate, Santa Ana, San Vicente, San Miguel, Morazán, La Paz, Chalatenango, Cabañas and Ahuachapan.

3 "Nuevo mapa de pobreza a escala municipal". FLACSO-El Salvador and Fondo de Inversión Social para el Desarrollo Local: <www.rree.gob.sv/website/comunidades/dlocal/Concepto%20Mapa%20de%20Pobreza.pdf>.

4 Ertürk, Yakin (2004). "Integration of the human rights of women and a gender perspective: violence against women." Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women of her mission to El Salvador (2-8 February 2004). UN Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/2005/72/Add.2.

5 "Los ricos más ricos de El Salvador," *Equipo Maíz*, 2007.

6 The most favoured industries are the large agroindustrial firms, which essentially number only three.

7 CEICOM. "Informe del Segundo Año de Implementación del TLCAC CAFTA DR en El Salvador". Draft summary, available at: <www.ceicom.org/informes/INFORMEIITLC.PDF>. According to the report, "until September 2007 the FDI increased by USD 1.01 billion, due to the financial sector growing by USD 787 million. This figure is part of the financial operations, a product of the sale of the main banks in the country to large world financial corporations in 2006, directly related to the FTA with the United States."

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country, leading towards the loss of its productive sovereignty. To this must be added the increasing export of ethanol, which has contributed to the rise in basic cereals, owing to land pressure from sugar cane crops bordering on the crops of corn, rice and beans. All of this is increasing the country's economic dependency, particularly on the United States, to the detriment of its internal productive capacity. Finally the FTA has facilitated the violation of labour rights. There are cases of maquila companies that massively and indiscriminately lay off or fire workers, declare themselves bankrupt and leave the country without paying severance pay or benefits owed to workers.

Tax evasion and corruption

Added to low economic growth is the Government's inability to effectively deal with tax evasion and public corruption, two mechanisms by which the State is divested of the resources needed for social investment in such essential services as health, education, housing and drinking water, without having to resort to loans. In order to implement its *Red Solidaria* (Solidarity Network) programme, for example, which is part of the official strategy for combating poverty, the Government took out a World Bank loan for USD 21 million in 2005.

In 2007, the Global Call to Action against Poverty in El Salvador (GCAP-ES) presented a study on tax evasion and corruption, reporting that large corporations evaded a total of USD 2.58 billion in taxes in 2006. The National Budget for 2007 was USD 2.94 billion.[8] GCAP-ES estimates that if the amount of tax evasion is totalled over the last 18 years (with the same party in government), the figure surpasses USD 25 billion. With this money, the Government would not have the debt it has today, the repayment of which is equal to 25% of its expenses.

The sum for public corruption over the last 18 years is calculated at USD 1.20 billion. If to this is added the figure for tax evasion for 2006 (USD 2.58 billion), the total sum of money extracted from public funds would equal USD 3.78 billion. With this sum, the Government could eliminate its financial problems and cancel a good part of its internal and external debt.

With USD 2.58 billion it would be possible to invest in health, education, public works, transport, housing and urban development, and environmental protection, and revitalize the agricultural sector. With these investments, the Government would still count on USD 1.13 billion for building 113,000 homes at USD 10,000 each, annually. Thus, in eight years the housing deficit – estimated at 537,000 units – could de eradicated. Moreover, if we take into account that year after year there would be more money joining the public funds, in a short time it would be possible to eliminate illiteracy and infant mortality.

Needed is political will

On the basis of the preceding analysis, Social Watch in El Salvador echoes the more than 65 recommendations that the UN has made to the Salvadoran Government regarding lack of compliance with economic, social and cultural rights, particularly as the country has sufficient resources to reduce the number of people in poverty; what is lacking is the political will to do so. The main recommendations are:

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- That the State take all necessary measures to reduce poverty and to improve its social development strategies, including coordination measures among the various institutions, as well as evaluations to assess the impact of plans and identify their shortcomings.
- That it assess the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force on 1 March 2006, on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by its population, particularly the most vulnerable sectors, and adopt remedial measures, as required. The Committee also recommends that the State consider the possibility of re-establishing the Forum for Economic and Social Agreement,[9] bearing in mind its inspiring principles.
- That it take the necessary measures to encourage the population to remain in the country, through the creation of jobs and the payment of fair salaries.
- That it take the necessary measures to consolidate a national health system based on equity and accessibility, in accordance with article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, guaranteeing essential health services for the entire population, in particular for vulnerable groups, by increasing the budget allocated for such purposes.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

- The Committee is concerned about the high level of poverty among women, especially rural and indigenous women.
- The Committee notes with particular concern the precarious employment conditions of women working in maquila industries, where their human rights are frequently violated, especially insofar as safety and health are concerned.
- The Committee observes a lack of gender-disaggregated data in the reports, as well as insufficient information on indigenous women.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- The Committee notes with concern the vulnerability of the indigenous peoples in respect of enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, particularly as regards land ownership and access to drinking water. ■

8 GCAP-ES. "La corrupción en El Salvador": <www.cidepelsalvador.org/GCAP>.

9 One of the Peace Accords that put an end to the Salvadoran civil war and which is, to date, one of the major matters pending in the compliance with the agreements.

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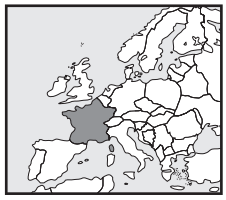
FRANCE

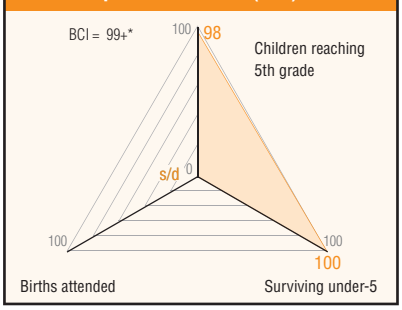
Economic, social and cultural rights at risk



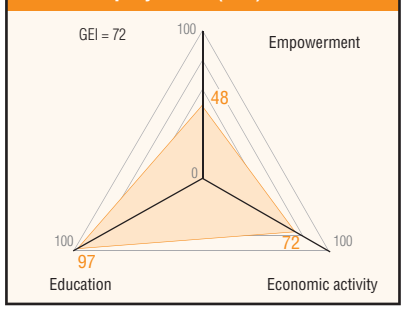
Although France is one of the world's richest countries and has one of the most comprehensive social welfare systems, its implementation of economic, social and cultural rights is more questionable, given the fact that more than 7 million people live in poverty. Although the country has adopted a number of redistributive policies under the banner of social justice and 'solidarity', these have for various reasons proven ineffective. Similarly, its commitments regarding the volume and delivery of development assistance have not been met.

Secours-Catholique/Caritas France
Coordination Sud[1]

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



In France, which has one of the most comprehensive social welfare systems, 12.1% of the population, over 7 million people live below the poverty line – although its income poverty rate, if measured by the Eurostat standard of 60% of the average national income, is near the European average. To address this situation, the Government has adopted a number of measures designed to support the country's most vulnerable citizens, including stricter enforcement of non-discrimination laws and child protection laws, implementation of urban renewal programmes and regulations to ensure universal health coverage and adequate housing.

Unfortunately, the impact of these measures has been seriously restricted by other factors, including the slowness with which they are implemented, the passage of resolutions that empty them of substance, or the failure to allocate sufficient resources. Furthermore, they are adopted in a political context characterized by increasing restrictions on civil liberties and social rights, including more and more national security laws, increasingly repressive legislation towards youth, more restrictions on immigrants and the banning of all sorts of protest movements and actions). Civil society organizations and trade unions have made the following observations concerning economic and social rights:

The right to work and labour conditions

There are more and more people in the labour force who cannot find a real full-time job and a decent salary, resulting in the emergence of a large number of working poor, who nevertheless have neither financial autonomy nor access to fundamental rights such as permanent housing.

Workplace discrimination is still a fact of life among women, foreigners and disabled people; and legal protections or affirmative regulations continue to be insufficient and inefficient. This includes measures that appear to be intended to encourage people to join the labour force, such as the so-called 'solidarity' income[2].

The righ to health and access to health services

Recent reforms regarding the payment of medicine and hospitalization fees[3] go against the principle of solidarity in social security, they exacerbate social and geographic inequalities, and jeopardize access to health care for poorer people.

Fundamental to efficient health insurance is an emphasis on prevention in the provision of public health services. Currently, however, health care professionals focus on providing specialized services for those with adequate insurance, neglecting attention to basic health education and disease prevention.

The right to housing

Over 3 million people in France live in poor conditions in sub-standard housing, or have no housing at all. Around 6 million people are or will be at risk of such living conditions in the short or medium term. These figures result from a combination of factors, including tenancy statutes that cannot be legally enforced and the shortage of affordable housing, resulting in overcrowded living spaces, including hostels and shelters, occupancy of buildings or land not intended for housing, camping, squatting, or living in the street.

In most cases, policies to address this situation have not been applied or applied only partially, providing little in the way of corrections. The urban renewal law adopted in March 2007 is an improvement, since it institutionalizes the right to affordable housing, thereby making it an obligation which if not met, can be subject to court action. However, given the paltry amount of resources allocated for such housing, the State will barely be able to guarantee the right to housing to about 10 per cent of those who are potentially entitled to it. State-provided credit for low-income people is also far short of the need, while municipalities that do not abide by the urban renewal law are not really penalized. These factors combine to relegate the less favoured sectors of the population to the periphery of urban zones.

The right to education

It is important to assist not only economically and socially marginalized adults but also children to overcome poverty. But school reproduces many of the inequalities found in society; it is therefore necessary to recognize and report discriminatory practices, particularly in the schooling of foreign boys and girls. For people with disabilities, the February 2005 law mandating their inclusion in 'ordinary' schools is an achievement as this is now common practice, except in specific cases. It is important to also increase funding to primary schools, junior high schools and secondary schools in priority education zones, which currently have barely 1.2% of the budget for national education.

ODA less than promised

In 2007, France's official development assistance (ODA) declined for the first time since 2001 falling from EUR 8.4 million (USD 11.96 million) in 2006

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 This report is a summary of more comprehensive analysis by a French NGO ad hoc platform which has been working on an alternate report to the official one on the extent to which France meets its obligations as a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2 A form of income support for those who take a job but not for those who stay unemployed.

3 The increasing part of the medicine and hospitalization expenses the patient has to pay.

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(0.47% of GNI) to EUR 7.2 million (USD 10.25 million) (0.39% of GNI) in 2007. This big drop (-16%), is due to a certain extent to the drop in debt relief (-55%) between 2006 and 2007. Also, the increase in the debt of French aid in the last few years is mainly due to artificial accounting, such as the *écolage*,[4] the 'reception' of refugees in France and the expenses allocated to the overseas territories. The 'real' help France has provided, which excludes a large portion of the debt relief and all the 'artificial' expenses, rose by very little between 2006 and 2007 (+3% in euros at current prices) and even fell in terms of percentage of gross national income (GNI), going from 0.24% in 2006 to 0.23% in 2007.[5]

After he was elected, Sarkozy announced that the country was committed to respecting the EU commitment to allocate 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2015, revising the 2002 pledge to do this by 2012. Even this is more likely to be a diplomatic strategy than anything else. The first finance law passed by President Sarkozy ratifies the postponement of the increase of ODA.[6] The pluriannual programme of public finance law for the 2009-2011 period, which should be introduced into parliament in July 2008, is the opportunity the government is seeking to clearly confirm its commitments and translate them into the budget in order to reach the 0.7% objective in 2015.

On the other hand, the growing relationship between development and curtailing migration blurs the objectives of aid policies.[7] This short term vision is an illusion and is also dangerous. To respond to the challenge of poverty effectively, cooperation for development should focus on the solutions to the process of economic and social exclusion. It is absolutely necessary to clarify the objectives of French aid in order to contribute to the central goal of eradicating poverty.

Starting in July 2004 France began to refocus development assistance on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopting seven priority strategies in 2005. Partnership Framework Documents (PFD) were signed in each of the recipient countries, defining five-year development cooperation strategies in the education and health sectors. But while education is a priority in many of the PFDs, this is not true for health, and even less so for drinking water and sanitation. In 2006, France's bilateral investment in basic social sectors was barely 3%, of which 1.1% is for education and 1.8% for basic health.

Health aid unbalanced towards the multilateral

In the health area, France has doubled its contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, providing EUR 300 million (USD 427 million) in 2007 and making it the Fund's second largest contributor, after the United States. France has also been a pioneer in implementing innovative financing for development mechanisms. In 2006, together with Brazil, Chile, Norway and the United Kingdom, France organized an initiative to facilitate the international purchase of medicines, called Unitaid.[8] By 2007, Unitaid already had a budget of USD 300 million, which might reach USD 500 million in 2009.

In March 2007 France organized a conference to review progress on G8 commitments made in St. Petersburg in 2006 to expanding health insurance coverage, whether public, private or community-based, in developing countries.

By contrast, France's bilateral effort in the health sector is insufficient. It is regrettable that there is no systematic effort to better link actions financed multilaterally with bilateral activities. While the national health strategy, adopted in 2005, identifies the need to strengthen public health systems as one of four priorities for bilateral support, this has not been reflected in reality.

Contribution towards education: biased figures

According to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in 2006 the country allocated 18% (around EUR 1 million – USD 1.42 million) of its aid to bilateral ODA for education. But official statistics on ODA that France allocates to education are very biased by statistics that do not correspond to expenses whose major objective is development. As well as schooling expenses, France also counts as part of its aid the cost of students from the developing world who study at French schools based abroad. This added to EUR 90 million (USD 128.12 million) in 2006, equivalent to 9% of bilateral aid allocated to education. Only 1.1% of bilateral ODA (about EUR 63 million – USD 89.69 million) was assigned to basic education in 2006.

With the production of the PFD, education became the focal point of aid in many countries and, therefore, should be receiving significant resources. There has been good progress made in the area of access to education, particularly thanks to the speeding up of processes in favour of an education for all, and to the advances France has made in the primary school sector. The joint initiative reached by Gordon Brown and Nicolas Sarkozy at the latest French-British summit held on 27 March 2007 should involve an increase in France's efforts in this sector.[9]

In any case, the objective of education for all cannot be achieved through a reduction in the quality of education, making it imperative to reinforce public education systems.[10] The French strategy, which has focused on basic primary education, has ignored post-primary education, as well as the inclusion of young people in professional training. Halving the number of people in poverty by 2015 will not reduce poverty and inequalities on a permanent basis.

Weakness of the struggle against gender inequality

France has committed itself on several occasions, at national and international levels, to reduce gender inequalities, signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, the Beijing Declaration in 1995, declaring gender equality central to development and democratization, and the Millennium Declaration in 2000.

However France is well behind in the adoption of a true gender equality policy in development cooperation, as noted in the OECD-DAC peer review in 2004. Financial and human resources are scarce, and declined between 2006 and 2007. Nevertheless, the Gender and Development platform, created in 2006 by the Ministry of State for Cooperation and Francophone Affairs, enabled civil society to play a major role in developing a gender equality strategy, which was adopted in December 2007, together with one entitled "Rights and the health of women".[11] However this strategy will not be applied in France as long as it is not provided with specific human and financial resources. ■

4 This is the cost of foreign students enrolled in French universities, which the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD authorizes as development aid in particular conditions, which France does not respect.

5 Coordination SUD, *L'APD française et la politique de coopération au développement : Etat des lieux, analyses et propositions*, updated version, February 2006 and *Aide publique au développement française, une aide "réelle" toujours aussi faible en 2007, April 2008*, <www.coordinationsud.org>.

6 The finance bill for 2008 projects ODA at 0.45% of GNI, or EUR 8.77 million (USD 12.48 million), less than that for 2006. See Coordination SUD, PLF 2008, La place de l'aide publique au développement dans le budget de l'Etat, November 2007, <www.coordinationsud.org>.

7 The inclusion of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and 'Solidarity Development' in the development cooperation system increases the pressure to tailor aid policy towards curtailing migration.

8 Funded by an international tax on airplane tickets, this facility offers long term access to treatment for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and advocates for low-cost access.

9 France and the United Kingdom agreed on a new partnership to get 16 million children in Africa into school by 2010, and for all children by 2015.

10 This involves staff training as well as revising the education framework, pedagogical content and equal access to quality education for girls. It should also support training for civil society organizations active in the sector.

11 The former presents the goal of gender equality as a condition for and a means to reach sustainable human development. It is formulated around two objectives: to generate deep and lasting changes in gender relations, so as to respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of both sexes; and to make development policies more sustainable by integrating a gender analysis into their formulation and implementation.

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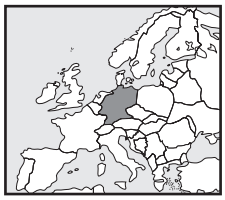
GERMANY

Human and social rights: not always a given



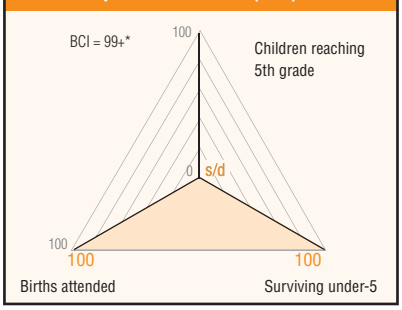
Poverty and economic and social inequality are increasing more rapidly in Germany than in most other EU countries, stimulating debate about minimum wage and labour protections as well as concern about human and social rights. Although politicians and the public assume that the law guarantees their human and social rights, citizens and groups are increasingly demanding Government human rights compliance. Interestingly, the Government continues to insist on human rights compliance as a condition of official development assistance.

Social Watch Germany
Forum World Social Summit
Uwe Kerkow

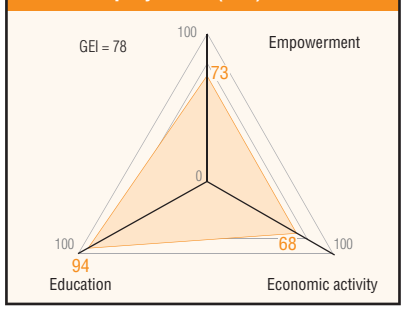
Poverty and economic and social inequality are increasing more rapidly in Germany than in most other EU countries. Income disparities have increased by 0.3 percentage points in 2007 alone. Without state benefits, the poverty rate would include more than a quarter of the population and a full one-third of children and young people.[1] These disparities provoked an intense debate about social justice in 2007. Employment shifts in particular came under scrutiny, for despite a more buoyant economy[2] and a substantial fall in unemployment,[3] the number of people in precarious employment and/or working for very low wages is steadily increasing.

During the third quarter of 2007, for example, the number of 'mini-jobs' paying a maximum wage of EUR 400 (USD 632) a month rose by a further 240,000 against the previous year, to around 6.6 million.[4] Since 2002, the number of part-time or temporary jobs has doubled – with women accounting for almost two-thirds of these marginal workers.[5] The State subsidizes this form of employment to the tune of almost EUR 4 billion (USD 6.32 billion), in terms of lost tax revenue and social security contributions.[6] The disproportionately large number of women in marginal employment reflects both a lack of state-funded childcare options as well as the impact of gender discriminatory tax provisions on female workers in the household. Preferential tax treatment is still given to the 'male-breadwinner' model of the family, which puts women at a disadvantage in the labour market and makes them dependent on a higher-earning partner. There are therefore calls for a Gender Equality Act on the Norwegian model.[7]

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Full-time workers are also facing losses, as economic restructuring results in plant closures and worker layoffs. These losses are matched by a parallel increase in workers employed by temporary employment agencies, which has tripled over the last ten years. In 1997, they numbered around 200,000, but by mid 2007, this had risen to a startling 713,000 – some 2.4% of the workforce.[8] As a result, despite the economic upturn, the number of people claiming partial unemployment benefits rose by one-third to 1.3 million between September 2005 and August 2007. Families are especially hit: almost 50% of married couples with children are now claiming unemployment benefit II – alongside a regular earned income that is liable for social insurance contributions.[9]

Combining all of these trends, we can see that the number of low wage workers has increased by 43% since 1995, totalling 6.5 million people – roughly 22% of all payroll employees.[10]

In light of this, it is hardly surprising that the demand for a comprehensive minimum wage has grown, resulting in a legislative initiative for a minimum wage of EUR 7.5 (USD 11.85) an hour scheduled for mid 2008. Minimum wage regulations already exist for construction workers and postal workers, and temporary employment agencies are already backing this initiative. It would also cover private security providers, workers in waste disposal, meat processing, horticulture and landscape architecture, retail and home care workers hairdressers and bakery workers.[11]

Human rights and development cooperation

Shortly before going to press, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ, in German) announced the publication of its Second Development Policy Action Plan on Human Rights 2008-2010, which explicitly describes social, economic and cultural rights as having the highest priority.[12] It thus builds on the previous Action Plan for the period 2004-2007, in which the Government defined 17 specific measures aimed at strengthening human rights through development cooperation.[13]

However, the BMZ has not yet taken up several human rights policy approaches, at least in the first Action Plan. The most important is the concept of *human rights budgeting*, which involves developing perspectives and analyzing the costs "of realizing

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 *Spiegel* online, <www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,529981,00.html>.

2 The German economy achieved a growth rate of 2.9% in 2006 and 2.5% in 2007. *Spiegel* online, <www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,528600,00.html>.

3 In February 2008, the number of registered unemployed had fallen by 630,000 against the previous year. See: <www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_27908/zentraler-Content/A01-Allgemein-Info/A015-Oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/Allgemein/Arbeitsmarkt-Februar-2008.html>.

4 For comparison, the official relative poverty line for Western and Eastern Germany in 2002 was EUR 730 and EUR 604 per capita per month respectively. See: <www.taz.de/index.php?id=archivseite&dig=2005/01/15/a0175>.

5 *Financial Times Deutschland*, <www.ftd.de/politik/deutschland/:Zahl%20Minijobs/280194.html>.

6 agesschau.de, based on figures from the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), <www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/minijobs2.html>.

7 For Germany's system of income splitting for married couples and taxation bracket V, see, e.g., Lissy Gröner, MEP, 8 March 2008: <www.lissy-groener.de/public/2008/presse2008-03-06_frauentag.pdf>.

8 *Spiegel* online, <www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,536129,00.html>.

9 FR online; based on a study by the DGB, <www.fr-online.de/_inc/_globals/print.php?em_cnt=1266981&em_ref=/in_und_ausland/wirtschaft/aktuell/>.

10 Report by the Work and Skills Institute, University of Duisburg, <www.iaq.uni-due.de/iaq-report/2008/report2008-01.pdf>. A "low wage" is defined as earning less than two-thirds of the mean gross hourly wage: in Western Germany, this is EUR 9.61 and in the new federal states, EUR 6.81.

11 *Spiegel* online, <www.ftd.de/politik/deutschland/:Scholz%20Mindestlohnantr%E4ge/323173.html>.

12 <www.bmz.de/de/presse/aktuelleMeldungen/2008/maerz/20080311_menschenrechte/index.html>. The text was not yet available for download at the time of going to press and therefore could not be evaluated.

13 <www.bmz.de/de/service/infothek/fach/konzepte/konzept127dt.pdf>.

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human rights in the national budget cycle, i.e. in strategy development; planning and budget allocation; spending and auditing".[14]

Under current budget planning, Germany's resource framework for achieving the objectives it has set itself is inadequate. When measured against the EU's step-by-step plan to raise the official development assistance (ODA), to which the Federal Government has a binding commitment, there is a funding gap of almost EUR 3 billion (USD 4.74 billion) already for this year, which is in danger of increasing to more than EUR 5 billion[15] (USD 7.90 billion) by the deadline for the attainment of the EU's target.[16]

The main omission in German development cooperation, however, is the recognition that Germany has human rights obligations to people in other countries as well as its own: in other words, extraterritorial human rights obligations. Whenever the German State, its citizens or German companies engage in activities in other countries, the Federal Government has an obligation to respect human rights and ensure that they are upheld – especially if local institutions lack the capacity to take on this task. A report commissioned by the Church Development Service (EED) and Bread for the World, based on six case studies,[17] shows that Germany is not fulfilling this obligation to an adequate extent – especially when its economic interests are at stake. The study concludes that "the German government should (…) promote extraterritorial obligations through mainstreaming and institutionalizing these obligations in its executive branch, including the effort to increase in capacity to analyse the implications of German policies on human rights outside its territory. This should explicitly include trade and investment policies as well as decisions taken in multilateral development banks." [18] German corporate social responsibility commitments to gender equality and women's rights also applies in this context, as women in developing countries are most often found in flexible, informal and precarious employment at the very end of the global supply chain.[19] ■

14 Budgeting Human Rights, p. 5 ff, <www.eed.de/dyn/download?entry=page.de.pub.de.202>.

15 *Die Wirklichkeit der Entwicklungshilfe* [The Reality of Development Assistance], 15th report, 2007, p. 27, <www.tdh.de/content/materialien/download/download_wrapper.php?id=247>.

16 *Ibid.*: 0.51% of GNI for ODA in 2010.

17 Obstruction of land reform in Paraguay, export of unsafe food products to Cameroon, lack of access to antiretroviral drugs in South Africa and violations of the law by German companies in Mexico and India.

18 "Germany's extraterritorial human rights obligations – Introduction and six case studies", <www.eed.de/dyn/download?entry=page.de.pub.de.182>, p. 5.

19 See, for example: *Unsere Rechte im Ausverkauf* [English original: Trading Away Our Rights] <www.oxfam.de/download/Arbeiterinnen.pdf> or <www.saubere-kleidung.de/2008/ccc_08-01-23_ka_aldi-aktionen-2008.html>.

SOCIAL HUMAN RIGHTS: A GROWING CONCERN

In 2007, concern about the murders of children by mothers who could no longer cope led to calls for amending the provisions on marriage and the family in Article 6 of the Constitution, the Basic Law, to include a reference to children. A number of jurists – notably Federal Constitutional Court Judge Christine Hohmann-Dennhardt – argue that enshrining a duty to promote children's welfare in the Basic Law would create specific obligations for action by both parents and the State.[1] Although no such amendment will be introduced, there are now plans to adopt practical measures to support families and improve monitoring of children's health so that problems in families can be detected at an earlier stage.[2]

However, NGOs accuse the German State itself of violating the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In their Shadow Report *Child Soldiers*, the charities *terre des hommes* and Kindernothilfe point to "serious shortcomings in the Government's treatment of former child soldiers", of whom around 500 are refugees in Germany. These charities are also urging Germany to raise the minimum age for military recruitment to 18 ("*straight 18*"), pointing out that 304 under-18s were recruited to the armed forces in 2007.[3]

An increasing number of human rights cases are being brought before the German or European courts. They include the case of two former prisoners who accused the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia of committing human rights violations in its penal system; the case was decided in their favour in the first instance.[4]

Of course, this by no means implies that every crisis faced by individuals in Germany is due to a violation of their social rights. Nonetheless, there are worrying trends: for example, the number of people without health insurance is steadily increasing. In 1999, the figure stood at around 145,000 people, rising to 177,000 in 2003 and reaching 211,000 by early 2007.[5] Due to the high costs of medical care, however, the lack of health insurance puts individuals' right to health at serious risk.

Under some circumstances, legislation designed to ensure economic well-being can also result in the violation of civil rights. For example, individuals sharing a home with recipients of unemployment benefit II ("Hartz IV") must expect home visits from welfare officials, thus violating the privacy of the home and information.[6] The officials will attempt to determine the precise relationship between the persons sharing the home: for if they are cohabiting in a quasi-marital relationship, the partner must contribute to the maintenance of the Hartz IV recipient. If there is no cohabitation, no such obligation arises. The authorities can thus save money if they manage to prove that their client is in an intimate relationship.

Finally, access to education is increasingly being considered from a human rights perspective. For example, the German Education Union and the National Union of Students have produced an analysis of the implementation of the right to tertiary education, especially in light of the recent introduction of tuition fees. They conclude that "neither the Federation nor the individual federal states are fulfilling their obligations arising under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", especially as regards Article 13, paragraph 2 (c) and (e).[7] The University of Bamberg's "Human Right to Education" research project is intended to develop "a systematic rationale" for the "need for and scope of the human right to education from a Christian social ethics perspective" and devise appropriate criteria for its implementation.[8]

1 See, for example, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, <www.sueddeutsche.de/deutschland/artikel/895/148542/>.

2 *ZEIT* online, <www.zeit.de/online/2007/52/kinderschutz>.

3 Press release, *terre des hommes*, <www.tdh.de/content/presse/pressemeldungen/detail.htm?&view=detail&id=194&year=2007>.

4 *ZEIT* online, <www.zeit.de/2007/51/LS-Haftbedingungen>.

5 *Spiegel* online, <www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,533727,00.html>.

6 Udo Geiger, *Liebe in den Zeiten von Hartz IV* [Love in the Time of Hartz IV], in *Grundrechte-Report* 2006, Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt a.M., 2006.

7 "*Die Einführung von Studiengebühren und der internationale Pakt über wirtschaftliche, soziale und kulturelle Rechte*" [The Introduction of Tuition Fees and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights], <www.studis.de/usta-ph-freiburg/cms/uploads/pdfs/sozialpakt_innenteil_web.pdf>.

8 <www.uni-bamberg.de/?id=17711>.

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GHANA

Free markets and the threat to basic food rights

The current food crisis highlights the fundamental conflict between the need to promote basic human rights and economic policies based on free trade and investment. Every woman, child and man, individually and in community with others, has the right to adequate food. In Ghana, state intervention in the market is urgently needed to facilitate local production and distribution of food, as well as to ensure basic rights for all citizens.

Social Watch Ghana Coalition

Some years back, the resilience of Ghanaians and their ability to cope with crises won them the nickname "magicians". But "magic" can only do so much. So far, Ghanaians have not surged into the streets like the people of Senegal, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, but hunger, anger and discontent are boiling higher, fuelled by sharp worldwide and domestic increases in the cost of many basic foods since the beginning of 2008.

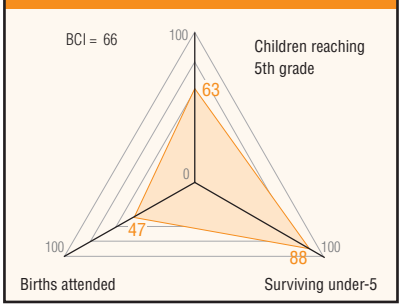
Prices of maize, rice, millet, yam, cassava, plantain, palm oil, tomato, cowpea and groundnuts jumped between 7.95% and 124.54% from January to April alone, according to figures obtained from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and published in the *Daily Graphic* on 1 April 2008. Although many of these staples are produced locally, the Government's determination to speed integration into the globalized economy has opened the floodgates to imported basic food products, particularly rice and sugar. The global market determines the price of these products, not local buying power.

An inadequate promotion of basic rights for women

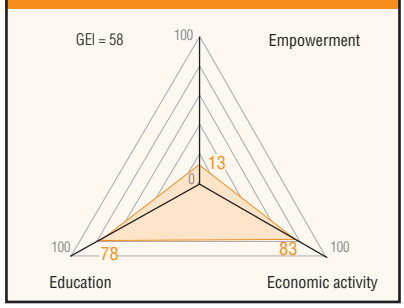
Eradication of hunger and poverty is particularly crucial to securing the basic rights of women. Like other signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Ghana is obligated to promote the rights of its citizens by complying with the obligations established under the United Nations Charter and the many treaties, covenants and agreements derived from it. The country has also ratified international conventions and agreements specifically dedicated to promoting women's rights, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. At the regional level, Ghana's adherence to agreements such as the Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Optional Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa entails additional commitments. The 1992 Constitution includes specific provisions designed to promote women's rights and gender equality.

The Government has attempted to demonstrate its commitment to the women's rights stipulated in these agreements by establishing a Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), to advise government on policy issues affecting women's rights and promote gender equality initiatives that advance women's status and well-being.[1] Unfortunately, in the eight years since MOWAC was created, the ministry has done little to advance the socio-economic well-being of women.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The sums allocated to MOWAC do not indicate strong Government support for women's rights. In recent years the ministry has been awarded 0.1% of the total budget, according to a study on "Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality in Ghana 2004-6" (Pobee-Hayford and Awori, 2007). "The small size of the budget for the MOWAC has implications for the mandate of the Ministry and its ability to carry out its duties," the authors comment. The effects of low funding are compounded by the absence of gender budgeting to monitor public expenditures for other purposes, including social welfare.

Food production and women's rights

Unbridled pursuit of neoliberal economic policies coupled with the unsustainable nature of globalization policies has reduced possibilities for addressing social, economic, cultural and environmental rights of women. Even more worrying, when economic policies are implemented, women's rights are the first to be sacrificed, on the premise that they have a "natural capacity" to cope with poverty, particularly in times of crisis.

Agriculture is the primary source of economic growth, responsible for 40% of the total (GLSS 4, 2000). However, closer examination reveals a strong gender bias in this expansion. Government investments have spurred a boom in export industries, primarily timber and cocoa production, where the workforce is predominantly male. At the same time, the Government has offered little support to basic food industries that are traditionally women's responsibility. As a result, crops for domestic consumption, livestock and fishing have all stagnated (Amu and Gockel, 2005 cited in ISODEC, 2006). This policy shows a preference for products over people. In the period under study, two million households were growing maize, 604,100 harvested peanuts and 361,400 had a rice crop, while only 584,400 households grew cocoa.

As shown in Chart I, agriculture is a main source of livelihood for persons living in rural communities, however much of the production is consumed by the families themselves. Households get only 30.6% of their income from agriculture, notes GLSS 4. Unpaid labour is common, 9.6% of the total for men and 20.15% for women. The table also shows that the burden shouldered by women varies according to ecological zone, indicating that climate change could have significant gender repercussions: Women do 53% of the agricultural labour in the rural coastal zone and only 36% in the rural savannah zone (ISODEC, 2006).

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (GPRS I) and the Growth and Poverty Strategy (GPRS II) both concluded that most Ghanaians who live in poverty are women and that poverty is greatest among farmers who grow basic foods, a majority of whom are women.[2] Addressing disproportionate

1 Ghana first established a National Council on Women and Development to meet its UN commitment in 1975. This body was transformed into the Department of Women when the Ministry of Women and Children was set up in 2000.

2 Ghana has had to produce Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as a condition for accessing funds from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative which has been pushed by donors.

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CHART 1: Distribution of households owning or operating a farm or keeping livestock and national estimates by locality

Locality/Ecological zone	Households operating a farm or keeping livestock. Sample	Women's share of agricultural activities
Urban Area	32	38
Rural Area	85	44
Rural Coastal	75	53
Rural Forest	6	46
Rural Savannah	93	36
Ghana	66	43

Source: GLSS 4 (2000).

deprivation will require policies and programmes that increase women's access to factors of production such as land, labour, credit and agricultural technology (Women's Manifesto Coalition, 2004). Inadequate credit is a major problem. It appears that lack of collateral often prevents women, the poor and persons with disabilities from expanding production. This compels them to rely on informal credit and loan arrangements, which usually charge higher interest than facilities commercial banks.

Policy responses and women's food rights

The Government's failure to enact any significant measures to address women's food rights has its roots in the neoliberal economic framework, which assumes that the country's development strategy will be based on aid flows and production for export, while many basic products and services, including food items, will be imported. Enhancing local food production and resource mobilization are not considered important. To succeed, this strategy requires a system of governance that limits political and technical opportunities for effective participation, and for promotion of human rights and women's rights.

Under its first President, the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana pursued a strategy of promoting development based on local food production. However, since his overthrow in 1966 (and subsequent death in exile), succeeding governments have executed a fundamental shift in agricultural policy. Under the country's Structural Adjustment Programme i.e. the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), fashioned according to World Bank guidelines, the Government has reduced the role of the public sector and given the private sector greater responsibility for providing goods and services. The Government eliminated subsidies for fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, and has attempted to reduce its role in the market. For example, the Cocoa Marketing Board disengaged from pricing and marketing. In 1991, the Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen was replaced by the Ghana Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, funded by farmers themselves, which functions as a cooperative venture at the district, regional and national levels. This reform benefits relatively large, wealthy farmers growing cash crops. Their financial support to the cooperatives allows them to wield disproportionate influence and power. Poorer farmers, predominantly women who are subsistence producers, are largely absent from the cooperatives, and have suffered the most from the policies these organizations advocate.

The basic framework of the ERP has been maintained under GPRS I and II. Despite some attempts to address biases against women, largely in response to protests by women's groups, the economic sectors where women predominate are still neglected, and gender inequality in the agricultural sector has not been addressed systematically. Budget allocations to the MOFA are heavily dependent on donors and woefully inadequate. The Government established a Women in Agriculture Development Department (WIADD) to address women's concerns, however it provided no funding for investment initiatives in 2002; in 2003 and 2004 WIADD did receive funding – but only from international donors (ISODEC, 2006).

The New Patriotic Party Government of John Agyekum Kuffour recently announce a program to "mitigate the hardships Ghanaians are facing as a result of escalating food and fuel prices" by reducing import duties on widely consumed food products and waiving levies on some petroleum products (*Daily Graphic*, 2008, p. 1). This measure is expected to tamp down prices of rice, wheat, yellow corn and vegetable oil. The report added that "the government was already in consultation with its development partners to import and stock-pile additional supplies of rice and wheat to enhance food security" (*Daily Graphic*, 2008, p. 3). However the Government failed to offer any strategy to bring more locally produced foods to market, even though investments to reduce post-harvest losses, improve transportation and modernize inadequate road networks, particularly in poor rural communities, would benefit both consumers and farmers.

Civil society initiatives

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have consistently called for a concerted Government effort to eradicate hunger and poverty. CSOs have seized opportunities such as the development of the GPRS I and II to express vigorous opposition to the Government's reliance on a free market economy to eliminate poverty. Women's rights organizations, particularly the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) have spoken out for gender sensitive policies to address poverty.

At a Civil Society Forum held in Accra on 17-21 April 2008 as a prelude to the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development XII (UNCTAD XII) Ministerial Conference in Accra, activists called for new polices that address poverty. The General Agricultural Workers' Union of Ghana's Trades Union Congress (GAWU of GTUC), the Third World Network Africa (TWN-Africa) and ActionAid Ghana declared that the trade and investment relationships developing countries have with the Bretton Woods institutions and transnational corporations are not the solution to poverty, and called for a shift to policies that protect producers and create employment. As they have in other venues, activists denounced the European Union trade proposals, which would compel the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries to lower tariffs that protect local food producers.

The most direct civil society critique of the current food crisis, hunger and poverty, particularly among women, has been developed by "Hunger-FREE Ghana by 2015 Campaign". The Campaign is a joint effort of FoodSPAN (a coalition of more than 50 farmer-based organizations, including GAWU of GTUC), community-based and policy advocacy organizations such as ABANTU for Development and media outlets. In a statement issued on May 27, 2008, the Campaign expressed support for the Government initiatives to address the food crisis, but noted that they were woefully inadequate and "will not benefit small scale producers, mainly women, who produce 80% of food in Ghana". ■

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HUNGARY

Romaphobia and fascism on the rise

Eighteen years after the adoption of electoral democracy and a free market economy, social and economic rights are still violated, while inequality and discrimination are pervasive. The creation of democratic laws and institutions has brought an increasing awareness of human rights, resulting in some legislative measures and some achievements. However discrimination against ethnic minorities is still deeply rooted, and discrimination against sexual minorities is becoming more evident.

ATTAC HUNGARY
Matyas Benyik

Hungary has ratified most of the major international instruments combating discrimination and is also a party to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Previously inconsistent and scattered anti-discrimination legislation has recently been thoroughly reformed to conform to the EC anti-discrimination *acquis*.

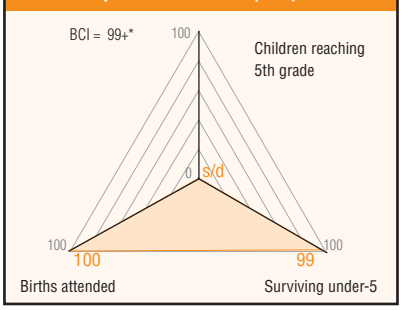
In 1997, the Government adopted its first programme for social integration of the Roma. Public debates on discrimination led to the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law in late 2003. The Equal Treatment Act (ETA), which covers all five grounds included in the EC Directives, came into force on 27 January 2004. Under the ETA, the Equal Treatment Authority went into operation on 1 February 2005. The Equal Treatment Authority is responsible for combating all types of discrimination and has already handled several hundred cases. However, a multitude of veiled abuses of human rights remains, and the ETA is not fully enforced.

Hungary has made its transition to capitalism and democracy more 'successfully' than most of its neighbours, but the majority has not benefited. For most Hungarians, the market economy has meant unemployment, involuntary retirement, and the loss of a secure livelihood. About 1.5 million people became jobless, and unemployment is the primary cause of poverty. About 60% of the population is worse off. The most affected groups include unskilled workers, the population of small towns and villages, families with children and the Roma. In addition to being the groups most negatively affected by the economic transition, minorities, particularly the Roma, have become scapegoats as the majority of Hungarians have experienced a severe drop in living standards.

Discrimination against the Roma

The Roma (Gypsies) constitute about 7% of the population (some 700,000 people). Despite legislative efforts and integration programmes, discrimination in education, employment, health care, housing and access to goods and services is still deeply rooted. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concerns about the prevalence of discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes. Roma children are stigmatized, excluded and impoverished. This discrimination is most notable in housing, jobs and access to health, adoption and educational services. The Committee expressed concern at the arbitrary segregation of Roma children in special institutions or classes. Access to preschools is limited in regions with a predominantly Roma population and a high incidence of poverty. The Roma are greatly overrepresented among the poorest groups. Hundreds of thousands live precariously in social ghettoes. Thousands have no access to water and electricity, and are malnourished when not starving. The desperate situation the Roma face is a consequence of pervasive racial discrimination, as well as the transition to a market economy.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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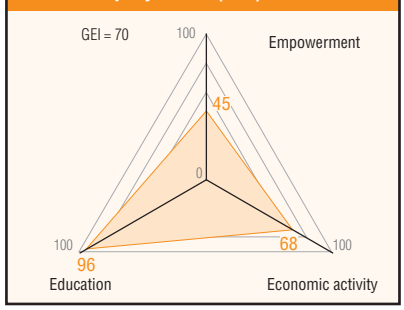

Roma health

The life expectancy of the Roma is estimated to be 10 years below the national average. Factors contributing to the poor health of Roma women include:

- Direct discrimination and degrading treatment in the form of extortion, neglect, verbal abuse and segregation in maternity wards;
- The extreme poverty of Roma women, which makes it impossible for them to pay for medical treatment, particularly since the recent introduction of a 'medical visiting fee'.

Egregious practices, including coerced sterilization of Roma women, have occurred in the past. Hungarian law does not require informed consent for sterilisation in all cases.

Roma education

Hungary's post-communist constitutional provisions granted municipal authorities significant autonomy in areas such as education. This has thwarted the national Government's efforts to gain broad-based compliance with national policies on school desegregation and to improve the education situation of Roma, especially Roma women. They have disproportionately low education attainment levels compared not only to the majority population but also to Roma men.

Roma girls and boys suffer verbal and physical harassment by classmates. Teachers rarely punish this behaviour, even when Roma parents report it. The combination of poverty, patriarchal attitudes and early childbearing continue to have a negative impact on the number of years that Roma girls and youth attend school.

These barriers are further exacerbated by the common practice of placing Roma children in special schools for the mentally disabled, based on poor judgments by mental commissions. Furthermore, school segregation along ethnic lines in separate classrooms or schools has increased in recent years.

Employment

The overall employment rate in Hungary is low (56.7% in 2007) and the unemployment rate is growing (more than 8% in January 2008).[1] Among the Roma, unemployment rates are far higher. The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities cites rates of 90% to 100% in particularly disadvantaged regions. Roma women face extremely high unemployment rates compared to Roma men and the majority population.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2008). *Employment and unemployment November 2007-January 2008*, First Release Serial:39, Budapest.

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Recent progress

In the past few years, cases of human rights abuse have been increasingly brought to public attention. In addition, implementation of the ETA shifted the burden of proof in many discrimination cases (previously, the current system had only applied in existed only in the realm of labour law). Although the ETA applies to all discrimination cases, legislation severely restricts the criteria for its application. The protection provided by the ETA is amplified by the Civil Code and by a number of other laws (e.g. consumer protection, law on labour supervision, etc.) and statutes regulating the operation of institutions (e.g. Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights).

In April 2006 Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and his socialist-liberal coalition won the elections and returned to office. Although this Government has been much better than its predecessors in promoting civil dialogue and consultation on discrimination, the decision to dismantle the Government's current focus on Roma issues in favour of a broad-based policy addressing 'disadvantaged groups' could hinder progress on Roma issues. Essential steps are needed to ensure this minority's full and effective political participation. One key means to fulfil their rights would be to promote inclusion of the Roma in electoral and administrative bodies and increase their representation in government administration.[2]

Women and domestic violence

According to a report released in 2007 by Amnesty International,[3] 28% of more than 1,000 women surveyed reported that they had been beaten and more than 7% said they had been forced to have sex by their partner.[4] Individuals known to the victim commit two thirds of sexual crimes in Hungary. Few of them are tried for their crimes. According to the report, the laws on rape need urgent reform. The Penal Code defines rape and other crimes of sexual violence as "crimes against marriage, the family, youth and sexual morality", ignoring the survivor and encouraging silence. Even more disturbing, the code states that rape must involve violence or threat of physical harm, thus requiring survivors to prove they physically resisted their attacker or that the person committing the rape directly threatened their life or physical integrity. Widespread prejudice makes it difficult to obtain justice, since raped girls and women can expect to be disbelieved and stigmatized.

Many cases simply drop out of the legal process, failing even to reach court. The police may not identify the attacker; the victim or other witnesses may decide to withdraw their statements or not to press charges. The situation is even worse among Roma women; more than two fifths of the them have suffered or currently suffer domestic violence, but the survivor seeks police assistance in only one case out of five ; the police responded effectively in just one out of seven cases. Violence against Roma women is pervasive, both within and outside the Roma community.

Roma women rarely turn to institutions that address discrimination, such as the Equal Treatment Authority, since they are barely represented in the self-government entities of the Roma minority and not represented at all in those representing women in general. Although some Roma women have succeeded in entering the public sector, most are employed within the Roma community.

Low levels of reporting are attributable to poor police investigative skills and training, the lack of official support and services offered to victims, the flawed legislation covering rape and other sexual crimes, and widespread social prejudices encountered by women who report such crimes. Only the strongest cases reach the courts, those in which the victim has been seriously injured. In rape and other sexual crime cases that are adjudicated, the conviction rate for is one of the highest in Europe, more than 50%.

Women's employment

A 2006 study[5] found that the employment rate for women remains static and the unemployment rate is rising. Despite legal regulations to combat discrimination on any grounds, women receive less pay and encounter more modest career prospects than men when they enter or re-enter the labour market.

Since 1993, the employment rate for Roma women has not surpassed 15%.[6] The latest statistical data show a further decrease, due to unfavourable changes in pension regulations and low participation in public employment.

Human trafficking

Hungary is primarily a transit country for human trafficking, though to a lesser extent it is a destination of women from neighbouring countries and a source of women. Women are transported through Hungary for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation to Austria, Slovenia, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, France, and the United States. Hungarian women are trafficked primarily to Western and Northern Europe and to North America.

Although the Government fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, and has shown a sustained commitment to combating it, Hungary was designated a Tier 1 transit country and to a lesser degree a source and destination country in the *Trafficking in Persons Report 2007*. Since then the Government has introduced new enforcement measures and the police have improved their efforts to identify and care for victims.[7]

Rising fascism and anti-Semitism

Since the adoption of electoral democracy, xenophobia has steadily increased. Hungary is now the most xenophobic country in Eastern Europe, more so than the Balkans.[8] In harmony with the triumph of liberal thinking, Hungary-nationalistic and neo-Nazi associations (e.g. Blood and Honour) mushroomed. Although Nazi-style parties do not enjoy wide support, the growing number of paramilitary organizations poses a real threat to Jews, Roma and gays. It is frightening to see neo-Nazis marching in the streets of Budapest waving Arrow-Cross inspired Arpad-flags and wearing symbols resembling those of the Nazi era. Jobbik, an extreme-right anti-Semitic and homophobic party currently enjoying poll ratings in the tenths of a per cent, recently established a paramilitary group called *Magyar Garda* (Hungarian Guard) composed of a few hundred young extremists.

Reacting to the pressure of NGOs and the Jewish and Roma communities, Prime Minister Gyurcsány asked public prosecutors to keep a close eye on this extremist grouping. "The establishment of *Magyar Garda* threatens our most important common values: respect for human dignity, the right to a life free from fear, and respect for others' cultures, ethnic origins, and world views", stated Gyurcsány.

Legal measures are being prepared to ban Magyar Garda. It could be disbanded soon. However, in order to prevail, the anti-fascist struggle also requires a change in social and economic policies, since neo-liberal austerity measures create fertile ground for fascist tendencies.

Excessive use of force and ill-treatment

Between the 17 and 20 of September 2006, police and protesters clashed after Prime Minister Gyurcsány admitted he had lied during the election campaign. The passivity of the police on that occasion opened the way for a series of arson attacks and the looting of the Hungarian state television headquarters: protesters set fire to cars and threw stones at the police.

Violence erupted again on 23 October. Ultra-nationalist and extreme right groups clashed with the police during the commemoration of the 1956 uprising, and the police repressed them with excessive force, including rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas. Protesters taken into custody were beaten and some detainees were denied immediate access to a lawyer.

These human rights violations were widely criticized by opposition parties and civil society activists.[9] In addition, incidents in which the police used excessive force against suspects, particularly Roma, have been reported, and there have been repeated allegations of government interference in editorial and staff decisions in the state-owned media. In September 2007, vandals sprayed anti-Semitic slogans on a mobile Holocaust memorial exhibition just outside Budapest. ■

2 Written comments of the European Roma Rights Centre concerning Hungary for consideration by UN CEDAW at its 39th Session (23 July-10 August 2007).

3 Amnesty International (2007). *Hungary Cries Unheard: The Failure to Protect Women from Rape and Sexual Violence in the Home*, AI Index: EUR 27/002/2007, London: AI.

4 Tóth, O. (1999). *Erőszak a családban* [Domestic Violence], TÁRKI Social Research Centre, in Amnesty International, 2007, *op. cit.*

5 Koncz, K. (2006). *A felzárkózás elmaradása: a magyar n'k munkaer'-piaci helyzete* [Out of step: Hungarian female employment], in Statisztikai Szemle [Statistical Review], July 2006, p. 651-674.

6 *Ibid.*

7 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2007.

8 Wallace, C. (1999). *Xenophobia in Post-Communist Europe.* Studies in Public Policy: 323. Glasgow: University of Stratchclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy. In: Hagan, M. (2003). *Human Rights Melodrama*, p. 2-3.

9 International Helsinki Federation Report 2007, *Human Rights in the OSCE Region*, Hungary, p. 82-85.

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INDIA

Rights, commitments and delivery: who gets what, when and how?

Government commitments to the right to justice, equality and liberty enshrined in the Constitution are laudable but not sufficient. They must be put into practice. The State faces a major challenge in formulating and implementing public policies that promote the accessibility, affordability and availability (the three A's) of basic social services to tens of millions of citizens still living below the poverty line (28% of the total population). Civil society campaigns are stepping in to ensure that promises to guarantee rights are actually fulfilled.

Social Watch India
Himanshu Jha

Even while India's GDP climbs at a rate of 9% plus annually, the question of whether the Government will provide basic services to the marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society remains unanswered. This will be evident in a review of how some basic services measure up on three A's and what patterns are emerging.

Health

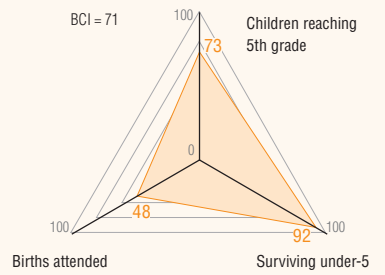
The trend in the health sector is hardly encouraging. Funding for health services remains meagre, hovering around 1% of total GDP. Worse yet, the public health care system is collapsing around the millions of citizens who depend on it. More and more are flocking to private health services -58% of the rural population and 62% in urban areas by 2004.[1] With no social security that covers their costs, households forced to seek private health care frequently become mired in debt and end up selling what little property they have to make the payments.

The inadequacy of health care outside the cities is reflected in the growing disparity in mortality rates for infants (50% higher in rural areas) and children under-5 (60% higher in rural areas).[2] Despite ample resources, the Integrated Child Development Services established to provide comprehensive care to the poor and improve the nutrition of women and children has failed to close the gap.

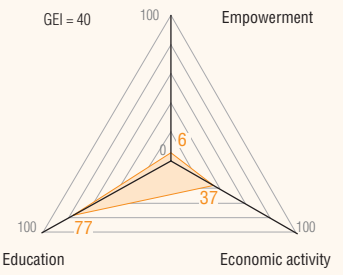
Health facilities in rural areas are woefully inadequate. Community health centres have less than half the staff they need. To meet the norm of one bed per 500 people, rural hospitals would have to expand 800%. Marginalized social groups such as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)[3] are far worse off: SC have four times less access than the average rural citizen and nine times less than urban residents; the ST have 12 times less access in rural areas and 27 times less in urban areas.[4]

The Government's flagship health care programme is the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), established to provide basic health care particularly in rural areas. With generous funding, this could program could make a major difference. So far, the money isn't there. The founding document promised that the initial allocation of INR 6,700 crore (USD 1.46 billion) in 2005-2006 would be boosted 30% in subsequent years from a separate budget. However, the Government didn't follow through; instead, it raided other programmes to give NRHM additional money.[5]

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Education

Some trends in education have been encouraging. The Government is building new primary and upper primary schools. Female literacy jumped from 32% in 1991 to 54.16% a decade later, a faster increase than among males.[6]

As in health, however, minorities and other marginalized groups have much less access to education. Enrolment among SC children is only 67% of the national average; among ST children it is only 60%. Enrolment is even lower among Muslim children, 51%. The percentages among girls are even more dismal. Only 49% of SC girls and 41% of ST girls sit in elementary school classrooms, considerably below the national average being 56.22%. The percentage of Muslim girls in school has actually fallen. Dropout rates are also above average among marginalized groups and girls (see Chart 1).

Gender

The range of poverty indicators has been broadened to include vulnerability, insecurity and defencelessness. Whatever the definition, poverty remains massive, particularly among women. India has a skewed sex ratio, with 927 females per 1,000 males. Some of this disparity is due to mortality in childbirth: for every 100,000 live births, 407 mothers die, according to UNICEF. The primary causes are early marriage, lack of adequate health care and the absence of trained health workers. All of these factors are more prevalent in rural areas, especially the most remote – further marginalizing the already marginalized.

From 1991 to 2001, the proportion of marginal workers in the rural workforce jumped from 11% to 26%, while the share of workers in the formal sector shrank from 89% to 77%, and the number of workers in the informal sector soared from 27 million in 1991 to 81 million 10 years later. In rural areas, 78% of all women work in agriculture, where they make up one-third of the labour force. However, only 4% are employed in the formal sector, while they far outnumber men among marginal workers – 51 million to 30 million in 2001.[7] Not only are their numbers disproportionate, their pay is traditionally 30% less.

1 NSSO 60th Round – 2004, Report No. 507, New Delhi, 2006.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 Social Watch India Report 2006.

5 "In 2005-2006, the plan outlay in NRHM was INR 6,075.17 crore [USD 1.32 billion]. It received an increased outlay of INR 7,155.97 crore [USD 1.56 billion] (Revised Estimates) as plan funds in 2006-2007. This has further increased to INR 9,801 crore [USD 2.13 billion] (RE) in 2007-2008 and INR 10,742 crore [USD 2.34 billion] in 2008-2009. The Non-plan outlays for these years remained almost stagnant at INR 32.29 crore [USD 7.03 million] (2005-2006 RE), INR 34.40 crore [USD 7.49 million] (2006-2007 RE), INR 38 crore [USD 8.27 million] (2007-2008 RE) and INR 44.25 crore [USD 9.63 million] (2008-2009 RE). The trend clearly establishes the fact that the revised estimates are significantly less than the budget estimates, which essentially means that there is underspending of approved outlays under NRHM". Centre for Budget Governance Accountability, Response to the Union Budget 2008-2009.

6 National Literacy Mission, Government of India.

7 *Ibid.*

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CHART 1. Gross dropout rate in primary, middle and secondary schools in India

Year	(Classes I-V)			(Classes I-VIII)			(Classes I-X)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1960-1961	61.7	70.9	64.9	75	85	78.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1970-1971	64.5	70.9	67	74.6	83.4	77.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1980-1981	56.2	62.5	58.7	68	79.4	72.7	79.8	86.6	82.5
1990-1991	40.1	46	42.6	59.1	65.1	60.9	67.5	76.9	71.3
2000-2001*	39.7	41.9	40.7	50.3	57.7	53.7	66.4	71.5	68.6

* Provisional

Note: The gross dropout rate represents the percentage of pupils who drop out from a given grade or cycle or level of education in a given school year.

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

This disparity persists, despite the efforts of a variety of rural development programmes launched by the Government and numerous international agencies: "Government programmes need to urgently address the problems of low wages, lack of incentives for work, lack of skills and access to resources. Most of the organizations do not touch upon the issues related to higher income work opportunities, upward economic mobility, property rights and rights such as equal wages for equal work. In addition since poor labour households in backward districts need more income, Employment Guarantee Schemes should pay special attention to create tailored-made employment opportunities for women at stipulated minimum wages to help them in the short run."[8]

Minorities

As noted above, minorities fare far worse than the population as a whole in areas such as health and education. The 403-page Report on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India prepared by the Rajinder Sachar Committee, appointed by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, concludes that poverty and discrimination leading to deprivation create high barriers to joining the mainstream of Indian society. Muslim children have "a significantly greater risk of being underweight or stunted than a child from other minority groups", according to the report, and their risk of malnutrition is also slightly higher. "The 61st round data from the National Sample Survey shows that 23% of India's population was poor in 2004-2005," notes the report. "The SCs and STs together are the poorest, with a headcount ratio of 35%. Muslims stand second with 31% living below the poverty line."[9] Muslims who are STs suffer double jeopardy (triple if they are women), and 40% of them belong to the "other backward castes" category.

Indigenous people

The neo-liberal economic policies pursued by the Government have opened the way to private company encroachment on tribal lands. This presents a major threat to indigenous and tribal peoples. When they protest, the Government response is often brutal. In the Dhule district of Maharashtra, the police violently repressed tribal communities protesting against the leasing of forest land to Suzlon Energy, a wind power company. In Gujarat, tribal farmers of the Dang forest were beaten up for "encroaching the government's forest land". These are not isolated cases. Other discriminatory acts have occurred in the states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The Government's own Ministry of Tribal Affairs reported that between 1950 and 1990 approximately 8.5 million *Adivasis* (indigenous forest people) were displaced by mega projects or Government takeovers of forest lands; they constituted more than 55% of the total displaced population. "It is this discrepancy between the authorities' pious lip service to their rights and unique culture while failing to protect them from rapacious commercial interests that has caught the tribals in a bind," concluded one article.[10]

Further encroachment may be reined in somewhat by the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill 2005, just passed by Parliament. The bill recognizes the forest rights of ST (FDSTs) who were occupying the land before 25 October 1980 by granting the "right to hold and live in the forest lands, under individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation, for livelihood by a member or members of a forest dwelling scheduled tribes or other traditional forest dwellers."[11] However the number of FDSTs who are actually protected remains unclear and the bill provides no protection for forest-dwellers and tribes not scheduled in a particular area, as well as *Dalits* (untouchables) and other backward communities who rely on forests for livelihood needs.

Social campaigns

Rapid economic, social and cultural change has cracked open the political floodgates. A variety of social groups are pouring through, joined by people's movements defending the rights of the marginalized groups. Together, they are at the crest of a wave of civil society campaigns demanding that formal commitments to the right to justice, equality and liberty be honoured in full. ■

8 *Ibid.*

9 Ghanshyam Shah, "The Condition of Muslims", *Economic and Political* Weekly, 2007.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Act, chapter 2, 3(a).

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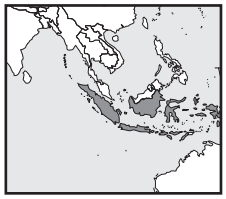
INDONESIA

Longing for a peaceful country



The Government has failed to provide a satisfactory level of basic human and social rights. Poverty has become fertile ground for violence, and the State is not ensuring respect for religious, cultural and sexual minorities. Opportunistic extremist groups and politicians are attempting to profit from widespread hardship by provoking more extreme forms of intolerance. Civil society groups are responding by reaching out to Government bodies and the broader public, advocating a revival of pluralism.

PEKKA (Women Headed Household Empowerment)
Nani Zulminarni[1]

Demonstrations by students and a wide range of other activist groups against official policies have become a common sight in practically every major city. Core demands are for Government action to break the rising cost of living and end pervasive corruption. The authorities often respond with beatings, shootings and incarceration, however throwing protestors in jail cannot hide conceal the reality that poverty is growing. In 2008 alone, the number of people living below the poverty line (an income below USD 1 per day) will jump to 41.7 million, 22% of the total population, estimates the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. If the threshold were USD 2 a day, the percentage would nearly double.

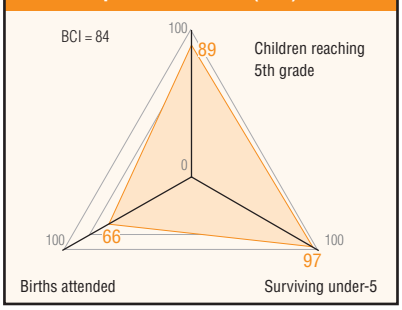
Oil, inflation and poverty

Since mid-2007, millions of people in nearly every part of the archipelago have been lining up to get some of the most basic products they need to survive, including cheap rice and cooking oil, as well as fuel. The price of refined fuel oil has leaped more than 175% since 2005, accelerating overall inflation to 12 % by mid-2008, according to Bank Indonesia estimates. Purchasing power has not kept pace.

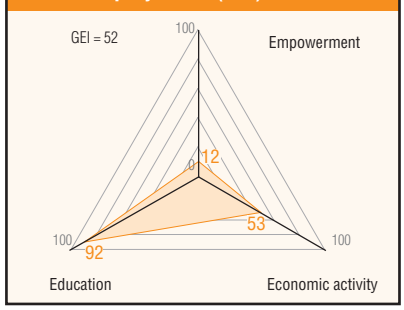
The Government has responded to the rising cost of oil by hiking the price of refined fuel. Oil production has been dwindling since 2000; the flow has already shifted from export to import. To reduce its budget deficits, the Government has slashed fuel subsidies, launched a program to convert refined fuel oil into gas to satisfy household needs, and cut social expenditures for education and health. These initiatives have been body blows to the poor, provoking widespread anger against the Government. A growing number of Indonesians are becoming frustrated that more than 30% of the budget goes to pay off State debt to international financial institutions and other lenders.

The Government solution has been to privatize basic services. As a result, the quality of education and health services has deteriorated in poor communities, widening the gap between them and the rich. To overcome these problems, the Government has announced a National Community Development Initiative (NCDI) with a diverse mandate, including direct cash assistance for poor communities, loans for small and medium businesses, and a community development program. However, many critics are sceptical, believing that the social support system is so under-funded, chaotic, corrupt, and plagued by inaccurate data retrieval that the NCDI cannot possibly be effective.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)

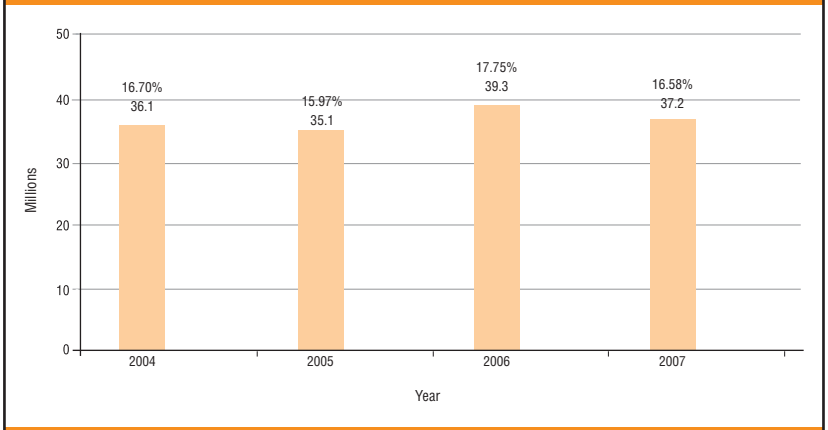


Activists and the budget

NGO groups have been vigorously demanding changes in the budget. Civil community groups are calling for more funding for community social services; women's groups are insisting that money has to be provided to secure fundamental gender rights in areas such as health, particularly to reduce the appalling level of maternal mortality during childbirth (310 mothers per 100.000 births).

Women are also urging action to stem rising domestic violence, including abuse, part of a surge in violence of all kinds as poverty shreds the social fabric. Reported acts of violence against women have been spurting between 9% and 30% annually, according to The National Commission on Stopping Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan). Although some of this increase may reflect greater willingness to go to the authorities, it may also indicate that incidents of violence are exploding at a terrifying pace.

CHART 1. Population under the poverty line



Source: BPS

1 National Coordinator of PEKKA (Women Headed Household Empowerment) and Chairperson of Advisory board of PPSW (The Center for Women Resources Development).

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Poverty and gendered-based violence

Domestic violence, particularly assaults on wives by the husband or children by their parents, often erupts in times of growing economic stress. Adults, particularly men, who lose hope and are overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness, are much more likely to lash out against weak or vulnerable family members. At a time when the combined unemployment and underemployment rates have climbed above 39%, many more families are on the edge.

The efforts of women's organizations to persuade government agencies to take action have been somewhat effective. In its most recent report, Komnas Perempuan counted up the number of official measures taken over the past decade and cited 11 at the national level, 15 at the district level, and 3 at the regional level. Unfortunately, enforcement of these laws remains weak. In addition, the country's decentralized system of government has opened the way to official discrimination against women. For example, 27 districts have laws requiring that women dress "properly", in effect authorizing the State to control the female body.

Failure to guarantee a plural society

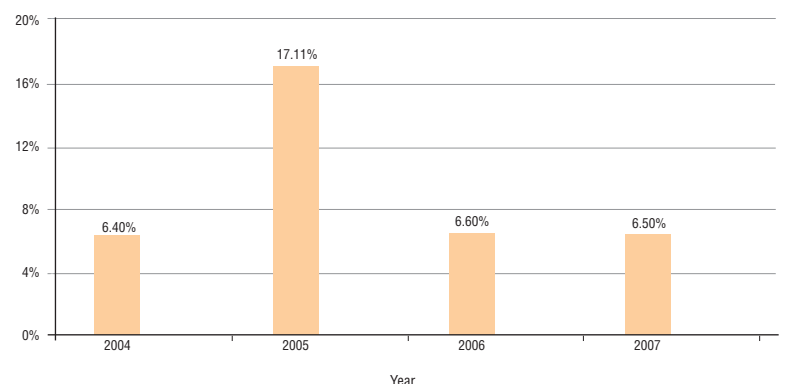
Basic laws guarantee freedom and protection for all Indonesians, and the Government has ratified nearly all international agreements that commit states to protecting human rights, Implementation, however, is another story. Weak law enforcement and an immature political system have fragmented Indonesian society. Tension is growing in areas such as religion. Violent acts by the Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) sect over the last three years are indicative of the Government's failure to provide adequate safety and protection to minority groups. The Government has responded by banning the JAI. This measure violates its commitment to freedom of belief while angering sympathetic groups that may react by assaulting communities considered *different*.

Over the last five years, the number of extremist groups that attempt to impose their beliefs on others by force has grown. Human rights activists are beginning to worry that the Government may eventually pander to them, and marginal groups such as sexual minorities will suffer the same fate as the JAI.

A fertile ground for violence

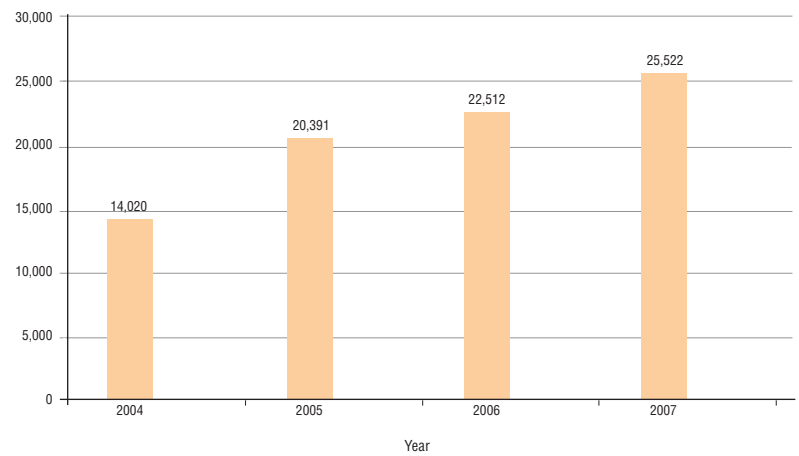
The widening gap between rich and poor creates a dangerous opening for extremist groups and politicians. If current trends continue, the poor, minority communities and society in general may pay a heavy price. Human rights groups and community organizations, including NGO's, are responding with efforts to revitalize Indonesian support for pluralism and respect for basic human rights. Their activities include public education programs and campaigns to convince the Government that it must find ways to overcome the many challenges the State and country are confronting. ■

CHART 2. Yearly inflation rate



Source: BPS

CHART 3. Reported domestic violence cases



Source: Komas Perempuan.

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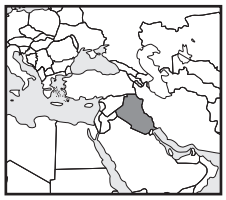
IRAQ

Migration and displacement: a growing and multifaceted problem



Pervasive violence has militarized and polarized society. Daily life has become a nightmare. Kidnappings and killings are widespread, forcing millions of Iraqis to abandon their homes and seek sanctuary in safer areas within the country or abroad, the largest and fastest migration in modern history. The country urgently needs an assessment of real needs by a partnership of government agencies, UN organizations and international and local NGO's, with the support of local communities.

Iraqi Al-Amal Association
Jamal Al-Jawahiri

In any country, human security involves far more than national security. It has economic, nutritional, social, gender and political dimensions, and encompasses individuals, local communities and the nation as a whole. Those who lack subsistence, are marginalized or subjected to violence, have lost their freedom or face any kind of danger as individuals or as members of a group are all deprived of human security.

The waves of migration from Iraq started in the early 1950s with the deportation of the Jews. For more than two decades in the 1970s and 1980s the State pursued a policy of displacing the Kurds, not only as a punishment but also to change the ethnic composition of Iraqi Kurdistan, particularly in Kirkuk. During the same period, the Government deported hundreds of thousands of Iraqis of Iranian origin to Iran.

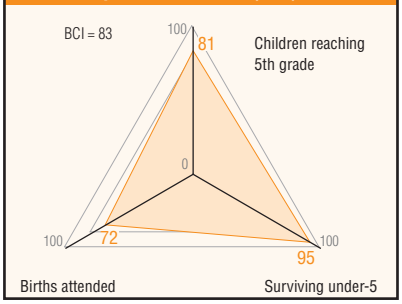
At the same time, the Government unleashed an aggressive campaign against political dissidents. This led to a massive wave of emigration that included many artists, intellectuals and scientists. During the 1990s, economic sanctions, the declining economy and deteriorating living standards compelled thousands of scientists to seek employment in other countries, inside and outside the Arab region. Prior to the regime's collapse, the number of Iraqi émigrés was already approaching two million.

The largest displacement in modern history

After the occupation of the country in 2003 by the US-led forces, insecurity skyrocketed with the emergence of militias and sectarian-based violence, including revenge killings. The plague of assassinations soon spread striking down university lecturers, doctors, engineers, managers and financial experts. According to the Ministry of Health, between April 2003 and May 2006 more than 102 doctors were assassinated, and many more were threatened or kidnapped. This led to yet another mass exodus.

Violence flamed even higher after February 2006, when the criminal demolition of the Imam Al-Askari shrine, one of the holiest Shi'ite sites, set off fierce sectarian violence and massive, forced

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



migration. Karbala Province had more than 18,000 displaced families; Salahadin, Najaf and Anbar Provinces each had 12,000; 50,000 more fled to Iraqi Kurdistan. The number of internal refugees seeking shelter in Baghdad and other provinces was similar if not higher. By the end of the year, the number of internally displaced Iraqis had climbed to 2.3 million, according to UN estimates. Tens of thousands more had fled the country. In the same year, Iraqis topped the list of asylum seekers in the industrialized countries, averaging 8,100 applications a monthly.

Syria has absorbed a greater number of refugees than any other country, more than one million, while Jordan has taken in more than half a million. The influx has strained the infrastructure of these two countries and many others, particularly in the housing, health services and education sectors. While those who had already gained entry were receiving assistance, the host countries introduced more strict entry procedures to limit the number of additional refugees.

A similar pattern emerged within Iraq. Some provincial authorities imposed more stringent procedures to limit the number of displaced people. For example, Dehuk, Arbil and Sulaimaniya required displaced Iraqis to register at the Ministry of Immigration to become eligible for assistance. This violates a government decree issued in July 2007.

Although the total number of refugees can only be guessed, the UN Commission for Refugees has estimated that by December 2007 2.5 million Iraqis were still in the country and 1.9 million were living elsewhere. Combined, these 4.4 million refugees represent 15% of the entire population, by far the largest and most rapid migration in modern history. The actual numbers could be far higher, since many Iraqis who abandoned their homes have not registered as displaced or refugees.

The nightmare of daily life

"Daily life is a nightmare for Iraqis and that is driving them to escape," a Red Cross spokesperson lamented. "Although it is difficult to foresee what will happen, things appear dire and what we can see is deteriorating living conditions."

A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees described what this has meant for some of the most vulnerable members of society: "Due to violence, many people escape from the multi-sectarian areas even before they are forced to do so… Children stopped going to school… their parents cannot find work… the number of street children is on the rise… child labour is on the rise… there are children collecting garbage".

Religious minorities such as Christians, Sab'is, Shabak and others have become particular targets, subjected to threats and personal violence, as well as attacks on their shrines in Basra, Baghdad and other places. More than 10,000 Christian families moved to Ninevah and many thousands more to Arbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. In addition, thousands of Palestinian residents who had supported the old regime moved from their homes after being attacked.

Terrorist groups have also targeted women, subjecting them to assassinations and kidnappings, as well as violent imposition of *hijab* (a code of modesty in dress that requires women to cover everything except their face and hands in public) and restrictions on their participation in public life.

Problems faced by the émigrés and the displaced

- Loss of income: A majority of the émigrés and displaced lose their major or only source of income. Many are robbed of their savings and valuables before emigrating. This frequently impels them to compete with locals in the job market, accept low wages or work in the black market.
- Abrupt termination of education: Uprooting children from their environment inevitably affects their education. Many are unable to resume their studies for financial reasons, others because local schools cannot absorb them. Some go to school in camps, but receive a lower standard of education there. In roughly half of the refugee families surveyed by Iraqi Al-Amal in Karbala, Salahadin and Ninevah provinces, some or all the children were not attending school.

* There are no available data on GEI components.

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- Deterioration of environmental and health services: Straitened finances or the absence of services cause a rapid deterioration in health. The camps lack the most basic health services. A survey by the Iraqi Al-Amal Association found that 50% of the families had no access to medicine.
- Housing: Every displaced person is, in essence, homeless. A majority of displaced Iraqis live in deplorable conditions (three persons per room). In some cases, six to eight people share a single tent.
- Psychological effects: People who have been driven from their homes typically lose family members, neighbours and friends and suffer from alienation, fear, anxiety, uncertainty and homesickness. The difficulty of adapting to a new environment and resuming a normal life will cause lasting psychological scars.

Unsatisfactory response

Given the magnitude of displacement and its disastrous consequences, the response of the Government has been less than satisfactory. Inadequacies have failed to provide safe havens for the displaced people and inadequate support to the host provinces, particularly in education and health services. The Ministry of Migration is poorly funded. The registration process, mandatory to obtain government assistance, is at best slow; sometimes it shuts down entirely, in some cases for long periods.

Iraqi NGOs, despite their recent origin and limited capacities and resources, have done their best to alleviate some of the hardship faced by the displaced people. However, due to the deteriorating security conditions and the difficulty in reaching the displaced, the NGOs are able to serve just a small percentage of the displaced.

International support has not been sufficient either. The poor security conditions have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the UN and the major international organizations to act in many cases. Even so, slow bureaucratic procedures have also hindered the international response, and assistance that has been provided has not necessarily corresponded to the greatest needs.

Lessons to be learned

- Any effort to mitigate the suffering of refugees and displaced people must be based on a careful assessment of needs. Furthermore, a sustainable, effective campaign can only be established through a partnership between government agencies, UN organizations and international and local NGOs acting with the support of local communities. It will also require building the capacity of the local communities and NGOs.

MAIN CAUSES OF MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

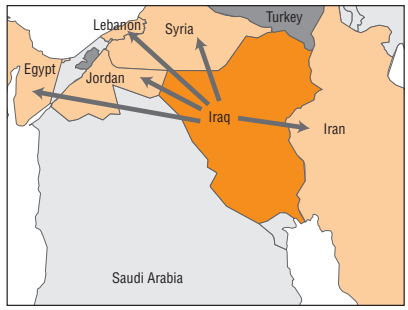
- *Sectarian strife:* Sectarian violence by the militias and other armed groups is the cause of forced migration. Departures are usually preceded by threats, kidnappings and killings. In some areas, sectarian violence is responsible for 90% of the migrations if not more.
- *Violence:* Iraq has many violent factions, each with its own agenda: the militias and armed groups of diverse types and allegiance (Al Qaeda, etc.); Government forces; the multinational forces.

  The militias and armed groups perpetrate violence in many forms and impose their own rule, independent of any control by the central Government. At the same time, the Government and multi-national military often use excessive force against civilians, including killings and home demolitions, forcing people to flee.
- *Non-tolerance:* Armed groups are usually intolerant. Many people are forced to choose between hiding their true beliefs and fleeing.
- *Culture:* Groups with Islamist tendencies have resorted to violence and banned cultural clubs, entertainment establishments and intermingling of the sexes in their areas of influence. Wearing the *hijab* becomes compulsory, not a choice. Those who fail to obey risk assault or death.

FIGURE 1. Iraqi migration. UN states that Iraqi refugees and IDPs forms the largest population exodus since the palestines refugees in 1948.

Population displacement (in million)			
Syria	18.6	0.5-1.0	0.43
Lebanon	4.0	0.04	0.40
Jordan	5.5	0.7	1.80
Iraq	26.0	2.0	1.70
Egypt	78.9	-0.02	
Iran	67.0	0.054	

Population
Iraqi refugees
Iraqi IDPs
Palestine refugees



Iraqi refugees
Hosting country
Other hosting countries

Source: UNHCR & IOM

- The participation of young people, currently beleaguered by a culture of violence, in re-building programmes is crucial, so that they can develop their constructive capacity.
- Emergency actions must be linked to sustainable development programmes. Otherwise, violence will erupt again and again. One of the aims of the emergency aid must be the stabilization of society.
- The emergency aid must include basic provisions and services, including food, health, education, electricity, water, housing and, above all, safe haven.
- Human catastrophes have the greatest impact on women and children. Providing for their safety and needs must be a paramount objective.
- The people served must be provided with education on human rights issues and conflict resolution and be given an opportunity to participate in the social democratic process.
- Finances, management, beneficiaries and the selection of partners in any activity, whether concerned with relief or development, must be transparent. ■

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ITALY

Economic, social and cultural rights: violations vs. moratorium

Human rights in Italy are not enjoyed equally by all social groups. Immigrants suffer constant violations of basic rights and torture is not explicitly punishable by law. The country lacks a legislative framework to combat violence against women as well as strong measures to prevent child labour and exploitation. Social and community rights are also a concern, especially with the growing xenophobia reflected in the recent change of government. Globally, while pledging to support efforts to reduce poverty and inequality, Italy has not defined a strategy for promoting human rights.

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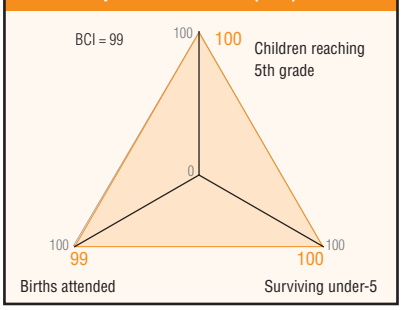
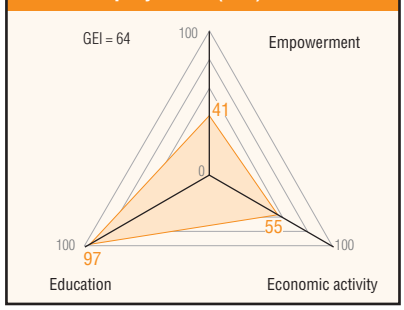
Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Provision of social services

The promotion of human and civil rights is linked to a great extent to public expenditures for basic services. In Italy, in comparison with European standards, much needs to be improved.

In 2004, Italy spent 26.1% of GDP in the provision of social protection and benefits to its citizens. Chart 1 shows that social protection expenditure goes mainly to provide old age and survivors' pensions (61.3%) and public health services (25.9%). While the latter is below the European average, the former is much higher. The high pension expenditure can be explained by the lower expenditure on unemployment benefits (2%) with respect to the EU average (6.5%), as unemployment compensation is based on early-retirement policies rather than unemployment benefits. The share of expenditure for families, home and social exclusion is 4.7%, also far below the European average. Compared with OECD data for other countries, the share of GDP spent on housing is minimal.

Poverty and the right not to be poor

The definition of poverty is usually confined to income levels. Although a wider definition is urgently required, even within the narrow income measure, the right not to be poor seems far from being fulfilled in Italy. According to the National Institute of Statistics, 2.6 million households are currently living below the poverty line, representing 13.1% of the population. The situation is particularly dramatic in the south, where the incidence of poverty goes up to 22.6%, and where the average income for poor families is 20.8% below the poverty line. Moreover, an additional 8.1% of working poor and households are "at risk of poverty", as they are vulnerable to unexpected events, such as illness, dependency of a relative, instability of employment or increasing financial burdens (for instance, flexible interest rates on mortgages).

The risk of poverty for households is tied to the number of children. Having three children raises the risk of being poor to 27.8% (up to 42.7% in southern parts of the country). Being part of a household with five or more members increases the risk of sliding under the poverty line by 135%. While the Government currently provides incentives for households not to bear children, it lacks a national plan to fight poverty, a strategy defining aims and objectives as well as measurable targets, action priorities and required structures. To implement such a plan, it would be necessary to harmonize the different institutional levels and the action of different social actors, such as business, the non-profit sector, NGOs and trade unions.

Immigration and respect for human rights

Italy is the only European country without a consistent law on asylum rights. The latest legislative reform on immigration, the "Bossi-Fini" law passed by the centre-right wing Government, is designed to deter migrant access to the country. Its provisions include limiting personal freedoms of asylum seekers, in total contrast with the Italian Constitution, in violation of the right to legal defence when refugee status is denied. Violations of human rights inside Centres for Temporary Residence (CPTs), instituted in 1998 by the then centre-left wing Government, are commonplace. CPTs are detention structures where foreigners without legal permits are detained with no access to legal assistance, deprived of personal freedom, and often lack of medical assistance. Deportation procedures with no right to legal defence are frequent and have been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights. The European Court's judgment in Saadi vs Italy in February 2008, reaffirmed that the ban on deporting people to countries where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment is absolute and unconditional.

The attack on immigrants has increased and been particularly violent in the last two years, regardless of the political colour of government. It has been favoured by a number of "public security" acts by local authorities, especially targeting immigrants and poor people. The mayor of Milan ruled – against

CHART 1. Social Public Expenditure in Italy

	Public expenditure for education (% of GDP)	Expenditure for social protection (% of GDP)	Social expenditure functions				
			Old age, survivors	Disability	Health	Unemployment	Family, home, social exclusion
EU 27	4.74	27.3	45.9	8.1	28.3	6.5	11.3
Italy	5.17	26.1	61.3	6.1	25.9	2.0	4.7

Source: Eurostat

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the Italian Constitution – that children of "illegal" immigrants should not be granted access to public schools. The mayor of Florence ordered that all beggars at street crossings be arrested and treated as criminals. Other towns, such as Cittadella near Padua, required proof of a minimum salary in order to grant residence to immigrants.

Children's rights

Italy submitted its last report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols in 2006. The UN Committee consequently issued a set of recommendations that concern the issues of exploitation, violence against children and the reform of child justice. Article 4 of the Convention requires signatories to adopt legislative and administrative measures and other kinds of measures necessary to improve children's conditions.

The worst forms of child labour and exploitation in Italy mainly concern trafficking, prostitution and exploitation of children by organized crime. In 2007 the Ministry for Welfare launched a multi-stakeholder initiative on child labour that should produce a comprehensive framework of measures and policies as well as a Charter to be adopted and implemented by all involved stakeholders. Since the change of government in mid 2008, the process has been on hold; civil society is requesting the new government to resume the process and not to lose the progress achieved in 2007.

International development co-operation

Although Italy committed to prioritize the goals of poverty reduction, achieving gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals within its development assistance policies, the quality and quantity of its funding to support universal access to health, water and education are still below European and international standards. Italy is not fulfilling the 20/20 initiative – 20% of bilateral aid to improve global access to basic services by 2020 – having allocated only 8.2% to these goals from 2000 to 2006. In 2007, Italy cancelled its debt to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by paying its 2008 pledge in advance, and is part of the International Health Partnership to strengthen national health systems in beneficiary countries. However, its commitment to similar initiatives, such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, remains poor.

Italy's position on international human rights

As one of the most economically advanced countries in the EU, Italy contributes significantly to multilateral institutions, including UN agencies as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. As Italy has its own representative on the boards of these institutions, it shares with them the responsibility for failing to promote a concrete development agenda based on the respect and promotion of human rights.

Although human rights have been a core issue in the country's culture and political history, the lack of a unique strategy for action inside the multilateral system and the fragmentation of (often conflicting) initiatives among ministries, lead to a lack of consistency between operational objectives and international commitments. For example, the respect and promotion of human rights is never mentioned as a central element for international development objectives and among strategic priorities for Italian participation in multilateral banks and funds. In the case of bilateral and UN support, the issues of support to human rights and the common good have started to surface in Italy in the last two years, yet there is still no strategic framework that can make Italy's position coherent across these different institutions.

Death punishment moratorium

With regard to international human rights, however, Italian diplomacy resulted in an important victory in the United Nations. On 18 December 2007 the General Assembly voted with a vast majority (104 to 54, with 29 abstentions) in favour of a resolution presented by the Italian Government, which proclaims a global moratorium on the death penalty. The resolution calls for a general suspension (not abolition) of the death penalty throughout the world. Nonetheless, being a General Assembly resolution, it will not have a binding effect on UN member states. Therefore, states that currently retain the death penalty will not be forced by international law to stop carrying out executions; from now on they will only be under a strong *moral persuasion.*

Environmental emergencies

Italy has a poor waste management record, infringing EU directives, and recent cases in Naples and the province in which it is located have proven disastrous in terms of protecting the environment as well as public health. In April 2008, the European Court of Justice condemned Italy for the late and incorrect application of EU directives on preventing negative environmental impacts from waste dumps, including sites for dangerous waste – Enichem Manfredonia, near Foggia, being one of the most notorious.

The country's rate of land and energy consumption has steadily grown during the last few years. Problems related to excessive consumerism and waste, as well as poor waste management exploded in 2007, revealing a corrupt system involving organized crime linked to local and national politicians. In some of the more densely populated parts of the country, citizens have been exposed to toxic waste for years, violating basic rights to a healthy environment. The relationship between the environment and human rights is well established at both the international and regional European level, since the environment is essential to the enjoyment of basic human rights as provided in the Stockholm Declaration of 1972. At both these levels, the right to a healthy environment was later linked to the right to environmental quality and as a prerequisite for achieving "adequate conditions of life".[1] ■

1 While there are no legally binding provisions recognizing the right to a healthy environment in European Community law, that right has been acknowledged by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, and subsequently in a high level European Council declaration in 1990.

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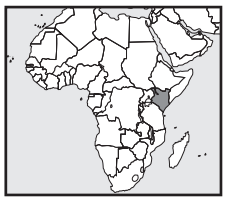
KENYA

Mired in the unsolved *National Question*



Following the announcement of the presidential election results on 30 December 2007, giving a second term to Mwai Kibaki, Kenya has been mired in its worst political crisis since independence. Over 1,000 people have died and nearly half a million have been violently displaced. Unless restorative justice is implemented to deal with the deep historical roots of this calamity, it may have an indelible impact on Kenya's tortuous path to democracy

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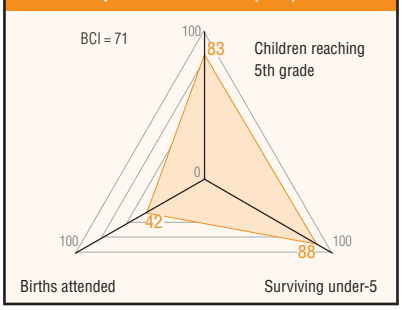
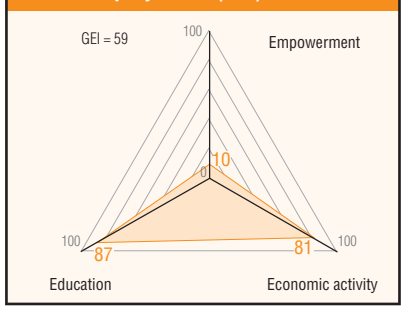
Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Violent social conflicts are often perceived either as conspiracies or as expressions of spontaneous bursts of political action, in the majority of cases triggered by an extraordinary event. Less attention is generally given to the social preconditions of a crisis, including the politic and economic structures, as well as the processes and perceptions that make such action possible. This may begin to explain why the international media reduced the Kenyan crisis to a Luo-Kikuyu rivalry, a dubious election or an African malaise rooted in warrior tribalism. This is a misunderstanding of the Luo-Kikuyu dialectic. In post-colonial African societies the unresolved issues concern land ownership, distribution of public resources, language, political marginalization, gender discrimination, and so on, all of which are expressed in terms of what we can call 'negative ethnicity,' rather than the other way around. In post-colonial Kenya these issues have constituted state-building challenges: their resolution would have precluded the systematic development of ethnic cleavages in general.

Colonial and neo-colonial processes resulted in the growth and concentration of state power as key instruments in organizing society, along the lines of a centre-periphery dichotomy. In Kenya, as in other African countries, the vestiges of colonial and post-colonial state building gave birth to an ethnocentric system of political oppression and economic marginalization by ethnic and sub-ethnic elites that defined themselves and others according to ethnic criteria in order to mask the underlying class tensions. While in other countries, like Somalia, this system has led to the total collapse and disintegration of the state, in Kenya it has left thinly concealed fault-lines that would inevitably one day shatter due to the build-up of tectonic pressures resulting from unresolved aspects of the *National Question*.

In order to understand the disruptive politics of negative ethnicity one must appreciate the dynamic political-economic context within which ethnic interactions occur. The changes in state power that transform political-economic relations foster new forms of solidarity while ethnic and sub-ethnic configurations of any nature, far from expressing primordial tendencies, are cultivated in large part by transformations within the political economy itself. To be sure, cultural and geographic affinity may provide an important basis for solidarity and cleavages that, under exceptional circumstances, might enable the mobilization of sub-national identities that affect the larger context of political action.

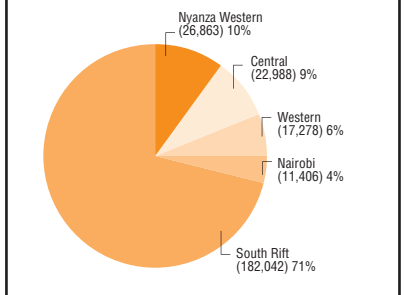
Presidential impunity, a biased electoral commission and a flawed election

In the run up to the ill-fated election of 28 December 2007, members of the opposition parties announced that the impending elections would not be free and fair unless the Electoral Commission of Kenya – the body with statutory authority to run elections – was reconstituted to reflect the interests of the contending political parties. Deaf to this legitimate claim, the President, by means of extra-democratic power, appointed individuals (believed to be his cronies) to the Commission. This was widely perceived as tilting the balance in favour of the incumbent, the Party of National Unity. This is the same Commission that has now been accused, by both foreign and domestic observers, of interfering with the vote tally and thereby compromising the integrity of the results. Reacting to an unjustifiable delay in announcing the results in some districts and to alleged anomalies in the tallying process, the supporters of the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which had taken a clear lead, announced they would take to the streets should President Kibaki be declared the winner.

Since the crisis arose, political analysts and media commentators have debated whether a) the announcement of the results triggered spontaneous inter-ethnic violence, b) was the result of a well-planned political conspiracy aimed at the ethnic cleansing of certain communities, or finally c) the conflict was a response to the historical fault-lines of the *national question* – fault-lines that violently split open to expose the fraudulent results of an otherwise historic election.

A closer analysis of all of the relevant factors shows that only by taking a) and b) together is it possible to find a reasonable explanation to the conflict.

CHART 1. Distribution of internally displaced persons (IDPs) countrywide Post election countrywide statistics



Source: Red Cross Society of Kenya.

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The unresolved National Question

Kenya became independent from the British Empire in 1963, following a bloody war that left the post-colonial peoples more united as a nation state than as a society. The war of liberation, instead of ushering in a national democratic process, provided the seeds for a process of class differentiation based on a land privatization policy that favoured the formation of a leadership characterized by extreme tribal loyalties and excessive concentration of power.[1]

Appropriate land and resettlement policies would have helped to avoid eventual conflict but successive presidents – from Kenyatta through Arap Moi to Kibaki – failed to adopt them.

Under President Jomo Kenyatta, the emergent post-colonial state resorted to every trick in the book to replicate the practices of the colonial governor: an imperial presidency presiding over the unequal economic development of ethnic regions. Based on politics of satrapy, the State implemented a land policy heavily skewed in favour of the ruling cliques, given to the expansion of ethnic-territorial power; and presided over the unequal distribution of jobs (in both the state bureaucracy and the private sector) and also unequal distribution of national resources.

Land alienation has primarily affected the fertile Kikuyu, in the Kalenjin/Pokot, Mjikenda and Maasai lands of Central, Coast and Rift Valley provinces respectively. These large tracts of land were initially lost to the British colonial settlers and the Arab coastal merchants and then to the post-colonial land tenure/use adjustments and the pressing need the new government had to resettle members of communities who had borne the brunt of colonial land alienation. The Kikuyu were the first to register their grievances against the Kenyatta government, having lost their smallholdings to members of their own community who were believed to have collaborated with colonial suppression of the Kikuyu-led Mau Mau war of liberation from 1952 to 1960.

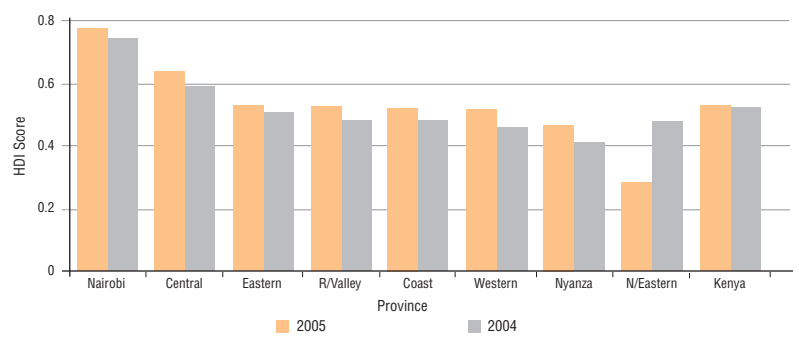
In the Rift Valley, the Kalenjin, who had lost their land to the settlers, expected to be the beneficiaries of a post-colonial resettlement. Instead, the Kikuyu, with the assistance of Kenyatta, himself a Kikuyu, purchased the vast lands vacated by the colonial settlers, who were frightened by the prospect of imminent decolonization.[2] This was also contrary to expectations, since the Kikuyu were expected to be resettled in the Central Province, and created a domestic Kikuyu diaspora more than 100 miles west of their tribal homeland around Mt. Kenya. This scenario was replicated in the Coast province, where the elites associated with the former regimes grabbed potentially commercially profitable beach land, leaving indigenous Mjikenda squatters landless.

CHART 2. Demographic distribution of IDPs (by sex and age), 12 February 2008

Region	IDPs camps	Total IDPs	Male	Female	Children
North Rift	72	89,829	9,981	29,943	49,905
South Rift	137	182,042	20,227	60,681	101,135
Nyanza/Western	63	26,863	2,985	8,955	14,924
Western	17	17,278	7,177	6,597	7,238
Central	11	22,988	2,555	7,663	12,772
Nairobi and environs	7	11,406	1,268	3,802	6,337
TOTAL	**307**	**350,406**	**44,193**	**117,641**	**192,311**

Source: Red Cross Society of Kenya.

CHART 3. Regional disparities in human development, 2004 and 2005



Source: UNDP, Human Development Index, 2006.

Thus groups that had lost land to the colonial settlers, including the Kalenjin, the Massai and Mjikenda, lost again to the state-supported Kikuyu companies and individuals that bought up nearly all vacated settler farms. Successive governments have treated resulting grievances with calculated indifference. President Moi owed his presidency to the Kikuyu expansionist project. President Kibaki, now caught up in the maelstrom, expected that any flair-up would be settled by state force.

On the other hand, the Luo harbour a longstanding grievance resulting from post-colonial marginalization. Like many other ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, the Luos complain of poor infrastructure, exclusion from government and the loss of their prominent leaders in assassinations orchestrated and executed by the ruling elites. The recent electoral fraud has provided them with an opportunity to vent their long-standing frustration.

In other words, the electoral fraud has exposed historical wounds festering under the scars of interethnic conflicts, releasing spontaneously the bottled up anger, hatred and suspicion that are the result of the unaddressed national question. As a result, state authority collapsed in the opposition ODM's strongholds. Supporters of its leader, Raila Odinga, took to the streets in violent protest across the country and sought revenge on the Kikuyu community perceived to be loyal to Kibaki. The security forces reacted brutally and members of the communities supporting the ODM were violently attacked by the armed forces and Kibaki's supporters.

Restorative justice

The instrumentalist approach which assumes that the Kenyan's ethnic strife was the work of some sections of the political elite setting out to mobilize ethnic solidarity along politically motivated cleavages has failed to bring the conflict to an end. The retributive adversarial justice it relies on as a means of returning peace to the nation has contributed to increased polarization.

A non-adjudicative, problem-solving approach – not favoured by the hardliners from both sides – has found popular expression in Agenda Number Four,[3] crafted by the Dialogue and Negotiation Committee. Depending on the principal actors' good will in steering the post-conflict resettlement process, the agenda is more than likely to provide the framework to re-examine the dynamics of the socio-economic and political environment. There lies the unquestionable efficacy of *restorative* justice as a means of ensuring lasting peace in a conflict-prone post-colonial, multi-ethnic and capitalist nation like Kenya. In this approach, the presumed offender and victim are brought together in order to help both sides to appreciate the context, its impact on social life across the board, but most importantly, to establish restorative mechanisms that will take care of the common good. Let us hope that the implementation of the Agenda Number Four of the Accord will help renew Kenya's path to democracy. ■

1 Land alienation policy and practices resembled those of the colonial government.

2 This followed a resettlement deal between the post-colonial government and the British involving several million British pounds, resources that were diverted towards the construction of a solid base for the development of a Kikuyu-based oligarchy of which president Kibaki is not only a product but an expression. The deep-reaching peasant and *lumpen* roots did not allow the resulting elite to develop a broad-based cross-ethnic class-consciousness.

3 Agenda Number Four as captured in the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation Accord contains long-term reforms such as land, institution and constitution changes.

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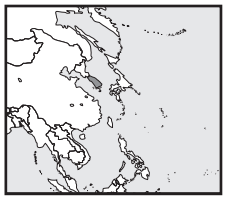
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The non-regular workers' wasteland



Neoliberal government policies, the collapse of self-employed entrepreneurs and the malfunctioning of the social welfare system have led to expanding low-income and a rising incidence of extreme poverty. While the informal work has a woman's face – two thirds of female workers are non-regular workers – and there are abuses to the human rights of illegal-immigrant workers, the de-regularization of labour is depriving workers of any protection. For informal workers in South Korea being fired is comparable to receiving the death penalty.

Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, Policy Research Department

Recent trends in South Korea's income distribution have shown that low-income groups are becoming larger and the incidence of extreme poverty has risen. Ten years after the 1997 financial crisis, the middle class has steadily dwindled, falling closer to the poverty line, and there is also a decline in wages for low-income groups.

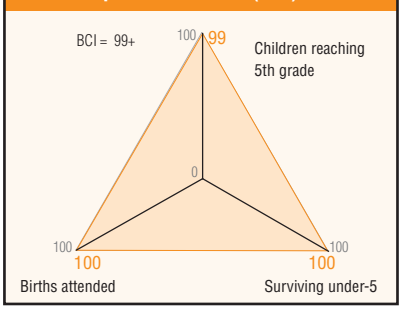
According to a Korea Development Institute statement issued in June of 2008, middle-income household[1] earnings accounted for 54.5% of total earnings in 2006, 10% down from 68.5% in 1996. During the same period, 3% of middle-income households climbed the economic ladder to join the high-income group while 7% fell into poverty. The low-income group accounted for 17.9% of Korea's total households in 2006, up from 11.3% in 1996. Wages earned by low-income households accounted for 5.7%, down from 7.9% of the nation's total household income.

Aside from the influence of the business sector, the current situation has also been driven by a sharp increase in non-regular workers resulting from neoliberal government policies, the collapse of self-employed entrepreneurs, and a malfunctioning of the social welfare system.

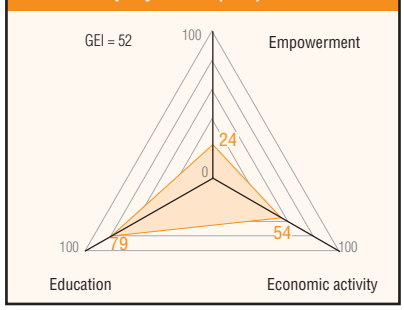
Human rights and the non-regular worker[2]

According to the Korea Labour & Society Institute, there are 8.58 million non-regular workers in the country, accounting for 54% of the nation's entire workforce. While the number of contract workers decreased by 170,000 from August 2006 to March 2007, non-regular workers like temporary/daily workers (200,000), part-time workers (170,000), dispatched workers – employees "shipped" to another workplace since the employment broker cannot hire them for more than two years[3] (40,000), etc., increased. This shift has resulted from the Non-Regular Workers Protection Act, which took effect in July 2007. Under the new law, non-regular workers are eligible to become regular workers in case they have been employed at one workplace for two years. In response to this law, businesses have begun to dismiss contract workers before they reach the two-year tenure requirement and employ new non-regular workers.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



If a regular worker's wage is 100, a non-regular worker's is 51. More than 50% of non-regular workers are living on slightly more than the minimum wage and suffer from lack of education, health care, and housing services. Among the total working class (15,990,000), there are 4,270,000 (26.7%) low-income workers who earn KRW 4,989 (USD 4.6) per hour – two thirds less than that of middle-income workers that earn KRW 7,484 (USD 6.9) per hour. Among low-income earners, there are 460,000 regular workers (6.3% of total regular workers) while there are 3,810,000 non-regular workers (44.4% of total non-regular workers).

In March 2008, 82-98% of regular workers enjoyed the benefits of social insurance like national health insurance, employment insurance and the National pension fund. However, only 33-36% of non-regular workers received the aforementioned social insurance. Ninety nine per cent of regular workers received a retirement allowance while only 26.3% of non-regular workers received support. Being fired is comparable to being sentenced to the death penalty.

Female workers and the non-regular work system

Two thirds of female workers are non-regular workers. Thus, the protection of female non-regular workers is the main issue when considering Korean women's rights. There are 2.33 million female regular workers (34.5% or total women workforce) and 4.16 million female non-regular workers (65.6%). While the female employment rate has risen compared with the past, 65.5% of female workers are non-regular workers who suffer from low-incomes and unstable employment. Their wages are also unreasonably low. In March 2008, when a male regular-worker's wage was 100, a male non-regular worker's wage was 52 and a female non-regular worker's wage was only 40.

They have not been able to build solidarity, nor have they organized or created a network to represent their demands. The Kiryung Electronics union was on strike for over 1,000 days, hoping that the company would convert their status from non-regular to regular workers. Only after the 1,000 day strike, the press started to have an interest in the non-regular workers of Kiryung Electronics because they went up to the skyscraper and went on a demonstration during the Seoul festival. Non-regular workers of E-land have also been on strike for over a year, but all negotiations have reached a stalemate.

In order to minimize the above mentioned problems, there were attempts to revise the Non-Regular Workers Protection Act. The efforts, however, were not met with much support. The Government expressed that the employment period of contract workers should be extended from the current two-year period to three years, while labour unions insisted on completely terminating the non-regular work system.

1 The middle class refers to those who earn between 50% and 150% of the nation's median income.

2 Non-regular workers include part-time, contract, daily, temporary, and dispatched workers. This designation is due to the flexibility of employment. On 30 November 2006, the National Assembly approved three labour bills aimed at protecting the rights of non-regular workers, and it took effect in July 2007.

3 If the employer used the same dispatched employee again with after a time-off period, it will be required to hire him as a regular worker. Dispatched workers are subject to the user-employer's instructions and working conditions, while the broker pays their wages.

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Immigrants

By November 2007, about 502,000 immigrant workers, including at least 230,000 non-regular immigrant workers, moved to Korea. The Employment License System for Foreign Workers that took effect in 2003 did not adequately protect immigrant workers from discrimination. In August 2007, UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination expressed apprehension about the "employment license system for foreign workers" because of the impossibility of extending their 3-year contract term work period, the difficulty in transferring workplaces, and the lack of protection from discrimination and mistreatment.

Recently, many illegal-immigrant workers have been arrested, detained, and immediately sent back to their home countries. During this process, there were many human rights violations. Some workers had been detained for several months because of administrative reasons or unpaid salaries that employers did not pay them. The Korean Ministry of Justice has tried to minimize these problems through revising the immigration law and suggesting that immigration officers issue arrest warrants in advance or present identification.

In July and August 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued concerns about abuse within inter-racial marriages and, on a related note, human trafficking. CEDAW and the UN special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants pointed out that foreign women married to Korean men are often subject to domestic violence and are not protected by any laws.

In November 2001, the Constitutional Court said that "foreigners are also entitled to human dignity, human rights and the right to pursue happiness as a human being. The right to equality is also a human right, so there are only limited restrictions on the right to participation and some limitations according to mutualism". In accordance with the above decision, the Government should provide better and fair treatment to immigrant workers and plan to reform immigration law. ■

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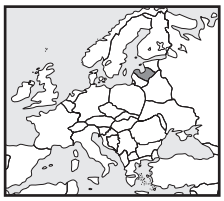
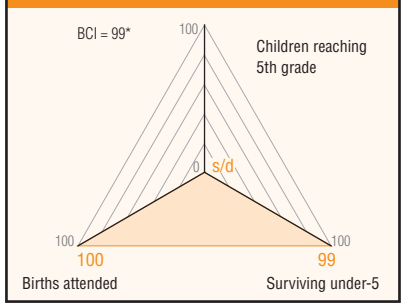
Needed: greater commitment on human rights and development cooperation



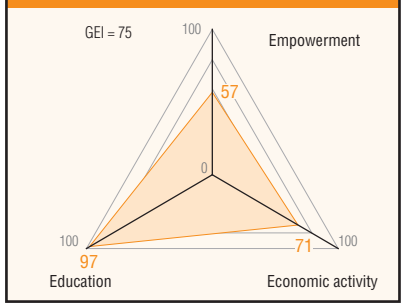
Human rights violations continue to be an important and shared concern in Latvia, although human rights activists and the general public have different views on which issues are most important. In terms of development cooperation, neither the public nor the elected politicians fully grasp the concept. Simplistic slogans conceal policies that have very different agendas.

MiTi Foundation
Gunta Berzina,
Andra Damberga

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Latvia signed the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000, obligating it to respect the human rights of its own citizens and be a responsible global partner to those in need. This promise is still far from being fulfilled.

A growing concern

The rapid economic growth in Latvia in recent years is causing major socio-economic problems, including greater social segregation, an increasing income gap between rural and urban populations, very small state-provided pensions and increasing migration of workers.

In a 2006 survey on human rights commissioned by the Latvian National Human Rights Office, most respondents said that the country's first priorities should be ensuring social rights and the rights to education and labour, including a just and satisfactory working environment. When asked about the current state of human rights, 4% characterized the situation as very poor and another 41% characterized it as poor. A slight majority had a positive estimation – 7% thought the country was doing "very well" and another 43% said "average, all problems can be solved". The most common complaints concerned the political situation (34%), economic conditions (17%) and corruption (19%).[1]

Human rights observers[2] outlined human rights concerns in several categories, including:

- *Hate crimes.* Both hate speech and violence have increased in recent years. Assaults have been reported based on racial/ethnic prejudice and bias against people with a different sexual orientation. The Security Police reported 16 criminal cases of incitement to national, ethnic or racial hatred in 2007, all still under investigation. According to the Security Police, extremist activities continue to fester. Most involve different racial, religious and ethnic groups, as for example those between Latvians and Russian speakers. In 2007 the Security Police forwarded 58 comments posted on the Internet to linguistic experts; 36 were determined to be violations of ethnic or racial equality.
- *Rights of non-citizens.* In 2007 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance issued a five-year report, criticizing disparities in the rights afforded citizens and non-citizens, and reiterating an earlier recommendation that the Government grant non-citizens the right to vote in municipal elections. The only official languages are Latvian, and the nearly extinct Livonian, even though more than one-third of the population speaks Russian as their first language (many have been denied citizenship and are now stateless). On the other hand, Knut Vollebaek, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, stated during a recent visit to Russia that Latvia has made significant progress in integrating linguistic minorities.
- *The right to freedom of assembly.* Controversy over this right has sparked heated discussion, primarily related to two issues: the permits given in Riga for Latvian Legion Day on 16 March,[3] an annual occasion for neo-Nazi rhetoric; and the reluctance of municipal authorities to issue permits for public assemblies of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals (LGBTs). Riga's mayor has refused to sign an international NGO appeal condemning bans on LGBT freedom of assembly and expression; intolerance and violence against people exercising these rights; and the failure of states to fulfil their obligation to ensure security for all inhabitants.
- *Workplace discrimination.* In January 2008 the European Commission (EC) issued warnings to Latvia and 13 other member states that they were failing to fully implement EU rules that prohibit workplace discrimination on the basis of religion, age, disabilities or sexual orientation. The EC criticized Latvia for laws defining discrimination very narrowly and for overly broad exceptions to the ban on age discrimination. Women workers earn wages nearly 18% lower than men's on average, typically have jobs with lower remuneration and are more often consigned to part-time work. As a result they earn smaller social security payments, which will mean their pension benefits will be lower.[4]
- *Mental health.* Community-based mental health services are virtually unavailable. Most patients can only get treatment at a psychiatric hospital or by going to a social care home for the rest of their lives.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Report on Human Rights in Latvia, 2006. Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Report ordered by The Latvian National Human Rights Office.

2 Integration and Minority Information Service. Latvian Centre for Human Rights. <www.humanrights.org.lv/html/29384.html>

3 More on Latvian Legion Day <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvian_Legion_Day>.

4 "Gender equality aspects in Latvian labour market" Riga, 2006, report ordered by the Ministry of Welfare. <www.darbatirgus.gov.lv/doc_upl/DziLDT_petijums_ENG_1dala.pdf>.

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- *Rights of tenants.* The abolition of rent control in 2007 has increased conflicts between landlords and tenants. The rents of low-income tenants are often raised to unaffordable levels, forcing tenants to move out. A majority of the 422 complaints (72 written and 350 oral) filed with the Government Ombudsman in the first half of 2008 concerned tenant rights.

Development cooperation and political will

The overall goal of the Development Cooperation Policy Programme 2006-2010 is to strengthen Latvia's role as a donor country by developing stronger bilateral and multilateral initiatives and relationships. The programme puts strong emphasis on increasing public awareness of development cooperation and ensuring public involvement in establishing development priorities. However, the programme has significant flaws, indicating that policy-makers themselves would benefit from a better appreciation of the principles that underlie development cooperation. This is evident in the Government's Annual Plan, which establishes three criteria that it will use in determining which countries and sectors the country will assist. Listed in order of importance, they are: Latvia's national interests; active presence of Latvian NGOs and/or businessmen in the country; and the recipient country's cooperation with NATO and the EU on defence matters.

None of these have anything to do with development cooperation, and contradict subsequent references to universal democratic values and human rights, combating corruption and strengthening local capacities. National interest should never be a consideration, while the active presence criterion implies it will use assistance to pay its own nationals for services, which distorts the meaning of assistance and reduces its effectiveness in the recipient country. On average, this kind of tied aid is estimated to be 20-25% more costly than goods or services procured through international competition or local sources.

The criterion regarding military cooperation is even more problematic. The European Union has severely criticized this policy, which is similar to those in the United States. Under no circumstances should the rights of the poor be subordinated to strategic economic, political or security goals. As numerous critics have pointed out, the war against terrorism, used in many parts of the world, Europe included, as a pretext for denying human rights and civil liberties, does not promote genuine security. The latter would require ensuring that the world's population has proper access to health, education and decent livelihoods.[5]

5 See for example Simon Stocker, Eurostep, <www.eurostep.org/wcm/content/view/131/40/>.

CHART 1. Latvian Development Assistance, 2001-2006

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ODA/ GNP	0.019%	0.01%	0.008%	0.06%	0.066%	0.06%

Source: Development Cooperation Policy Programme of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010, <www.mfa.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/finance/>.

Based on projected economic growth, Latvia has set a goal of steadily adding to the budget for development cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Plan for Increasing State Budget Financing for Implementation of the Development Cooperation Policy of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010, promised an increase to 0.1% of GNP by 2010. This would still be far short of the EU minimum goal of 0.56%.[6]

So far, Latvia's development support has not made human rights and poverty reduction high priorities. Instead it has become primarily a mechanism for funding selected Latvian NGOs, supporting activities of national institutions and enterprises, and popularizing Latvia abroad. In 2007 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced a request for proposals (RFP) for Development Cooperation projects focused on facilitation of 1) public administration and economic reforms, and of the European and transatlantic integration process; 2) local administration reforms; 3) the development of democracy and civil society; 4) development in the areas of education, culture, social development, health and environment protection.[7]

An RFP for "Communication Activities for Informing the Public on Development Cooperation and Development Education" ultimately resulted in five projects. Outside the RFP framework, the website lists three pre-feasibility study visits and eight projects under the supervision of embassies; five projects were approved.

To date, civil society organizations have not been able to make people knowledgeable about the concept of development cooperation. Only three NGOs devote their full attention to international assistance policy, although a dozen others do some work on development cooperation. A 2006 poll among participants at NGO seminars on the subject found that only 40% had heard the term at all, although 43% agreed that Latvia should provide aid to disadvantaged and less developed countries, and an equal percentage disagreed.[8] Interviews with academics indicated that they were even less informed than the general public: 85% claimed that they had never heard the terms "development cooperation" and "development education",[9] although many admitted that their students were very interested in international assistance.

Given the lack of any Government awareness campaign and limited NGO activity, the current low level of public awareness and support is not surprising. In a 2005 poll, two-thirds of the respondents opposed Latvian participation in development cooperation, asserting that Latvia is still a poor country and has to solve its own problems first.[10]

In 2005, when Latvia was entering the EU, three important questions were raised about development cooperation:

- Is an increase in funding the country's only responsibility toward the Millennium Development Goals?
- Will current EU policy and the way it is implemented actually promote a reduction in poverty and injustice in the world?
- Are we indeed establishing a global partnership for development?

Three years later, these questions remain unanswered. ■

6 Development Cooperation Policy Programme of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010.

7 <www.am.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/Projects/projects2007/>; 37 projects were approved.

8 <www.mfa.gov.lv/lv/Attistibas-sadarbiba/info/publikacijas/2006-01-24/>

9 Questionnaire filled by 50 participants – mainly teachers of social sciences - during Development Cooperation seminars implemented by MiTi Foundation in 2007 in the framework of the project "Schools Act Globally: The Development of NGO Network", supported by European Commission.

10 Opinion poll, "Attitude towards Development Cooperation: poll of Latvia's inhabitants" (Attieksme pret attīstības sadarbību: Latvijas iedzīvotīju aptauja, SKDS, 2005. gada decembris).

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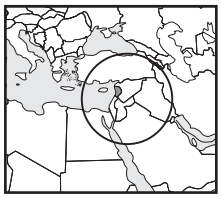
The "Paris III Conference" and the reform agenda



Decades of foreign intervention in the sectarian-based political system, together with irrelevant public policies, have led to a deteriorating social and economic situation. Although the Government has recently taken the issue of social and economic reform more seriously, especially after the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, the reform plan presented at the recent Paris III donors' conference has served primarily to integrate the country into the international economy rather than securing the basic socio-economic rights of the Lebanese.

Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
Cynthia Abi Rached[1]

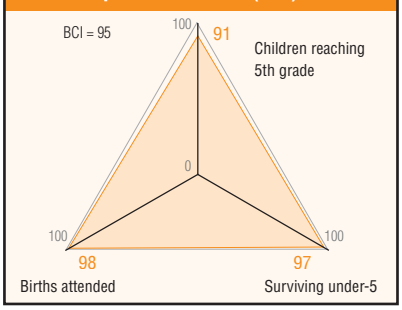
Following the Israeli war on Lebanon in July-August 2006, which aggravated an already unstable social-political situation and resulted in a large-scale destruction of the country's infrastructure, the Government presented an early recovery programme at an international donors' conference in Stockholm, Sweden, securing over USD940 million in pledges. Added to previous pledges, the total was over USD 1.2 billion available for recovery and reconstruction."[2]

Five months later, in January 2007, another donors' conference was held in Paris, known as "Paris III", in order to provide support for the country's post-war reconstruction, secure cash for debt servicing, and cover the budgetary deficit. A programme for social reform, already underway, provided the framework for the Government's economic reform agenda, designed to reduce volume and rate of debt accumulation and lay the structural and institutional basis for growth.[3]

It should be noted, however, that economic and social rights have been historically marginalized in Lebanon and that challenges for a comprehensive reform process stem not only from the unstable political situation but also from the economic and social policies pursued since the 1990s. These policies not only encourage clientelism, nepotism, favouritism and sectarianism, they also sponsor the different communities' interests as separate entities, rather than enhancing citizenship by serving the collective good of a nation that treats citizens equally. Missing is the notion of a modern Lebanese state based on citizenship: successive ruling regimes, instead of integrating the different communities through a national strategy for social development, have addressed their demands in a random and selective manner.

Moreover, Lebanon's situation is no exception in the region, which has become increasingly linked to and dependent on the international economic system. In a recent comparative study on socio-economic reforms in eight Arab countries (Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Sudan, Yemen and Egypt), researcher Salah Eddine Al Jourchi has pointed out that, besides positive managerial and technical reforms – especially in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia – there are alarming social, economic and political impacts.[4] In all eight countries, reforms led to rising unemployment, declining state provision of social and economic rights (health, education, and social security), increasing corruption, especially in the public sector, weak and inefficient civil society organizations, erosion of the middle class and increasing dependence on the international economy.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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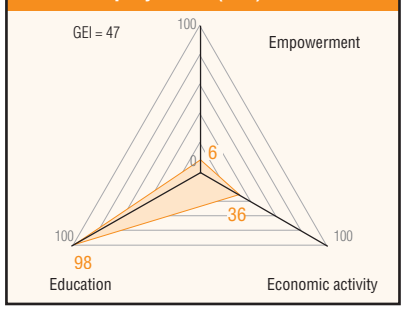

Lebanon's economic programme

The economic reform plan presented to Paris III is designed to stimulate growth, create employment, reduce poverty and maintain social and economic stability as well as increase "Lebanon's role in the free trade system, and speed up the negotiations regarding Lebanon's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO)."[5] The programme rests on seven pillars:

- structural reforms to increase productivity, reduce cost, and enhance economic competitiveness;
- social sector reform to improve social indicators and develop social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population;
- pension reform;
- phased fiscal adjustment aimed at increasing the primary budget surplus through streamlining expenditures and raising revenues, in ways that minimize the negative impact on the poor;
- a privatization programme designed to increase investment, reduce public debt, and spur economic growth;
- monetary and exchange rate policies to maintain price stability and facilitate credit to the private sector;
- a foreign assistance package to complement domestic adjustment, primarily by reducing debt repayment and creating the confidence needed to encourage private sector investment.[6]

However, increasing growth by promoting competition implies "the integration of Lebanon in the global economic system and the promotion of trade liberalization," so that economic liberalization becomes 'a target in itself'."[7] In addition, collaboration with the World Bank and other financial institutions has increased since the 2006 war as Lebanon became more dependent on international financial

1 The author is Democracy Programme Officer at ANND.

2 Eliasson, Jan and Jämtin, Carin, "Chairman's Summary: Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery 31 August 2006": <www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/06/85/56/02ae2a3c.pdf>.

3 Abou Chacra, Sanaa, "Reform Initiatives in Lebanon", p. 15. This paper will be published in the framework of ANND's regional project entitled "Democratic reforms in the Arab region: A focus on socio-economic reforms" in partnership with the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

4 Mr. Al Jourchi, an independent researcher and consultant on reform issues, is also the regional researcher for the ANND's project mentioned in footnote 3. The regional paper will be published early in 2009.

5 Abou Chacra, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

6 Poverty reduction measures include cash transfers to the poorest households; implementing reforms in various ministries in order to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness; and establishing an inter-ministerial committee for social issues. See: "Recovery, reconstruction, and reform: International conference for support to Lebanon", Paris, 25 January 2007: <www.finance.gov.lb/NR/rdonlyres/89C37627-828E-4626-9F00-9A6498BB4082/0/ParisIIIEngVersion.pdf>.

7 Abdel Samad, Ziad. "Foreign Aid and the National Reform Agenda: The Case of Lebanon": <www.futureofaid.net/node/330>.

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prescriptions and less able to defend its national productive sectors.[8]

The implementation of the reform plan has faced a number of obstacles. On the one hand, rising energy and food prices, and the rise of the euro against the dollar have negatively affected the country, as Europe is Lebanon's number one trade partner and the dollarization rate of the Lebanese economy – based on the World Bank's projections – has reached 76%.[9] On the other hand, the lack of political stability and security, coupled with the paralysis of all the Lebanese institutions since 2006, has led to socio-economic stagnation, while unemployment and immigration have greatly increased and foreign investments are rare. While it is difficult to get a full assessment of the impact of the reform plan, it is possible to identify some important issues and gaps from looking at the view of different stakeholders.

The Government's perception

In its 5th progress report on the Paris III plan, in March 2008, the Ministry of Finance presented a highly optimistic report, focusing on the achievements during 2006-2007 and the expected gains from structural reforms in the various ministries, including the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as well as the National Social Security Fund. On the social front, it mentioned performance gains in social policy and social service delivery, while maintaining fiscal responsibility. It emphasized that the Government had successfully intensified efforts to increase the primary surplus as a result of increased revenues, tight expenditure measures and substantial budget reforms" and had pressed forward with reforms in the power, telecommunications and transport sectors.[10]

The International Monetary Fund perspective

Delegated by the donors to monitor the reform process, the IMF has issued periodic reports, which have emphasized the provision of social safety nets rather than pushing for a comprehensive national development strategy, based on national productive sectors and the creation of employment. These reports have also noted uncertainty regarding the success of these policies due to the political situation and have stressed the need to (1) mobilize domestic support for adjustment and reform by protecting the most vulnerable; (2) align public spending and policy priorities to growth objectives; (3) develop stronger institutional mechanisms to improve control over budgetary outcomes; and (4) generate national unity through subjecting reforms to a transparent national dialogue.[11] The latest IMF report in particular noted the country's fragile situation and the dangers should it deteriorate.

Civil society and trade union perspectives

Representatives of productive sectors, mainly industrial and farmers' unions, have been very critical of the reform plan, pointing out that the Government's neoliberal approach disregards national productive sectors in favour of international considerations promoted by global institutions, and arguing that since more than 40% of the Lebanese population receives direct or indirect income from agriculture, agriculture should be treated as a "primary strategic sector." The current push towards the "elimination of subsidies on all agricultural products and the reduction of tariffs upon accession [to the WTO]" is a clear double standard, as the EU and the US continue protecting and subsidizing their agricultural sector.[12]

Regarding industry, the 2005 Lebanese Ministry of Industry plan, entitled "Production for the Lebanese Youth 2010", emphasized the lack of coordination between policy-making in Lebanon, and measures that negatively impact the productive sectors, even beyond that necessitated by economic liberalization. Industrialists consistently criticize the Government's embrace of open markets regardless of their impact on the industrial sector. It is worth noting that Lebanese industry was hard hit by the removal of tariffs on most products, including those locally produced, in 2000. While this was expected to give a positive shock to the national economy, increase consumption, and create profits for producers and traders, the lack of coordination between government taxation policy and the productive sector priorities led to its failure, impacting negatively both on employment and on Lebanese consumers.[13]

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have joined farmers and industrialists in their criticism. Indeed, CSOs understand economic reform as part of a comprehensive reform agenda that should aim at improving human development indicators Their main criticism refers to 1) lack of comprehensive national strategies for the economic, social and cultural sectors, as well as for the political and administrative sectors, coupled with extremely selective initiatives that often aggravate the existing inequalities among communities; and 2) lack of participation by core stakeholders in the formulation of social and economic reform policies and assessment of its impact at the regional and international level. Moreover, the social feature in the reform initiative still lacks a national strategy for social development and remains therefore very general and closer to social safety nets programmes.[14]

Rights of women

Although Lebanon is committed to achieving all of the MDGs, including Goal 3, gender equality priorities are totally missing in the Paris III reform plan.

Furthermore, gender equality in Lebanon is badly hampered by the country's sustained CEDAW reservations, namely on article 9 paragraph 2 concerning the nationality law, article 16 paragraphs (c), (d), (f), (g) concerning the personal status code and article 29 on arbitration. The CEDAW Committee, in its latest report, noted concern on (1) the "persistence of patriarchal attitudes…and deep-rooted stereotypes reflected in women's educational choices, their situation in the labour market and their low level of participation in political and public life"; (2) "discrimination against women in the area of taxation"; and (3) "the dominance of the private sector and geographical disparity in the delivery of services, preventing access to health care for women and girls from poor and rural areas, as well as disabled women".[15]

Other civil society critics underline that the Paris III reform agenda focuses on the "increased public debt and debt services"[16]; that the "quality of life index in Lebanon, Palestine or Iraq is deteriorating whenever governments surrender to international conditions" claiming to improve their economies; and that the Government has favoured "increasing the gains of the financial sector and its ability to attract more foreign investments", thereby impoverishing "the remaining middle class."[17] To sum up, the Government has disregarded human rights considerations and focused on living up to the process of integration in the global economy and satisfying the economic liberalization agenda.

The way ahead

The shortcomings of the reform plan are clearly reflected in the rising pessimism, complaints and protests among different social classes, who have been asking for fairer redistribution of wealth by reconsidering tax policy and the social service delivery system. In this respect, the frail socio-economic reality may lead to serious social instability and street protests if the new Government fails to engage multiple stakeholders – including civil society, unions, and the private sector – in elaborating a more specific and comprehensive reform plan that focuses on empowering productive sectors. Such a plan needs to move beyond narrow sectarian and economic interests, and take human rights and national priorities as core tools to enable Lebanon to face international challenges and benefit from the regional oil revenue surplus and emerging opportunities in the global economy. ■

8 Abou Chacra, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

9 *Ibid*, p. 23.

10 "International conference for support to Lebanon-Paris III: 5th Progress Report", *op. cit.*

11 Lebanon-2007 Article IV Consultation, Mission Concluding Statement, May 2007, IMF: <www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2007/052807.htm>. See also: Abou Chacra, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

12 "Statement regarding Lebanese WTO Accession File", ANND, April 2007.

13 *Ibid*. See also: "Production for the Lebanese Youth 2010": <www.industry.gov.lb/Gemayel_PDF.pdf> (Arabic).

14 Abdel Samad, Ziad. "The civil society participation in setting economic policies: An open letter from the executive director of ANND to the Prime Minister", *Al-Akhbar*, 9 March 2007.

15 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 40th session, January-February 2008.

16 Zbeeb, Mohamad. "The first year after Paris III: Hiding once again behind the political crisis". *Al- Akhbar*, 4 February 2007: <www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/62529>.

17 Zbeeb, Mohamad. "The first year after Paris III: Lebanon forced to apply a program with the World Bank." *Al- Akhbar*, 5 February 2007: <www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/62650>.

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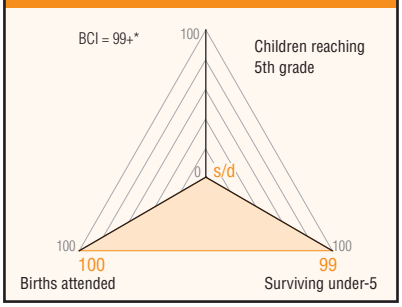
Human rights: impressive legislation but inadequate implementation

Lithuania possesses a splendid legislative foundation for the fulfilment of human rights. However state institutions and business interests perceive human rights as a purely formal matter and an onerous obligation (not so much to Lithuanian citizens, but to foreign partners). This attitude has been a serious obstacle to full implementation of current legislation.

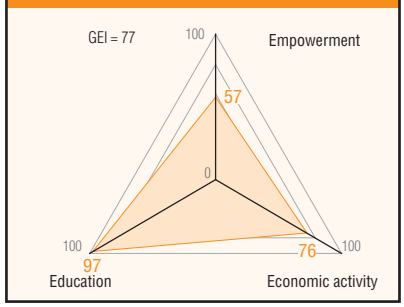
Centre for Civic Initiatives
Giedrius Kiaulakis

The Republic of Lithuania has been an independent state since 11 March 1990. The Constitution, approved by referendum on 25 October 1992, establishes a broad spectrum of political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights that reflect the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Minority rights

Since the restoration of its independence, Lithuania has paid considerable attention to the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. The Constitutional Law on Ethnic Minorities was approved at the end of 1989 – several months before the declaration of independence.

According to the 2001 census, Lithuanian society is composed of 115 different ethnic groups. Ethnic minorities account for around 16.5% of the population. The largest are Poles (6.7%), Russians (6.3%), Belarusians (1.2%) and Ukrainians (0.7%). Other ethnic groups, including Jews, Germans, Latvians, Tatars, Roma, Armenians, each make up less than 0.1% of the population.[1]

Paragraph 37 of the Constitution declares that "Citizens in ethnic communities have the right to maintain their language, culture and customs". This declaration is observed in practice. For example, the larger ethnic minorities such as the Poles and Russians have numerous public schools in which children are taught in their native languages, as well as their own newspapers, commercial radio stations and shows on national television and radio. They also have an extensive network of public and cultural organizations, supported by the Lithuanian Government and the countries of their ethnicity. Naturally, smaller communities have fewer opportunities for cultural expression, but they do have some access to media (the Belarusians, Ukrainians and Jews are given time on national television), in addition to state-sponsored Sunday schools. The number of Russian and Polish schools, as well as the number of pupils in those schools, has diminished in recent years, however official statistics indicate that the rate of shrinkage is even greater in Lithuanian schools.

Although the general situation is quite good, some conflicts have emerged:

- On several occasions since 1997, two municipalities where a majority of the population speaks Polish have tried to introduce Polish street names alongside the Lithuanian designation. The national government has overruled them.
- The Lithuanian media and some public officials frequently link the Roma population (usually called gypsies in Lithuania) to criminal activities. For example, during a conference on drug addiction, the deputy commissioner-in-chief of the Vilnius City Supreme Police Commissariat declared that "all we have to do is enforce the law. Then all the gypsies will be in the same place, where most of them already are for the crimes they have committed."[2]
- Violent skinhead (neo-Nazi) assaults against people of other races have intensified since 2003. The response of Lithuanian law enforcement authorities has been quite benign – even when the assailants are detained, punishment is mild.

Religious communities

Religious communities are supervised by the Law on Religious Communities and Groups, adopted in 1995. This law divides Lithuania's religious communities into traditional and other. The traditional are Roman Catholic (80% of the population), Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformist, Russian Orthodox, Old Believers, Jewish, Sunni Muslim and Karaim. The special privileges enjoyed by these communities are few and insignificant (for example, easier registration of new congregations), however Lithuania has been criticized internationally for making any distinction at all (for example, in annual USA reports on religious tolerance).

Although Lithuania strictly adheres to the principles of religious tolerance in its laws, negative attitudes toward non-traditional religious communities remain strong. These communities (Witnesses of Jehovah, Hinduists, Mormons, Buddhists, Adventists) are treated as sects that are dangerous to society and employ psychological coercion to pull people out of their customary social sphere and even away from their family. On the other hand, in contrast to Western Europe, Islamophobia is alien to Lithuania. A Sunni Muslim community has existed in Lithuania since late 14th century.

Sexual minorities

Sexual minorities have been a major issue in recent years. Homosexuals, who had been persecuted and jailed by the Soviet authorities for their sexual orientation, are not subject to official persecution – there are gay clubs, public organizations, websites, etc. However, in society as a whole, attitudes remain negative. Gays and lesbians are frequently accused of being responsible for depravity and social decline. In some instances informal homosexual groups have even been accused of political activities dangerous to the state (*Respublika, a* daily newspaper, published several articles in 2004 claiming that gays and Jews rule the world). When homosexuals requested a permit for a public event in 2007, city officials in Vilnius, the capital, turned them down.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 <www.tmid.lt/index.php?page_id=3940>

2 <nkd.lt/files/spauda_raso/20070917_Spaudos_apzvalga.htm>

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Gender equity

Parliament adopted a Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in December 1998. An Ombudsman's office for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was established in May 1999. After Parliament adopted a new Law on Equal Opportunities in November 2003, it was renamed the Ombudsman's office for Equal Opportunities and its jurisdiction was expanded to include discrimination based on age, sexual orientation, disabilities, race and ethnicity, and religion or beliefs. Since 1 January 2005 the office has investigated individual complaints of discrimination or prejudice based on age, sexual orientation, disabilities, race and ethnicity, religion or beliefs that have occurred at work, education institutions or while receiving services.

This broader jurisdiction has significantly increased the volume of cases handled by the Ombudsman:

- 1999 – 31 complaints, 4 investigations initiated.
- 2003 – 50 complaints, 15 investigations initiated.
- 2007 – 162 complaints, 2 investigations initiated.

Most of the investigations are related to gender discrimination. Although men file complaints, most commonly charging discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, most of the complainants are women, usually for gender and age discrimination. In 2006, as in previous years, many of the complaints came from pregnant women and women on pregnancy or maternity leave who claimed that their employer placed them in worse working conditions than those enjoyed by their male colleagues, failed to pay them additional wages and bonuses they deserved, did not did not give them annual bonuses based on work results and did not provide a level playing field where they could compete with their male colleagues for advancement.[3] After returning from maternity leave, women sometimes face similar problems when they stay home to care for a child who becomes ill. Moreover, employers may prefer to hire men to avoid the "complications" related to pregnancy and maternity leaves.

In 2006 many complaints were filed against products and services advertisements for demeaning women through emphasis on specific body parts; employing stereotypes of female fragility, flightiness and lack of intelligence; or implying that a woman's only positive attribute is the ability to seduce a man. Advertisements frequently juxtapose women against material objects, either by presenting a choice between a product and a beautiful woman, or by comparing a woman's breasts, buttocks or other parts of her anatomy with a product.[4] On the other hand, complaints of sexual harassment are very low. Negative stereotypes of women reflect the strong persistence of patriarchal stereotypes in society as a whole. These traditional attitudes are often inculcated in early childhood, and changing them may take many years.

Family violence remains quite common. Although most people condemn it and legal mechanisms are available to restrain violent individuals, most people prefer not to interfere in family affairs unless the violence becomes life-threatening.

Socio-economic aspects of human rights

Lithuanian laws protect the social and economic rights of individuals; the social welfare system is well developed. Property rights are respected. The State guarantees a 40-hour work week and 28 vacation days annually for employees. Women can begin receiving their pension at 60 years of age and men at 62.5. All employed individuals receive social security payments if they are unable to work due to illness or accident. Unemployment benefits last at least six months from the time a job is lost. Since 2007 a mother has been eligible for maternity leave benefits until her child is two years old (the previous legislation guaranteed one year). Most healthcare and education services are funded by the State and provided free of charge.

Unfortunately, the social welfare system is far better on paper than in reality. Understanding why requires some historical background. In 1990 Lithuania inherited a Soviet economic system in which almost everything belonged to the State and was controlled by the bureaucracy. Private property was minimal. To rid itself of this inefficient economical system, Lithuania introduced a program of rapid privatization without thoughtful planning. Many of today's social problems are a legacy of this policy.

A large number of industrial firms were deliberately bankrupted, so they could be purchased at the lowest possible price. Many never resumed production; their workers were let go, dramatically increasing the unemployment level (it was 15.4% in 2000, according to the Department of Statistics). High unemployment has had two profound negative consequences for the workforce:

- Employers remain reluctant to raise salaries and invest in better working conditions at their own expense. At the same time, employees are afraid to defend their rights (only 12% of employed Lithuanians are members of trade unions), because they feel they are in a much weaker position than the employer. As a result, frequently extra hours are not compensated, vacations are postponed indefinitely, and workers are paid part of their wages off the books, which reduces their social benefits. The percentage of people living below the poverty line between 1996 and 2007 fluctuated between 16% and 20%,[5] and is bound to increase. Salaries of officials, in contrast, are generous. Lithuania pays the 18th highest compensation worldwide relative to GDP, far more than economically stronger countries such as the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom and France.[6]
- At least half a million Lithuanian citizens, almost a quarter of the economically active population, work abroad, according to a variety of estimates. This figure is likely to grow. Economic migration separates families for months and even years. Children grow up without their parents. The sole benefit of massive emigration has been labour shortages. By the end of 2007 unemployment had dropped to 3.9%,[7] compelling employers to improve working conditions. Officially, emigration is characterized as one of the most significant national problems. In April 2007 the Government approved an Emigration Management Strategy to reduce it. However it is possible that the Government actually regards emigration as a way to reduce social conflict. This perspective is evident in frequent statements by officials advising people who express discontent with social conditions to move abroad. The Minister of Culture suggested that to actors in November 2006.[8] The chairperson of the largest parliamentary faction made a similar statement to teachers in December 2007.[9]

How people can defend their rights

Lithuanians feel very sceptical about their ability to defend their rights, according to the Lithuanian Human Rights Monitoring Institute. Three quarters of respondents in a 2006 poll reported that their rights had been abused and they had not complained. Seventy-four per cent of respondents declared that they would not appeal to state institutions for redress because they believed it would be futile.[10]

This attitude is largely a result of the large disparity in resources. Most private groups and organizations lack the time and funds necessary to defend individual rights in courts, while state institutions and business structures they might challenge have plenty of both. This discourages people from bringing rights cases, even though actual court decisions indicate that they have good chance of success despite the wealth and power of their adversaries.

The public also seems to have given up on popular protests, which the authorities usually ignore. In recent years, when local communities united in a campaign against environmentally risky commercial projects (toxic pig farm waste in Northern Lithuania, a huge garbage dump near the ancient capital Kernave and the secretive Leo LT energy project), they received no attention. Moreover, the harsh Government response to some acts of protest has been disproportionate. One example is the arrest of two individuals in October 2006 while they were peacefully protesting at the gates of the British Embassy against the use of black bear skins to make the guards' fur hats. The court subsequently dismissed the case. In a more recent case, on 6 February 2008, the ruling parliamentary parties submitted legislation that would order law enforcement agencies to open investigations of opposition politicians who criticized the controversial Leo LT energy project.[11] Initiatives of this kind by state institutions do not encourage citizens to defend their rights. ■

3 <www.lygybe.lt/static.php?strid=1499>

4 *Ibid.*

5 The poverty line for Lithuania is equivalent to 60ī the median of the adjusted personal income available. <www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1333>

6 <www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20070716005331&newsLang=en>

7 <www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=2407>

8 <www.mediabv.lt/res_zinpr_det.php?id=10524>

9 <www.balsas.lt/naujiena/177659>

10 <www.hrmi.lt>

11 <www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=314152&p_query=&p_tr2=>

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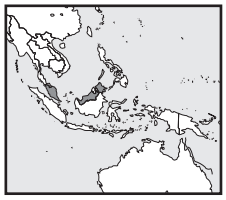
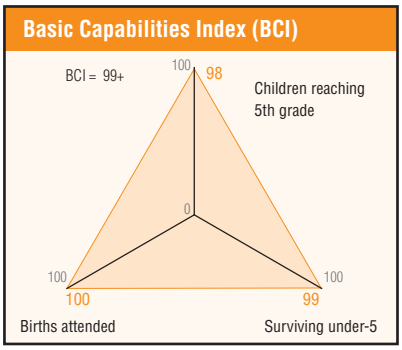
MALAYSIA

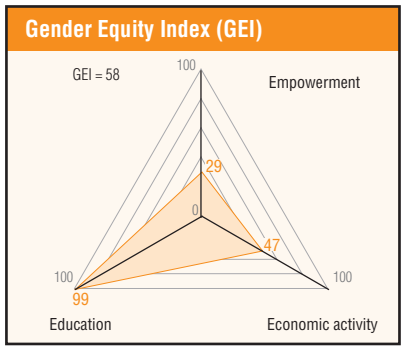
Government secrecy threatens civil and economic rights



Although Malaysia is frequently showcased as one of the developing countries with the highest social and economic achievements, growing social unrest reflects serious concerns over corruption, rising crime, escalating food prices, growing inequality, deteriorating environmental quality and sustainability. The Government culture of secrecy must be loosened if the country is to create the openness, accountability and transparency needed for broad public participation in economic development.

Consumers' Association of Penang
Mageswari Sangaralingam





Malaysia celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Independence on 31 August 2007 with great ceremony, celebrating development achievements that include a world-class health care system, a literacy rate of 88.7%, water supply coverage of 95% and electricity coverage of 93%. Efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and provide social and community services are considered among the best in all developing countries. Despite this, the end of 2007 saw notable civil unrest, including protest rallies by vast segments of society, reflecting the curtailment of civil liberties as well as on-going poverty and marginalization, especially among rural and indigenous populations.

Civil liberties curtailed

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia recognizes the right to freedom of speech and expression, although it does not specify how these are to be protected. Although the country prides itself on practicing democracy, the rights of its citizens are restricted through laws such as the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Official Secrets Act (OSA) of 1972 and the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) of 1984. The OSA and the PPPA both restrict free speech and expression, the former by subjecting public administration matters to national secrecy laws; the latter through annual re-licensing requirements that keep media wary of offending the Government.

Mainstream media is controlled by political parties aligned with the Government and practices self-censorship whenever an issue is deemed controversial. In 2007, Malaysia's ranking in the Reporters Without Frontiers press freedom index dropped 32 places to number 124 (SUARAM Kommunikasi 2007). Alternative news and online blogs are also closely monitored.

The reluctance of the Government to grant the public access to information on ongoing free trade negotiations, particularly the Malaysia-USA Free Trade Agreement (FTA), is particularly disheartening since issues of major public interest end up being negotiated in utmost secrecy.

Freedom of assembly suffered serious setbacks in 2007. On 10 November 2007 a massive rally, organized by the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections, comprising members of 70 civil society groups and political parties, congregated in Kuala Lumpur demanding free and fair elections. A few days later, on 25 November, the Hindu Rights Action Front (HINDRAF) organized a rally attended by at least 20,000 protesters, mainly Indians, demanding equal social and economic rights (SUARAM Kommunikasi 2007). In both rallies, the police used tear gas and chemical-laced water cannons to disperse the protestors and scores of them were detained without trial. Five organizers of the HINDRAF rally have been in detention since December 2007 under the ISA, which permits indefinite confinement without charge or trial.

While it was hoped that the establishment of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia in 2000 would improve the human rights situation, critics view it as a powerless body appointed for the purpose of obscuring the Government's poor human rights record, deflecting attention from continuing civil rights violations (Suara Rakyat Malaysia 2007). Its main shortcomings include lack of transparency in the selection of commissioners; a limited mandate and lack of structural autonomy; Government disregard of its recommendations and advice; and slow response to alleged violations. Many of its recommendations have gone unreported and remain on the shelves of Parliament (Suara Rakyat Malaysia 2007).

Poverty and inequality

According to official statistics, poverty in Malaysia decreased from 8.5% in 1999 to 5.7% in 2004. However, this masks considerable differences among various regions and between rural and urban areas. In particular, there is high incidence of poverty among indigenous peoples, especially the minorities in East Malaysia (EPU 2006), who find their customary landownership, already weak, increasingly threatened. For instance, the future of an estimated 150,000 Orang Asli (indigenous communities, made up of about 18 ethnic groups) in Peninsular Malaysia is bleak due to the loss of land and livelihood resulting from clearing of forests, sudden eviction to make way for development projects and paltry cash compensation. In addition, rural-urban income disparity continues to widen. The Ninth Malaysia Plan reported that the poverty gap was five times higher in rural than in urban areas (EPU 2006).

The gap between the rich and the poor has also increased. The national Gini coefficient went downhill from 0.442 in 1990 to 0.462 in 2004, as the share of income of the bottom 40% declined from 14.5% in 1990 to 13.5% in 2004 while the share of the top 20% increased from 50% in 1990 to 51.2% in 2004 (EPU 2006). Clearly, the New Economic Policy has not fully benefited the poor majority, while a small group accumulates wealth via contracts for mega projects and other governmental concessions.

During 2006-2008, the Government launched five regional economic corridors, covering the Northern, Eastern and Southern regions of Peninsular Malaysia, and one each in Sabah and Sarawak, designed to address socio-economic imbalances (Treasury Malaysia 2007). The development plans were drawn up in consultation with the private sector only, with no public hearings, and are therefore more likely to benefit the corporate sector than the poor.

For example, the Master Plan for the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), encompassing the states of Kedah, Perlis, Penang and northern Perak, was launched on 30 July 2007. Designed by a local conglomerate, Sime Darby Berhad, the Plan focuses on services, agriculture, manufacturing and

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infrastructure. The first phase is intended to lay the foundation by securing anchor investors and constructing priority infrastructure.

The execution of the detailed NCER plan will be assigned to a proposed implementation body, namely the Northern Corridor Implementation Agency, which has the power to carry on or engage in any commercial activity or profit-making enterprise subject to the approval of the Federal Government. The plan includes a clause obligating secrecy in Authority meetings while no action can be brought against it or its members for acts done in good faith.

Given the lack of public participation in either the development of the plan or the projects to be implemented, the question is whether it and the other regional economic corridors can fuel economic growth and raise people's income levels in the reasonable future, or simply benefit the private sector. In the meantime, the soaring price of agricultural commodities has benefited Malaysia's agricultural sector, including farmers and smallholders involved in oil palm or rubber production, while the cost of living has gone up along with the price of necessities and farm inputs, thus limiting the gains for most people.

There is also concern that the influx of cheaper imports arising from globalization and trade liberalization may affect the rural economy. Increased competition from imports can cause difficulties for local farmers as bound tariff levels have to be reduced over time, while farm subsidies will be progressively reduced, sharply reducing incomes for hundreds of thousands of farmers and smallholders.

Trade liberalization

Free Trade Agreements[1] between developed and developing countries usually require the latter to undertake WTO-plus obligations, which include rules on investment and government procedures traditionally opposed by developing countries. When Malaysia and the US began a first round of talks on a bilateral FTA in 2006, Malaysian citizens protested that the agreement would cause more harm than good. The Coalition on Malaysia-USA FTA, a broad-based group including people living with HIV and AIDS, consumers, workers, farmers, health activists and human rights activists, expressed concern that the scope of the negotiations would have significant impacts on the following:

- government procurement and local policies, imposing a threat to national sovereignty
- investment and implications for local jobs, small industries and enterprises
- intellectual property rights and access to affordable medicines and knowledge
- agriculture and food security owing to the impact on rice self-sufficiency and the labelling of genetically modified foods.

The civil society movement is particularly concerned that decisions are being taken without any consultation with the public. An example is the Japan-Malaysia FTA, concluded in a shroud of secrecy, the details of which appeared on the official government website only after it was signed.

In the case of the Malaysia-USA FTA, in 2007 Cabinet ministers were given only a week to provide feedback on 58 contentious issues so that negotiations could be concluded to meet the the US Government's fast track authority. Negotiations deadlocked over a number of these

In the case of the Malaysia-USA FTA, in 2007 Cabinet ministers were given only a week to provide feedback on 58 contentious issues so that negotiations could be concluded to meet the US Government's fast track authority. Negotiations deadlocked over a number of these issues and formal negotiations were postponed to early 2008.

The experiences of countries that have signed bilateral FTAs have shown far-reaching implications for ordinary people as policy space to shape sustainable development is reduced. An influx of imports caused by market liberalization can displace local products, reducing the livelihoods of affected local farmers and firms. Manufacturers and farmers will also have to anticipate business losses when protective tariffs are eliminated.

A group representing people with HIV and AIDS is very concerned that anti-retroviral medicines would become even more unaffordable after the signing of the agreement. Almost all patents registered in Malaysia are foreign-owned, so any tightening of patent laws resulting from a Malaysia-USA FTA would benefit foreign companies at the expense of local companies and consumers. Usually, a USA FTA forces more patents on medicines. Thus, monopoly and increase in the price of antiretroviral drugs is foreseeable.

The anti-FTA protests managed to ensure that the Malaysia-USA FTA was not signed before the expiration of the fast-track authority in 2007. As negotiations resume, civil society organizations are continuing to pressure the Government not to continue with the FTA.[2] ■

1 For further information on implications of FTAs on Malaysian society, see: <www.ftamalaysia.org>.

2 In the 2008 general election, citizens expressed discontent by denying Barisan Nasional (National Front), the ruling political alliance since independence, a two-thirds majority. Five out of thirteen states are now under opposition rule, compared with only one after the 2004 election.

CHART 1. Malaysia: key statistics

	2007
Population (in millions)	27.17
Gross birth rate (per thousand)	17.6e
Gross death rate (per thousand)	4.4e
Infant mortality rate (per thousand)	6.7e
Life expectancy (male)	71.9
Life expectancy (female)	76.4
Adult literacy rate (%)	88.7
Unemployment rate (%)	3.1
GDP growth rate (%)	6.7
Human Development Index (2005)	0.811

e = estimate

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, <www.statistics.gov.my>.

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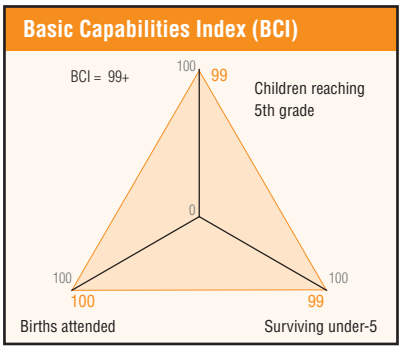
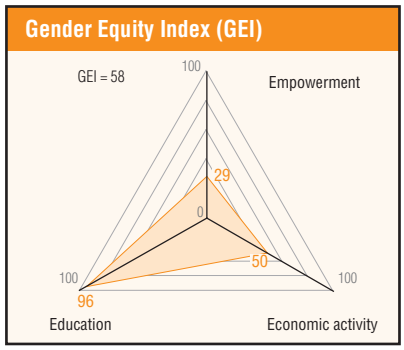
MALTA

Human rights, dignity and solidarity

Hate-speech and the condition of migrants and asylum-seekers are among the most severe challenges to human rights in this constitutional, parliamentary democracy. The country has become the entry door to the European Union for many refugees. Maltese leaders must not forget that decent work for all is essential to the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedom. The island must improve its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, especially in closed detention centres. Its European partners have to support this effort with a pragmatic solidarity plan.

Kopin
Joseph M. Sammut





A constitutional, republican, parliamentary democracy, Malta holds fair elections every five years on average. Six women were elected to the most recent parliament (2003-2008); one of them became a minister in the 14-member cabinet; another was appointed parliamentary secretary (junior minister without Cabinet rank).

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary and the Government generally respects this mandate. The Constitution also guarantees the right to a fair public trial; the independent judiciary safeguards this right. Defendants have a right to the counsel of their choice. They may confront witnesses and present evidence, and enjoy a presumption of innocence and the right to appeal.

Malta abolished the death penalty in 1971. Prison conditions generally meet international standards; visits by independent human rights observers are permitted.

The Constitution provides for an independent, impartial court to determine civil rights and obligations, with remedies for human rights violations. Malta has also incorporated the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms into domestic legislation. Early in 2008 the European Court of Justice held that Article 6 of the Convention had been violated when the Chief Justice headed the Court of Appeals when it heard a case in which his nephew and his brother were appearing as lawyers for the defence.[1]

Maltese citizens have freedom of movement within the country, as well as in foreign travel and emigration. There are no restrictions on the return of citizens who emigrate. As Malta is a member of the European Union and incorporated in the Schengen Area, Maltese nationals can travel freely within the Union.

Freedom of speech and information

The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and press freedom is safeguarded by the Courts and the Broadcasting Authority, an independent constitutional regulator that supervises radio and television broadcasting. However during the period 2005-2007, journalists and human rights and anti-racism activists were subjected to harassment by right wing fanatics for speaking out against racism. As will be explained below, Malta's anti-discrimination measures have merited criticism.

Internet freedom is respected; no restrictions are placed on Internet access. But even though individuals and groups are free to express their views peacefully via the Internet, Privacy International, a European watchdog on surveillance and privacy invasion by governments reported in 2007 that the country systematically failed to uphold safeguards against invasive surveillance. Malta scored 2.4 in 2007, down from 2.6 the previous year. This places it in the "red zone", which the report defines as "systematic failure to uphold safeguards" and "widespread practice of surveillance". The major factors in the downgrade are a diminution of democratic safeguards, including protection of free expression, open government laws, and protection for journalists and lawyers. Privacy International expressed concern that privacy protection law is enforced by a ministry and "not by an independent agency."

The National Statistics Office (NSO) came under fire when the Chamber of Small Business and Enterprise (GRTU) challenged the accuracy of its statistics. A report prepared for the GRTU showed that the NSO had inflated GDP growth to 4.14% when it was actually 1.94%. The GRTU also criticized the appointment of the chairman of the statistics watchdog, the Malta Statistics Authority (MSA), to the helm of the NSO in January 2007. The MSA is in charge of making sure that the NSO functions correctly, putting this official in the compromising position of running the same organization that he was responsible for monitoring.

Religion

The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Although Roman Catholicism is the state religion, numerous non-Catholic groups practice their faiths and are not required to register with the Government. All public schools provide Catholic religious instruction, but a student may legally opt out of it. The Muslim community runs its own school. Divorce and abortion are not permitted due to the strong opposition of the Maltese Roman Catholic Church. However, the State recognizes any divorce obtained abroad.

Labour

The labour market continues to adjust to globalization and the continuing privatization of public enterprises. Factory relocation has dramatically cut employment in the textile industry, formerly the mainstay of the manufacturing sector. Layoffs in the past two years have caused a broad shift in Maltese employment patterns. This transformation has included an expansion of employment in services, the pharmaceutical industry and information technology that is offsetting losses in traditional manufacturing enterprises.

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2002, which governs the labour market, includes family-friendly provisions. Despite wide-ranging agreement among the social partners on the need for family-friendly measures in principle, employers are wary of the strain that this could place on corporate economic viability. Unfortunately, measures aimed at helping workers achieve a better work-life balance currently apply to workers in the public services exclusively. The debate on this issue highlights the gap in industrial relations between rhetoric and reality.

In January 2005, the regulations governing vacation leave were amended to abolish the award of a compensatory day off for a public holiday falling on a weekend. The General Workers' Union strongly opposed the decision, appealing to the International Labour Organization (ILO). In June 2006, the ILO

1 *Malta Independent*, "European Court finds Malta guilty of breaching European convention", Malta, 23 January 2008.

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recommended that the amended legislation should respect clauses contained in collective agreements and thus refrain from interfering in social partners' negotiations. However, up to this date (February 2008) the Government has maintained its original position.

The European Commission has required Malta to implement in full the EU rules prohibiting any discrimination in employment and occupation on grounds of religion, belief, age, disability or sexual orientation. The Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) was ratified in 2000 with a deadline for implementation into national law of December 2003. The main problem areas are the following:

- National legislation is limited in terms of the people and areas it covers, as compared to the Directive (for example: lack of protection for civil servants or in self-employment);
- Definitions of discrimination that diverge from the Directive (in particular, in terms of indirect discrimination, harassment and instructions to discriminate);
- Incorrect implementation of the employer obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for disabled workers;
- Inconsistencies in the provisions designed to help victims of discrimination.

The influx of a relatively large number of undocumented migrants from Africa fills a gap in the labour market, since these migrants take on jobs unwanted by the Maltese. This situation may eventually create an underclass. To prevent that, their situation should be regularized through temporary work permits or by registering them as guest workers.

In an effort to promote female participation in employment, in 2007 the national budget implemented a measure offering tax deductions for expenses that individuals incurred on licensed childcare services. Employer payments for childcare services became deductible expenses.

Although gender mainstreaming was officially introduced in Malta through the European Employment Strategy, a study conducted by the Centre for Labour Studies revealed that obstacles to equality of opportunity remain. Although gender equality is protected by law, discrimination in various forms is still apparent. For example, recruitment strategies and modes of selection discriminate against women.

As globalization's emphasis on economic growth and profitability catalyzes market volatility and makes the labour world less secure, it is important for Maltese leaders to look upon work as a significant means of gaining self-respect and human dignity. Productive and decent work for all is essential to the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedom.

Domestic violence

Women' rights were enhanced by the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act, which came into force in February 2006, eight years after it was first presented. A Commission on Domestic Violence was established in March to provide enhanced protection for victims and specific offences have been enumerated in the legislation covering domestic violence. The Commission's responsibilities include awareness raising and developing strategies to identify problems in order to give better protection to victims.

Racism

A report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on racism and xenophobia had mixed words of praise and criticism regarding how Malta deals with and prevents ethnic discrimination. The study criticized the absence both of Maltese case law on ethnic discrimination (meaning that key concepts of anti-discrimination legislation on ethnic or racial discrimination have not been applied, tested or interpreted by the courts) and of unemployment figures for immigrants from outside the EU. The FRA also noted that not a single sanction had been applied nor any compensation awarded in cases of ethnic discrimination during 2006, though the laws and procedures were in place.

On the other hand, the FRA commended two programmes underway in 2006 – one dealing with cultural awareness and anti-racism training of the Malta Police Force, and another that provides in-service courses with a specific emphasis on human rights for social studies teachers.

In April 2007 the Government published Legal Notice 85 – the Equal Treatment of Persons Order – which mirrors the EU directive. The Legal Notice, under the European Union Act, also extended the mandate of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) from matters limited to gender equality to include complaints of racial or ethnic discrimination. The legal notice empowers the NCPE to look into complaints regarding social protection, social advantages, education, housing and other goods and services available to the public.

Overt racism has continued to increase in recent years. A non-governmental coalition, the European Network Against Racism noted that discussions in the news media and on the Internet were increasingly hostile towards immigrants and that racist attacks and hate speech were on the rise. In 2005, individuals and organizations that actively worked to protect the human rights of migrants and refugees or denounced racist and discriminatory attitudes and actions in Maltese society were targets of arson attacks. Although the situation currently appears calm, a new political party with racist tendencies – the Azzjoni Nazzjonali – is contesting the parliamentary election.

Migrants and asylum-seekers

Malta maintained its automatic detention policy for irregular migrants. On arrival they are held in closed detention centres for up to 18 months and later transferred to open centres. The policy clearly violates international human rights laws and standards. Migrants are detained without first having proper medical screening, potentially putting the health of other detainees and the detention centre staff at risk. NGOs and journalists are still not allowed access to detention centres. Four administrative detention centres for asylum seekers and migrants are in deplorable condition and failed to meet legally binding international standards.[2]

A delegation of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs that visited four detention centres in 2005 found that the Hal-Safi detention centre "was like a cage", without sheets on the beds, broken and dirty mattresses, and no heating. Hygiene conditions were intolerable, with broken showers, no hot water, and toilets without doors and in a state of disrepair. At the Hal-Far centre, delegates found high levels of mosquitoes and rat infestation, and appalling conditions in bathrooms. Some residents who had fled from the Darfur region in Sudan said their asylum applications had been rejected on the grounds that "they could have moved to safer areas of the country". The Lyster Barracks centre, had only two functioning toilets for more than 100 people, no provision of sanitary towels for women, and no area outside for fresh air and exercise, the Committee reported.

A report drawn up by the French NGO Médecins du Monde (MdM) criticized the living conditions in Malta's overcrowded closed detention centres as "detrimental" and "incompatible with a minimal respect for human rights". MdM doctors were initially denied access to the closed centres, but were eventually allowed in for two single-day visits. An Eritrean migrant, Mr. Berhe, has filed a constitutional case against the Principal Immigration Officer and the Justice and Home Affairs Minister, claiming a violation of his human rights due to the lengthy procedures for asylum and inhumane conditions of detention that included a crowded centre and lack of appropriate hygienic and medical and legal services.

Dr. K. Camilleri, a Maltese refugee lawyer working with the Jesuit Refugee Service, has been honoured by the UN refugee agency with the Nansen Award for her work with refugees.

Malta has implemented several initiatives recommended by previous EU delegations to ease boredom within the Closed Centres and to facilitate decent living conditions for detainees who are released into Maltese society or possibly resettled in another country. Declaring that its resources are over-extended, the Government has called upon the international community to give Malta the help it needs to tackle its refugee problem through burden sharing and resettlement schemes. The EU, which is the real magnetic pole for those fleeing Africa, needs to develop a consistent response. Malta's request for assistance is not to be construed as an abdication of its international obligations but as the expression of a genuine need for short-term help. Such assistance is not viewed as a permanent solution, which Malta recognizes can only be found within the framework of a long term approach addressing the root causes of emigration from Africa. We have had sufficient declarations on migration. It is time to translate them into practice. ■

2 "JRS (Malta) concern on medical care in detention centres", August 2007, <www.jrsmalta.org>.

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MEXICO

After 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The country reaches the 60th anniversary of the UDHR with some points of light but many shadows. The economic model that the State refuses to review does not promote real development, but creates social injustice, environmental depredation and diverse violations to the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental human rights of the population.

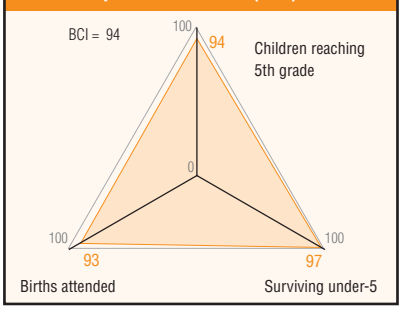
Areli Sandoval Terán[1]
Endorsed by Espacio DESC[2]

As Mexico approaches the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it has already ratified the major international and regional human rights instruments that support it and is open to visits by representatives of world and inter-American organizations and institutions that protect human rights. Mexico presided over the first year of work of the UN Human Rights Council[3] and supports the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).[4] Likewise the National Development Plan 2007-2012 declares that the State will "guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights and struggle for their promotion and defence."[5]

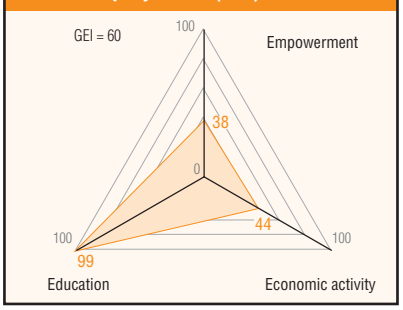
Pending agenda

Notwithstanding the above, the country also has a long list of tasks to accomplish in fulfilling its commitments. Multiple and systematic violations of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights have been committed with impunity despite documentation and denunciation by national and international organizations. In addition, many recommendations made by the UN human rights treaty bodies, as well as by UN Special Rapporteurs to the Mexican State in recent years, have yet to be thoroughly implemented.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Mexico is well behind in its recognition of human rights at the constitutional level. Although the 1917 Constitution was a pioneer in its recognition of some social rights, it has not been amended to reflect current international human rights standards. Despite "more than 70 changes in Title 1, Chapter I, entitled 'Individual Guarantees' (modifications that have added new rights or have attempted to update some of the rights already incorporated), it has not been possible to reform the chapter in its totality. The manner in which the Constitution covers human rights reflects structural deficiencies that make it impossible to exercise these rights fully and effectively. To cite only a few of these deficiencies, some are related to the very concept of individual guarantees; others to the lack of structure and coherence in Chapter I; to the lack of a gender perspective; to weak incorporation of international treaties on the subject; and to limitations that undermine guarantees and mechanisms for the protection of rights."[6]

Violations of human rights coupled with the impunity of perpetrators have cast a shadow on this commemorative year. A range of civil society organizations and networks described the situation in a joint document submitted to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, when she visited Mexico in February 2008. The main concerns raised in it were criminalization of social protest; unconstitutional initiatives relating to criminal law; conditions of political prisoners; forced disappearance and torture; harassment and assaults on defenders of human rights, including journalists and organizations; the situation of migrants and refugees; and conditions of women and children. Another concern has been poor supervision and regulation of non-state actors such as private national and transnational corporations guilty of activities that violate human rights, especially economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, and even State complicity in these violations.

The economic model and human rights violations

In this section we will look at some of the situations that reveal the negative impact of the economic model of liberalization of trade and investment on human rights and development, and illustrate ways in which the Mexican State has failed to meet its commitments, particularly the obligation to protect human rights by preventing third parties from interfering with their enjoyment.

The State does not protect the labour rights of workers at large international service corporations. As described in Report 2007 of the Centro de Reflexión y Acción Laboral (CEREAL), "these types of companies commit very serious violations of worker dignity: they subject workers to job instability; pay insufficient wages and offer very limited benefits, very often below legal requirements; and create labour relationships based on designations not covered by legislation (interns, associates, etc.) that make it difficult for employees to win respect for their human rights as workers; and by preventing them from exercising their freedom of association in unions and right to collective bargaining. This is the sector

1 Coordinator for the Programa Diplomacia Ciudadana of DECA Equipo Pueblo, A.C., focal point of Social Watch in México and member of Espacio DESC. Contact: arelisandoval@equipopueblo.org.mx

2 Reference group in México for Social Watch and other international networks, founded in 1998 and currently made up by: DECA Equipo Pueblo, Casa y Ciudad de Coalición Hábitat México, Cátedra UNESCO de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Estudios Sociales y Culturales Antonio de Montesinos, Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, Centro de Reflexión y Acción Laboral de Fomento Cultural y Educativo, Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Defensoría del Derecho a la Salud, FIAN Sección México, Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario, Liga Mexicana de Defensa de Derechos Humanos, Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe de la Coalición Internacional del Hábitat, RADAR-colectivo de estudios alternativos en derecho.

3 México presided over the UN Human Rights Council from 19 June 2006 to 18 June 2007.

4 Established in Mexico in 2002, it will operate in the country until 2012.

5 Look up PND 2007-2012 at: <pnd.presidencia.gob.mx/>.

6 Proposal for a constitutional reform in matters of human rights produced by civil society organizations and academics specializing in human rights, Mexico, February 2008. This document was promoted by the OHCHR in Mexico in 2007 with the purpose of presenting before the Congress of the Union this strategic proposal, which our organization also subscribed to. Full document available at: <www.ohchr.mx>.

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in which most workers are subject to 'owner protection contracts'."[7]

Furthermore, the State fails to check compliance with hygiene and security standards in private company workplaces. The absence of regular inspections by the State and non-compliance by the companies can lead to a tragic loss of life among workers, such as the 65 miners who died in February 2006 in the (preventable) explosion at Pasta de Conchos Mine 8, property of Grupo Industrial Minera México (IMMSA), the largest mining company in the country.[8] For more than two years, complicity between State officials and the company has hindered the search for bodies, the main demand made by families of the deceased miners.[9]

In many of Mexico's states, construction of infrastructure megaprojects and large shopping, tourist or housing projects is proceeding with no concern for the social and environmental impact on the part of either the investors or the State. Communities that organize protests against these megaprojects suffer harassment, arbitrary arrest, repression and even media campaigns that criminalize social protest. A clear example of this is the struggle of the Peoples' Council in Defence of Water, the Earth and the Air in the state of Morelos. For the past three years it has campaigned for cancellation of the megahousing project *La Ciénaga*, backed by private company Urbasol, charging that it will severely limit the availability, accessibility and quality of water in dozens of communities in the area. Like other megaprojects, it was approved without consideration of its total environmental impact.

The most glaring example of the social and environmental irresponsibility of allowing unfettered access to the external market can be seen in the consequences of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in force for 14 years, because of which the Mexican State has been observed by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[10] The negative impacts are many, and the inevitability of the Treaty was only an excuse. The State seems to have forgotten that human rights take precedence over treaties of whatever type, including financial or commercial agreements.[11]

Among all the negative consequences of NAFTA, the impact on the agricultural sector deserves special attention. Since 1 January 2008 products of extreme importance to Mexicans like corn, beans, sugar cane and milk have been imported with no tariff or other restriction. During January 2008, "imports of white corn from the United States jumped by 384% compared to the same month in 2007, while imports of yellow corn for fodder, starches, fructose and snacks, grew by 1,000% during the same period."[12] This will increase Mexico's agricultural product trade deficit, which was already growing steadily in the NAFTA years: "from 1980 to 1994 exports of agricultural products grew more than 200%, while imports went up only 28%. Over the next 14 years the opposite happened. Exports only grew by 50% and imports jumped by 176%."[13] The agricultural crisis has deepened; rural and urban poverty have grown, as has migration to the North. Food security has disappeared. According to the National Campaign for Food Security and Restoration of the Mexican Countryside, "Without corn there is no country, nor is there a country without beans." In addition to the trade deficit, negative consequences include lack of control over the agro-industrial monopolies, the proposal to sow genetically modified corn in Mexico, and demand in the United States for corn to produce ethanol, "all of which threatens the quality, quantity and price of corn... and of all foodstuffs that depend on corn."[14]

Were this not enough, the State, encourages policies and legislation that contravene both international human rights declarations and environmental rights, while favouring the interests of the transnational food, biotechnology and energy industries. An example of this is the Law on Biosafety of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), which came into force in May 2005. Also known as the *Monsanto Law*, "it does not create a security framework for biological diversity or food security for crops and plants of which Mexico is the original source or centre of diversity, and these crops remain essential to the subsistence of the peasant and indigenous cultures that nurtured them; however it does provide security to the five transnational corporations that control GMOs worldwide, 90% of them owned by Monsanto alone."[15] The regulations to implement this law, which went into effect in March 2008, reduce red tape so that transnational corporations can sell Mexico transgenic seeds and leave it up to the corporations themselves to "present, document and study the risks and environmental impact to health, biological diversity, including the evaluation, monitoring and control of the risks that their transgenic crops will create."

The Law on the Production, Certification and Trading of Seeds, in effect since August 2007, "is the ideal complement to the biosecurity law (*Monsanto Law*), because it gives the seed corporations the assurance that they will be able to prosecute any farmer whom they determine has been using their products without paying for them."[16]

Finally, the Law for the Promotion and Development of Bioenergy, which came into force in February 2008, opens up an investment opportunity long sought by the transnational corporations involved in energy and other industries. These "large agroindustrial, oil, automobile and biotechnology corporations have created alliances and links to facilitate participation in this activity."[17] This legislation on transgenics and agrofuels will have a severe impact on human rights, especially on the rights to health, food and water.[18] If the Government is to honour its presumed priorities in matters of human rights and complementary legislation,[19] revision is urgent and necessary.

The list of violations to the rights enshrined in the UDHR and other instruments ratified by Mexico is very long. In this report, we have mentioned only some of them, basically those related to the economic model. The country reaches the 60th anniversary of the UDHR with some lights but with many shadows, with a State that does not show true willingness to comply with its obligations regarding the Declaration and the treaties it has signed and ratified. For Mexicans, the ideal of a life free of fear and want found in the Universal Declaration is far from becoming a reality. ■

7 Centro de Reflexión y Acción Laboral (CEREAL) de Fomento Cultural y Educativo, A.C. "XI Informe de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos Laborales durante 2007. La mano dura de Calderón. Tres reformas, arrebatar el poder a los trabajadores". Mexico, D.F., March 2008, p. 45.

8 IMMSA is valued at more than USD 9 billion, "a sum equal to seven times the budget of public education for the whole country for 2006, to 15% of the GDP and 150 times the expense in Federal Public Security", quoted in: "Mina 8, Unidad Pasta de Conchos: Múltiples violaciones a los derechos humanos laborales", by Cristina Auerbach Benavides and Carlos G. Rodríguez Rivera, members of CEREAL. Mimeo, January 2008.

9 "Both the company and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare have mentioned a presumed danger... In spite of the conditions in which our relatives worked, danger in the mine was never an obstacle when it came to the extraction of carbon and obtaining profit from it. For which reason, and having established the necessary precautions... there is no reason for us to be denied the internationally recognized right that we have of families, of recovering our families." Press bulletin issued by the social organization Familia Pasta de Conchos. Mexico City, 19 January 2008.

10 See the concluding observations of the CESCR to Mexico in 1993 (E/C.12/1993/16) and 1999 (E/C.12/1/Add.41), as well as the summary record of the CESCR 13th meeting (36th session) in 2006 (E/C.12/2006/SR.13).

11 Article 103 of the UN Charter (1945) establishes: "In the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Members of the United Nations under the present Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail." Among those obligations, the fulfilment of human rights occupies a central place.

12 Imagen Agropecuaria, <www.imagenagropecuaria.com> quoted by Blanca Rubio. "Decisiones de Gobierno, de espaldas a las tendencias mundiales", in: *La Jornada del Campo*, No. 7, 8 April 2008.

13 Roberto Garduño. "Desastrosos efectos del TLCAN en el agro, concluye estudio en la Cámara." *La Jornada*, 3 February 2008.

14 Further information at: <www.sinmaiznohaypais.org>.

15 Silvia Ribeiro. "Ley Monsanto: parece mala pero es peor". *La Jornada*, 22 January 2005.

16 Silvia Ribeiro. "Nueva ley de semillas contra los campesinos." *La Jornada*, 24 August 2007.

17 Michelle Chauvet and Rosa Luz González. "Biocombustibles y cultivos biofarmacéuticos: ¿oportunidades o amenazas?". *El Cotidiano*, No. 147, January-February 2008, year 23, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana.

18 On several occasions the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, has expressed his reservations regarding GMOs, invoking the precautionary principle in the face of the risk of affecting the right to food and to health. Also, he has emphasized the negative implications of agrofuels on the right to food and the right to water. See for example, his report to the UN General Assembly in August 2007 (A/62/289), available at: <www.ohchr.org>.

19 One of the current government's priorities in international politics is "to make compatible the internal legal resolutions, whether at federal or state level, with the international treaties that Mexico is party to." See: <www.sre.gob.mx/derechoshumanos>.

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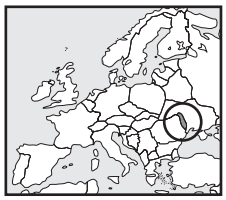
MOLDOVA

Realities, promises and illusions



In this multicultural country, almost one third of the population lives below the poverty line. Social assistance programmes remain weak. Although gender issues have become a hot topic, recent legislation has yet to become integrated into public policies or strategic development documents. Domestic abuse is common; the Government is just beginning to take action to prevent it. Women's high labour force participation rate has not been accompanied by men's equivalent participation in household tasks.

National Women's Studies and Information Centre "Partnership for Development"
Diana Mocanu

Poverty is a major problem in the country. In 2006, 30% of the population was living in poverty; about 4.5% of them in extreme poverty. The highest rates were in rural areas, where economic activities are less profitable and wages lower. More than 40% of households headed by agricultural workers and pensioners were eking out a living below the poverty line.

The average retirement pension in 2006 was MDL 457.51 (USD 45), up 15% over the previous year. Currently, one Moldovan in five collects a pension or a social insurance benefit. This high proportion is a heavy financial burden on the current labour force. The almost total absence of contributions to the social insurance system by the agricultural sector is undermining its financial sustainability.

Social protection

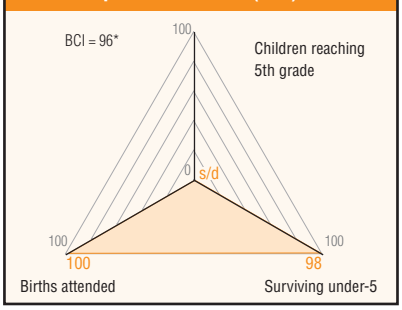
The Moldovan system of social protection has two main elements, social insurance and social assistance. The legislation for state social insurance is very complex and includes differentiated insurance rates for different categories. Benefits are based on need, but due to poor data management, the same person may get 11 different kinds of assistance.

All community services were created with support from international organizations and charity funds. While the strategies and programmes to reform the social protection system have been based on the needs of vulnerable populations, the greatest threat to the system is its extremely complicated formulas.

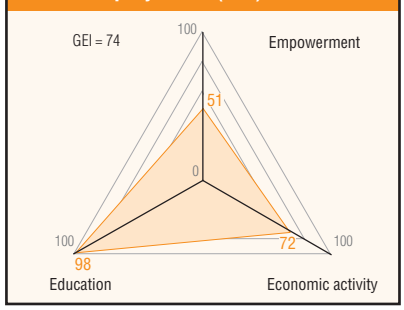
In 1998 the Government introduced a radical reorganization of the pension system based on a private social insurance system that would be financially and socially stable and equitable. It called for increased contributions and more rigorous control of distributions and raised the retirement age. However, in 2002, most of the reforms stalled; only a few were implemented. Although the Government made another attempt to create a uniform pension system in 2004, the impact was limited. The redistribution formula still leads to inequities among different categories of employee, which makes many people reluctant to contribute.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



In terms of social insurance, local governments have little capacity for managing and financing social services. This leads to inequalities in the provision of services, such as support for children, vulnerable families and the elderly. In 2006 only 44% of the poorest families were collecting child benefits and only 26.2% got cash payments or groceries.

Even when the poor do receive a full complement of social services from the State, this does not cover their needs. In rural areas, NGOs are the main providers of community-based social services, and supplement public benefits. These programmes, which primarily assist children, youth, women and the elderly, can be grouped into three categories:

- Prevention services, with an emphasis on information and consulting (82%), and counselling and support (63%);
- Intervention services, including humanitarian assistance (66%); however, only 29% goes for day care services;
- Social-medical services, primarily related to health care and hygiene services (26%).

Gender equality and women's rights

Gender equality has become a major issue in the last decade. NGOs are still underestimated by the State and not valued as a force for change, despite increasing efforts by civil society to gain a greater voice in policy making. The "PasProGen" Alliance, a civil society coalition established primarily to campaign for equal rights and opportunities for women and men, has more than 90 member organizations; thanks to its work, citizen awareness of gender issues has steadily grown.

The Government has enacted an equal opportunities law and a national plan titled "Promoting gender equality in society for 2006-2009". However, after a careful review of the law, the independent organization Gender-Centru concluded that some of its provisions are merely formal and do not provide mechanisms for implementation. Besides, the law has not been applied in public policies or strategic development documents. The national plan calls for partnerships with NGOs to achieve 19 out of its 20 specific objectives. Representatives of the most visible and active NGOs are usually invited to participate in activities, planning meetings and discussions, but no genuine collaboration has occurred.

Although gender equality is cited in many legislative measures (e.g. the Education Law, Social-Political Parties' Law, Labour Code, Family Code, Salary Code and Citizenship Law) they also contain many provisions that contradict it. For example, Article 14 of the Family Code sets the legal age for marriage at 18 for men and 16 for women, a violation of international standards for equal treatment.

According to the CEDAW Assessment Tool Report for Moldova, although women participate in the political system, they continue to suffer discrimination within the family. Domestic abuse is common; the Government has only recently passed legislation to prevent it. Heavy participation of women in the workforce has not been accompanied by an equivalent participation of men in household tasks such as childcare and housework. In February 2008 the Government enacted a Law on Preventing and Combating Violence within the Family that will take effect on 18 September 2008. In addition to establishing penalties for psychical, sexual, psychological, spiritual and economic abuse within the family, as well as moral and material bias against women, the law provides for the creation of rehabilitation centres where victims will receive shelter and protection, and

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both they and the aggressors can obtain, juridical, social, psychological and medical assistance.

A recent Cabinet shake-up, following the Prime Minister's resignation in March 2008, resulted in an increase in the number of women in high-level positions, including the new Prime Minister. However, the share of women in Cabinet and parliamentary positions remains very low.

Justice is not gender sensitive either. "Preliminary Findings on the Experience of Going to Court in Moldova", a report by a mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) based on a six-month analysis, concluded that the Constitution and other normative acts fail to clearly define the terms "discrimination", "gender equality", "sexual harassment", etc., leading to unequal treatment of women in the legal system.

In addition there is no effective legal remedy against gender discrimination. Lack of gender sensitivity within courts and among law enforcement authorities denies women access to justice, particularly in cases involving gender-based violence. An Anti-Trafficking Law went into effect in late 2005, however the 2007 US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report stated that Moldova remains a major source, and to a lesser extent, a transit country, for women trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Legislative progress must be accompanied by changes in attitudes and behaviour that inform gender discrimination – but few of the over 2,000 NGOs are specifically concerned with women's and/or gender issues. Gender equality can only be achieved through the joint efforts of Government and civil society; women's groups especially have a crucial role to play in designing and implementing initiatives that support and promote women's rights and empowerment, and address gaps in women's access to information.

Children

Primary education is free and compulsory until ninth grade. Still, many inadequately funded schools, particularly in rural areas, charge parents for school supplies. Even though not technically illegal, such fees contradict Government policies and cause some parents to keep their children at home. Government and local authorities provide annual assistance of USD 30 to pay for the school supplies of children from vulnerable families.

The percentage of children attending primary school slid from 94% to 88% between 2000 and 2005, according to UNICEF. Approximately 16,000 youngsters between the ages of 15 and 16 leave the educational system each year without any professional qualifications. Secondary school enrolment was approximately 88.5% but secondary school attendance is dropping, according to the Moldovan Human Rights Centre. It believes the primary reasons are absentee parents (many are working abroad) and the obligation to care for younger siblings due to a lack of preschools in rural areas.

Although prohibited by law, child abuse is widespread. Only the gravest forms of abuse and neglect are registered and officially reported; the National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention identified 116 cases in 2006 and a majority of cases remain unreported. UNICEF study of violence against children in Moldova revealed that almost half the parents interviewed considered beating an acceptable form of punishment; 10% agreed that there were times when physical punishment was necessary. One-third of the child respondents reported that they had been beaten at home in the past year, 40% stated that they had been slapped and 25% reported they had been threatened with physical abuse or verbally abused at home. No government statistics are available.

Trafficking of children for sexual exploitation and begging remains a problem. The Centre to Combat Trafficking in Persons identified 28 children under age 18 who had been trafficked in the first six months of 2007, compared to 61 in 2006. The actual numbers are believed to be far higher.

Persons with disabilities

Despite legislation barring discrimination against persons with physical and mental disabilities, this is rarely enforced. Gaudeamus, a local NGO, has reported widespread discrimination against students with disabilities. The Social Assistance Division in the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the National Labour Force Agency are responsible for protecting their rights.

Children with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Moldova. Many live in conditions of extreme poverty and isolation, without access to services that could help them learn take care of themselves and become productive citizens. The Government devotes minimal resources for trainers who work with individuals with disabilities. In 2002, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed profound concern regarding the growing number of children with disabilities and the insufficient support provided to them and their families. The Committee also noted that few programmes such as cultural and recreational activities, had been established to integrate these children into the education system and society. Three years later, only 33% of registered children with disabilities (4,540) were receiving special educational services; nearly all of them lived in residential institutions. An additional 700 were getting specialized training in sanatoriums. In its report, the Committee also recommended changing the terminology used to refer to children with disabilities, pointing out that the term "invalid" could reinforce prejudice and stigma.

No legislation requires universal access to buildings. Children with physical disabilities and their families confront major challenges simply going from one place to another. Most buildings do not have special access ramps. Roads and sidewalks are poorly maintained and public transport lacks special access facilities. Although families caring for children with disabilities receive monthly allowances, the money does not cover basic subsistence or the costs of medical assistance or other services they need. In 2005, half the families with at least one child with a disability declared that they did not have sufficient income to satisfy their basic needs.

Ethnic minorities

Moldova has an impressive record in ethnic minority rights. The principle of equality and universality is guaranteed in law; ethnic minorities have the right to pursue their own culture and practice traditional arts. A State Department for Inter-Ethnical Relations (formerly State Department for National Relations and Linguistic Affairs) was established in 1990 and the House of Nationalities under the Department for Inter-Ethnical Relations is responsible for sustaining and promoting the ethnic cultures of all nationalities. In 1996, Parliament ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities.

The country has 18 minority groups, the largest of which are Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians and Gagauz. All of these communities protect the civil, economic, social and religious rights of their members, speaking on their behalf and representing their interests. Members of the Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Belarusan, German, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian communities have set up their own social, cultural and humanitarian organizations and there is also a network of cultural institutions for ethnic minorities, based in the State library, museum and theatre system. Chisinau has six libraries for ethnic minorities and a Russian State Theatre. The first Gagauz theatre company has been created in Comrat; Taraclia now has the country's first Bulgarian theatre company.

Parents have the legal right to choose their children's language of instruction, and the Government secures this right in practice. In addition to a large network of schools with Russian-language classes, Ukrainian is taught in 71 schools, Gagauz in 49 schools and Bulgarian in 27 schools. Belarusan, Lithuanian, Greek, Georgian, Armenian, and German children can learn their mother tongue and culture in Sunday schools set up by ethno-cultural societies. Special training programmes are available for teachers in schools and kindergartens where pupils speak ethnic minority languages. Over the last decade, the Government has established a number of higher education institutions for ethnic minorities, including a Comrat State University and the Comrat Pedagogical College, the Pedagogical College in Taraclia and a branch of the Music College Stefan Neaga in Tvardita.

The "Teleradio-Moldova" company has two special departments that broadcast in minority languages. Their shows make up about 40% of all programmes (24.9% in Russian; 14.8% in Ukrainian, along with programmes in Bulgarian, Gagauz, Polish, Yiddish, and Romaic). Local TV and radio stations regularly broadcast programmes in Gagauz, Bulgarian and Ukrainian. Romanian, officially known as Moldovan, is the only official language. However, all official documents are also translated into Russian, which is used for interethnic communication. Nearly half (45% in 2005) the total production of the publishing sector – books, newspapers, magazines – is in Russian. Government officials are required to know both Romanian and Russian "to the degree necessary to fulfil their professional obligations." ■

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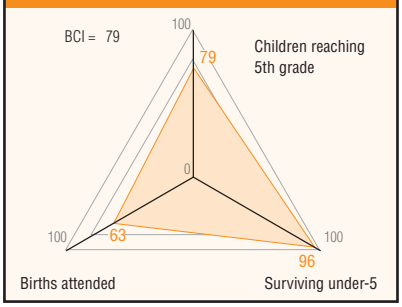
MOROCCO

Economic, social and cultural rights: reforms and the harsh reality

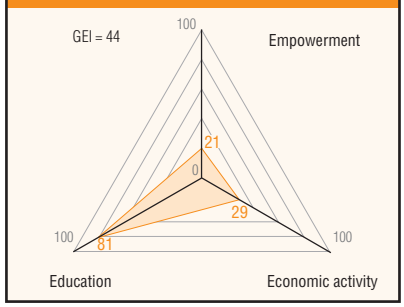
Although there have been a number of reforms in Morocco in the last few years, access to economic and social rights is still deficient. The State fails to invest adequately in human rights: every year, budgets assigned to the two ministries (Interior and Defense) are over eleven times greater than those assigned to the remaining ten ministries put together. The right to work, to gender equality, to health, to education and to a viable environment are far from being a reality for Moroccans.

Espace Associatif[1]

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



During the last few years, a number of reforms and initiatives have taken place in Morocco regarding human rights. However, the recommendations made by the Equity and Reconciliation Commission have not – at least for the most part – been put in practice. The present king, Mohammed VI, officially established this commission in 2004, in order to "shed light on the truth regarding the serious violations of human rights committed in the past"; that is, to investigate the repression and dirty war perpetrated during the reign of his predecessor, Hassan II.

Diverse Moroccan laws often refer to the foundational texts in their preambles or main content: from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) to the Millennium Declaration (2000), including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, although it is possible to register moderate legislative achievements with regard to gender equality – such as the reform of the family code – as well as with regard to socio-economic rights – such as the reform of the labour code (2005), the education code and the introduction of compulsory health insurance (2005) – these achievements are still not mirrored by reality.

There are deficiencies in the economic and social policy tools as regards the respect for human rights. This is seen unmistakably each year, as soon as preparations for the budget laws begin: budgets assigned to the two security ministries are over eleven times greater than those assigned to the ten other ministries put together.

Investment – both public and private – is still scant and focused mainly on exports. The agriculture and fishing sectors constitute a very eloquent case. As agriculture focuses on exports (citrus and fruit in general) according to the needs of foreign markets, it has been necessary to import basic agricultural products (wheat and cereals) from industrialized countries in the European Union with agricultural subsidies. This partly explains the difficulties encountered in the face of the high cost of basic food products on the international market; the income per inhabitant cannot keep pace with the rise in prices. With regard to the fish industry, despite its 3,600 km (2,237 miles) long coastline, the country suffers from over-exploitation of its marine resources, without this entailing any noticeable economic profitability. This over-exploitation impoverishes resources (biological rest periods are not respected, illegal nets are used and so on). Furthermore, fish consumption per inhabitant is the lowest in the region; fish prices are very high on the domestic market in relation to the population's income levels.

The various free-trade agreements (with the United States and the European Union) as well as the duty-free zones are often accused of violating workers' economic and social rights.

Field observations and socio-economic indicators reflect significant backwardness in almost all sectors: from unemployment, particularly amongst young professionals of both sexes, to environmental degradation, through health coverage for the whole population and the quality of education. According to the UNDP's Human Development Index,[2] Morocco must make "a great effort" to improve the situation with regard to human, social and economic rights. The same can be concluded from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)'s follow-up indicators, as well as from Social Watch's Gender Equity Index and Basic Capabilities Index which accompany this report.

Unemployment and social implosion

Article 13 of the Constitution establishes that all citizens have the right to work. Unemployment, however, increases without respite, particularly amongst university graduates, and every year the number of jobs created is lower than the number of people seeking work.

Unemployment is structural; over 70% of the unemployed have been looking for work for over a year and 80% of these have never worked at all. This situation has sunk many young people in despair, leading to clandestine immigration and even to suicide. Unemployment, experienced as a social drama by most Moroccan families, constitutes a real threat of social destabilization and is a factor of social implosion.

Labour insertion training programmes have been a failure because some companies made use of them in order to collect unjustified indemnity payments. Thus, many of the beneficiaries of these programmes are included in the ranks of the unemployed. With regard to the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Abilities, it is necessary to state that because of it, thousands of young people have been entrapped by fictitious enterprises. Also through the Agency, another group signed contracts with foreign firms which later refused to provide jobs for the young people, who had already settled in Spain. Several hundred graduates

1 This document is part of the summary of a report developed within the framework of a collective and participatory project lasting five months. On 23 April 2008, *Espace Associatif* organized a round table that brought together a panel of experts, researchers and university graduates who had carried out studies and had contact with civil society actors, among them *associative groups* and journalists. This made it possible to perceive the status of economic, social and cultural rights and the role of associations, as well as contributing to the analysis of the obstacles that prevent the application of these rights beyond the recognition of their existence.

2 In the Human Development Index, Morocco fell from the 117th position in 1995, to the 124th, in a total of 177 countries, in 2005 and again to the 126th in 2007 (UNDP).

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have obtained employment in various public administration organizations, particularly within the field of education, after a selection process consisting of interviews and tests made available mainly to those who participate actively in unemployment collectives.

Child labour continues to be common in Morocco (according to official sources, 600,000 children work). This is due, mainly, to tolerance towards the employment of minors below the legally stipulated age in areas such as crafts and agriculture, as well as in domestic labour and exploitation in private undertakings. A serious aggravating factor is the situation regarding street children, together with the exploitation of children for sexual tourism. The lack of regulation regarding domestic labour and the adoption of specific legislation for work in the traditional trades, carried out in the most part by children, despite the current labour code, contribute to this situation very significantly.

Health: the failure of the reform

According to all of the political, trade union and associative actors, and also according to overwhelming reports from international institutions (WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank), health in Morocco suffers from the disease of its own model, its own political choice and its own form of management and governance.

Recurrent crises are related, essentially, to the absence of a health policy as well as of a strategic global vision – there is still no health chart for Morocco. Both this policy and this strategic vision must be based on dynamic, innovative actions and on a national charter rooted in the universal values of human rights and the right to health; that is, on the general principles of solidarity, equality, equity, freedom of charge and, finally, democracy and collective and State responsibility.

The disparities between the central (Casablanca and Rabat) and the peripheral regions are flagrant in every sense. Existing health structures perform very poorly. Over half (55%) of the doctors in the public sector are in Casablanca and Rabat, but only 19% of the country's population[3] lives there. Professional risk and disease are common in hospitals and health centres: 30% of the health staff suffers from diseases contracted at work, and 3% have been diagnosed with hepatitis C.[4] Several testimonies reveal that health staff even lacks soap in order to wash their hands and that it is not possible to follow the most basic procedures with regard to hygiene, asepsis and sterilization. Persons who undergo surgery are likely to contract diseases.

These results, which are alarming in more than one sense, are the direct consequence of budgetary restrictions (5% of GDP). In this context, the most worrying example for actors in this sector is the annual rate for maternal mortality (227 in every 100,000) and for children (50 in every 1,000). In rural areas, 52% of women still give birth at home, far from a health centre. Close to 31% of the rural population still lives more than 10 km (just over 6 miles) away from a health centre and one in five children dies before the age of five[5].

Projects for the reform of the health system launched by the sector's ministry (new strategy 2008-2012) are unworkable. On the one hand, there are no financial or human resources and on the other, the government's project does not present a global, comprehensive and coherent approach to the health question. Health cannot be separated from other areas, such as education, food, drinking water, housing, environment, living conditions and the protection and assistance of vulnerable populations.

Three years after the adoption of the compulsory medical insurance plan the new system, with its decrees of application, is an increasing burden on the budget of households, particularly on those of salaried workers of the public or private sectors. The aid plan for people without coverage, known as RAMED, which should have been in place in early 2007, has been delayed. The emergence of a private medical insurance system, INAYA (an Arab term which means "look after"), seems to indicate the beginning of privatization in the sector, as has already happened in Egypt and Turkey.

The consumption of medication is very low; the average amount allocated is 20 dollars per year and per person, one of the lowest coverages in the region. Taxes on drugs are very high (49% of the price of prescription drugs is tax) and, despite a major tax cut for raw materials, from 25% to 2.5%, prices have not changed. Furthermore, reimbursement rates do not exceed 41% of what the insured person has spent, which means that, contrary to the strategy's promise, the amount households pay for health coverage will probably increase.[6]

Education: another failure

The right to education, like the right to work, is guaranteed by the Constitution. Although this decade, which is nearly at its end, was declared a decade of "education and training", and despite the Charter for Education and Training, and the establishment of a Higher Council for Education and Training, the sums invested in the sector and some quantitative progress during the last few years, results are far below target, and below the achievements of comparable countries.

Opinions are unanimous regarding the failure of the educational system; the Higher Council for Education's report, submitted to the Head of State on 16 April 2008, points this out, as well as the need for urgent intervention. Illiteracy is about 50% (in rural areas, less than 10% of the population is literate) and preschool education is limited (45% in 2004, and in rural areas only one girl in five has access to preschool education).

Official figures – 92% school enrolment; 87% in rural areas – are based on the statements of parents; there is no monitoring system. Close to one million children between 6 and 15 do not attend school and, furthermore, almost one million and a half drop out of school every year. Students who finish the fourth year of primary education do not know how to read or to understand a written text.

Despite an increase of teaching staff, there has been no attempt to guide students in choosing the training which is most suited to each. With regard to higher education, with 280,000 students enrolled – one of the lowest rates (10%) among the countries in the region in a comparable situation – performance is only fair. If the necessary resources are not invested, the reform of the sector will not yield perceptible results.

Degradation of natural resources

In Morocco, matters concerning water – quantity per inhabitant, for example – are far from achieving the international threshold needed to guarantee development. The quality of the country's water is amongst the worst in the world. Air pollution is severe in industrial centers, despite recent adoption of solar and eolic energy plans, and has negative repercussions on the population's health. Management of biodiversity is one of the worst in the Mediterranean region. The loss of forests and soil degradation has given rise to increasing desertification.

The cost of environmental degradation is very high; it represents MAD 20 billion[7] (USD 2,591 million) a year. There is no clear vision to guide farmers and encourage investors. National production covers food consumption less and less and the country's food security is in serious danger.

The management of natural resources, which entails the right of citizens to sufficient food and to live in a viable environment, does not receive the attention it deserves and does not interest the executive power, nor the political parties, nor Parliament.

Gender: very far from equity

Moderate legislative achievements do not hide the fact that women are far from enjoying the same opportunities as men as regards work, health and education. Furthermore, the implementation of the new family code is far from being a reality, particularly as regards polygamy, divorce (unilateral) and a mother's guardianship of her children, the marriage of minors, bicultural marriage and the establishment of a pension savings system. It is necessary to set up institutional mechanisms to monitor achievements in the matter of women's rights as well as the obstacles that come up. ■

3 *Social Watch Report, 2007.*

4 Report by the Democratic Work Organization, March 2008.

5 Morocco's Fiftieth Anniversary Report.

6 Information from the Regional Council of Pharmacists of the Northern Bureau, 2007.

7 National strategy for environmental protection and sustainable development, 1996.

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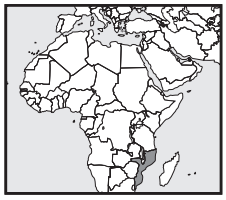
MOZAMBIQUE

Economic growth versus human development



Despite high rates of economic growth in recent years, human development in Mozambique will not be achieved without significant improvements in governance, reducing corruption in the financial, judicial and public administration systems. Rather than focus exclusively on economic growth, the Government should focus on increasing access to quality education, efficient health services and social security and delivering basic public services.

Social Watch Moçambique
Liga Moçambicana dos Direitos Humanos

World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports rank Mozambique a country that has attained one of the highest levels of economic growth since the 1990s. According to the Government economic performance report in January 2008, its annual growth rate should average 7%, and annual inflation rate 6.4%, together with international reserves that can uphold nearly five months of exports of non-factorial goods and services. In order to reach these goals, the money supply should grow to 17.5% and the monetary basis should be in the region of 15%.

Mozambique faces considerable challenges in implementing its second poverty reduction strategy, PARPA II (Plan to Reduce Absolute Poverty, 2006-2009), as well as promoting the empowerment of citizens and institutions. In order to help the country reach these objectives, the World Bank's International Development Association has committed to annual support of USD 155 million in the framework of the Country Partnership Strategy for the period 2008-2011.

The State's global investment, according to the 2007 State budget report, was USD 978 million, a growth of 19.5% in relation to the previous year. Some 77% went to strengthening institutions at the national level, with 9.6% to provincial level and 11% to district level administrations, the main target for socio-economic development.

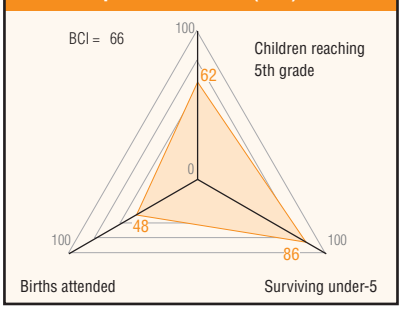
The State's overall expenses for 2007 were USD 3.06 billion, while its income was USD 1.4 billion. During that year, USD 676.09 million were for personnel expenses (salaries and other expenses). In 2007 the country had 182,952 public employees, compared to 170,934 in 2006. The main employer was the education sector (61%), followed by the health sector (15%).

The main foreign investors were the United States (nearly USD 5 billion); Switzerland (USD 170 million); Mauritius (USD 151 million); the United Kingdom (USD 91 million) and South Africa (USD 79 million).

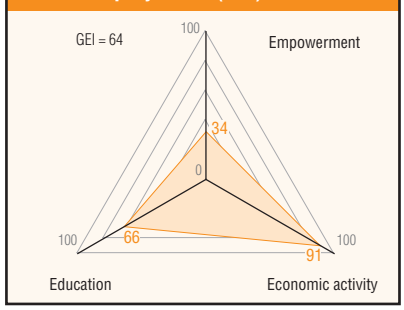
Contradictions

Given the country's widely praised economic growth of recent years (between 7% and 8%, almost double South Africa's 4%), the social, economic and cultural impact on the lives of its citizens should be queried. Mozambique ranks 172 out of 177 countries on the UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008 and a 2004 World Bank study on industrial-agricultural growth indicators, led by renowned Mozambican economists Apolinário Panguene and Cardoso Muendane, concluded that the economy was in recession rather than growing, as the authorities claimed. The study indicated that industry was stagnant and beginning to decline, aggravated by the fact that the tertiary and services sector were the main contributors to GDP.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Engineering, raw material, agricultural input and spare part industries contributed less than 7% to industrial production, while agricultural industries and fisheries are insignificant. Agriculture, defined in the Constitution as the basis of national development (article 103), receives only 4% of the General State Budget. Seventy percent of the population live in rural zones and are totally excluded from hunger and poverty reduction policies.

To make matters worse, the country has endorsed the green revolution and the cultivation of the jatropha plant for the production of biofuels, which has led on many occasions to substitute fertile land suitable for growing cereals and other food products consumed by the population with plantations to cultivate biofuels. According to government communiqués, in 2008 it will invest almost USD 160 million for the production of jatropha in the provinces of Nampula and Sofala. Similarly, ten oil companies involved in doing research in the country will invest more than USD 233.3 million in 2008 in prospecting activities.

The study demonstrates that the growth of private investment and GDP as well as monetary stability are insufficient indicators by which to evaluate the performance of the Mozambican economy. The minimum salary is around USD 60, but studies done by the unions for social consensus showed that the basic worker's basket can only be met if the minimum salary were at least USD 140.

In an effort to stimulate the economy, the country joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC) free trade zone in January 2008, permitting the entry of many products from SADC countries without an 85% export tariff. SADC includes South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as Mozambique. As part of the regional economic integration process, these countries will enter into a Monetary Union in 2018.

Social development

The two main threats to Mozambican development continue to be HIV/AIDS and the government administration, as both the incidence of HIV/AIDS and the rate of corruption grew exponentially from 2006 to the end of 2007. Both the Strategy against HIV/AIDS and the Anticorruption Strategy failed a long time before they were implemented.

An Anticorruption Forum, created in 2007 and presided over by the Prime Minister, was charged with drawing up the Anticorruption Strategy, but was abolished after being declared unconstitutional.

As a result, the likelihood of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), although the Government continues to show itself optimistic, is slight, given disastrous rainfall, rising fuel prices as well as international commodity prices, along with three upcoming elections between 2008 and 2010 – provincial, local and presidential and legislative, expected to show that Government corruption continues unchecked.

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Social injustice is compounded by the widening of the gap between the citizens who have minimum survival conditions and those who are absolutely indigent. The cost of living, already extremely high, is inaccessible to more than 60% of the rural population (who rely on subsistence agriculture and lack any kind of modern technology). In January 2008, a 19% increase in the price of liquid fuels resulted in soaring prices for wheat, rice and other basic food products as well as public transport. Between 5 and 8 February 2008 there were large demonstrations in the capital city of Maputo, replicated in other parts of the country, in protest against the high cost of living and the low purchasing power of Mozambicans.

In response to the wheat crisis, the Government launched a USD 20.12 million project, which anticipates production of more than 225,000 tons of wheat per year until 2014, in an area of more than 108,000 hectares.

At the same time, massive flooding displaced more than 100,000 people in the central region of the country, and the Government needed USD 31.73 million to fund its contingency relief plan. At the end of 2007 the Inhambane province was devastated by tropical cyclone Favio, leaving more than 120,000 homeless. A similar disaster occurred in early 2008 in the northern region of the country, where cyclone Jokwe devastated towns like Ilha de Mozambique, which are World Heritage sites.

Women and children

UNICEF reported in 2005 that one-fifth of Mozambican children suffers total deprivation in terms of health, education, clothing and food. More than 58% of children live under the poverty line and more than 380,000 children are orphans whose parents died of AIDS. In addition, more than 100 children per month are trafficked to South Africa, either as a final destination or in transit for sexual exploitation, slave work or even organ-trafficking. It was only in April 2008 that the national parliament passed a law on traffic of persons, women and children in particular.

The Government has not yet presented a clear proposal to address child poverty, despite being aware of the urgent need to improve the health and wellbeing of children, hundreds of whom die each day of AIDS, malaria, hunger, natural disasters or lack of maternal care at childbirth.

Mozambique reports high levels of reported violence against women, although many women are intimidated and will not report violent incidents. The country has no legal framework for protecting women victims of violence, a fact that lends impunity to its perpetrators.

Only a third of women know how to read and write, and among rural women 81% are illiterate. The Government has committed itself to lowering the general level of illiteracy by 10% in the next two years. The National Education System receives 20% of the General State Budget and in order to reach the MDGs, the education programme has been expanded throughout the national territory. However, the indicators used for evaluating the system are strictly quantitative, so there is no data on the quality of the education provided.[1] ■

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1 The district director of Cuamba, in the Niassa province, informed the Social Watch Mozambique research team that some students in seventh grade still had difficulties reading and writing and that due to this they were unable to read information or their names, the reason why over 50% of them had not attended their year end exam 2007.

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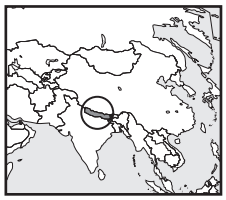
Human rights in political-economic perspective



By and large, the general population has suffered economic, social and cultural rights abuses that include the rights to earn one's own living, to adequate food and freedom from hunger, adequate housing, health, education, and women and children's rights. The overthrow of the monarchy and elections for a new Constituent Assembly provide grounds for hope that the long period of violent conflict is finally over. The new Government faces major immediate challenges, both political and economic.

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
Neeraj N. Joshi
Sarba Raj Khadka

Nepal has signed 20 United Nations (UN) treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as seven International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. However, up until now the country has failed to make significant progress in addressing human rights violations.

A decade of violent conflict and rough contours of human rights

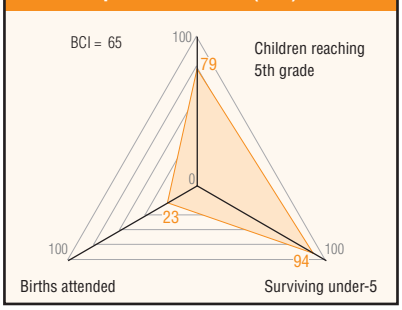
The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) announced its armed struggle to overthrow the existing state and establish a new one on 13 February 1996. The Maoists declared that this was the only way to genuinely liberate the Nepali people from centuries of feudal exploitation, deprivation, exclusion and discrimination based on class, caste, gender, ethnicity, religion, language and geographical isolation that remained pervasive despite the reinstatement of democratic government in 1990. In the years that followed, the root causes of the conflict – poverty, injustice, hunger, and other forms of socio-economic deprivation remained largely unaddressed (Karki and Bhattarai 2003). The State's failure to meet the needs of the poor majority allowed the CPN-M to win wide support, particularly among the most marginalized sectors of rural society.

Those who hoped that the conflict would produce a better, more equitable society were soon disappointed. Consequently, the country fell into a maelstrom of torture, property seizures, intimidation, illegal detentions, extortion, abductions, disappearances and extra-judicial executions, compounded by the already widespread poverty and misery (Karki and Seddon 2003; Karki and Bhattarai 2003).

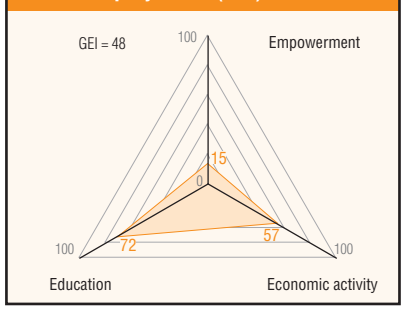
The period of autocracy: "war on terror" versus civil rights

After the King assumed direct executive authority as Chairman of the Council of Ministers and restricted civil liberties on 1 February 2005, the human rights situation deteriorated even further. The authorities severed all communications links within Nepal, as well as with the outside world. Freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom to assemble peacefully were all suspended, along with many other rights. Despite Government assurances that this crackdown would allow it to end the Maoist-led rebellion, the conflict continued with the same brutal intensity. Although the opposing forces renewed their commitment to international human rights standards and humanitarian laws, both continued to commit serious violations.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



In the months after seizing full control of the Government, the King consolidated his control over key institutions, such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the judiciary, the civil service and the media. An amendment to the Human Rights Commission Act gave the King the right to change the composition of the NHRC appointment committee, undermining its autonomy. New York-based Human Rights Watch reported that beneath velvet gloves, the Government and the Royal Nepal Army were wielding iron fists, consistently interfering in the work of the judiciary, the media, civil society, legally operating political parties and the NHRC. Strict media regulations prohibited broadcasts of any news critical of the King and his family. During a three-month state of emergency in 2005, the security forces killed at least 333 people, including 13 children (Pyakurel 2007).

Furious at this repression, hundreds of thousands of people spontaneously swarmed into the streets, demanding an end to the feudal monarchy system. Despite Government assaults that killed 21 people and injured more than 6,000, the demonstrators kept coming back. After 19 consecutive days, this extraordinary explosion of popular power (usually called People's Movement-II, or *Jana Aandolan-II* in Nepali) toppled the autocratic regime on 24 April 2006. The elected Parliament reconvened, and all political parties to the violent conflict agreed to make peace for the sake of the people and the country.

Interim period of democracy, or Loktantra

The widespread expectation that the violence would end with the collapse of the monarchy and the establishment of a "democratic interim government" was soon disappointed. Killings, abductions, torture, intimidation and extortion persisted even after the formation of a Constituent Assembly. The Government's failure to take strong measures against the perpetrators and maintain law and order permitted the culture of impunity to continue. Armed combat and widespread human rights violations continued throughout the country. Fighting grew particularly fierce in the lowland Tarai region near the Indian border. The Tarai (from the Madhesi ethnic group) representatives, unhappy with the interim constitution, demanded immediate establishment of a federal system of government and proportional representation. When the Government did not respond quickly, more than 20 small armed groups emerged in the Tarai, some of them political, others criminal in nature.

Fortunately, after successfully completing the election for the Constituent Assembly in spring 2008, the country appears to be making a transition from autocracy to democracy and from armed conflict to peace. More importantly, this transition delivered a message that the people of Nepal want true democracy and generated widespread hope that future governments will promote economic, social cultural rights in addition to civil and political rights.

The national budget: security versus development

Nepal is one of the 49 least developed countries of the world, and is ranked 142nd in the Human Development Index (UNDP 2007). About 31% of Nepalese live below the poverty line, earning less than one US dollar a day (NLSS-II 2004). The conflict with the

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Maoist insurgents virtually paralyzed the Nepalese economy. Once peace was declared, the Government was looking forward to 4.5% growth the following year, however GDP inched up only 2.5% in 2007 (UNESCAP 2008). The budget that year allocated only 3.44% of total expenditures of NPR 168.99 billion (USD 2.54 billion) for agricultural development, even though this sector contributes 39% of the country's GDP. This is a violation of General Comment No. 3 of the UN ESCR Committee, which states that where minimum living standards are not met, state parties have a responsibility to use "all resources that are at [their] disposition in an effort to satisfy, as a matter of priority, those minimum obligations."

Impact of trade liberalization on social, economic and cultural rights

Nepal became the 147th country to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in September 2003. Government officials predicted that the ensuing trade liberalization, augmented by Nepal's membership in two regional trade agreements – South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) – would contribute to high, sustained growth and poverty reduction. However, the benefits of trade liberalization have been confined to a few manufacturing industries and urban centres, and have not led to a transformation of the agriculture sector, which employs more than 75% of the country's 26.4 million people and accounts for 13% of its foreign trade.

Agricultural productivity is low, and poverty is particularly acute in rural areas. Most of the rural population is engaged in subsistence farming, and productivity remains low. Planting, harvesting and seed production and storage are all largely performed by women. As a result, they have borne the brunt of competition from the food imports that have poured in under the trade liberalization policy. This constitutes a violation of farmers' rights to food security and agriculture-based livelihoods. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has proclaimed that "everyone has the right to a standard of living, adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and the family, including food…" Similarly, the ICESCR stresses "…the right of everyone to …adequate food…" The State has an obligation to ensure this right.

Conclusion

Several UN human rights treaties and ILO conventions that Nepal has signed obligate the State to make budgetary provisions and implementation efforts to meet the fundamental rights of its citizens. The State is also obliged to ensure that all citizens have a right to redress or reparation if these rights are denied or infringed upon. Finally, it has an obligation to take measures against widespread and worsening hunger, soaring prices for basic commodities and environmental degradation, including the consequences of climate change, without further delay.

The country recently held its long-awaited elections for a 601-member Constituent Assembly. The former rebels of the CPN-M emerged with the largest number of seats. Of the 575 winners announced before this report was written, 191 (33.2%) were women, a milestone in the political history of Nepal. At its first meeting on 28 May 2008, the Constituent Assembly abolished the monarchy that had ruled Nepal for nearly 240 years (1769-2008).

The new Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has huge tasks ahead. They include drafting a new constitution; institutionalizing democracy; promoting human rights; ensuring that the entire population benefits from peace , with a focus on the grassroots, and establishing the lasting peace that the Nepali people need and expect. The new Government should quickly introduce reforms to address the human rights abuses afflicting traditionally excluded and marginalised groups; otherwise these issues may once again fail to receive the attention they deserve. ■

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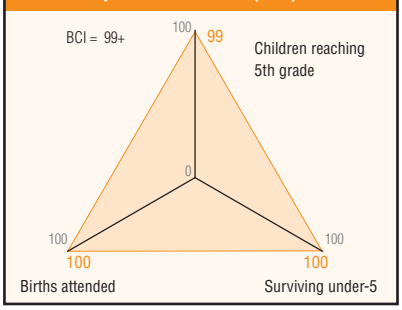
NETHERLANDS

Human rights back on the agenda

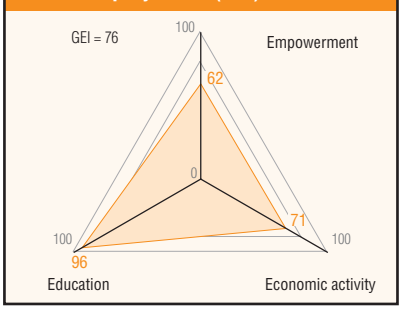
Human rights are the point of departure in the new Dutch foreign policy. The priorities range from the abolition of the death penalty, a ban on torture and championing women's and children's rights to advocating freedom of expression, preventing discrimination and promoting human rights in security policies and counterterrorism. Although there has been a more coherent foreign policy, the country still needs to reconcile some of its stated positions with its actual trade practices.

Oxfam Novib
Arjan El Fassed

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Traditionally the Netherlands has played an important role in developing international law, human rights law and the international mechanisms of protection of human rights. In its pledge to the Human Rights Council, the Government stated that: "The Netherlands is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, both at home and worldwide. For decades, human rights have been a cornerstone of Dutch policy on foreign affairs and development cooperation."[1]

On 6 November 2007, Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen presented the new human rights strategy for Dutch foreign policy, *A life of human dignity for all*. The strategy takes human rights as the point of departure for Dutch foreign policy and explains how the Netherlands intends to implement it. Policy priorities vary from striving for the abolition of the death penalty and an absolute ban on torture and championing women's and children's rights to advocating freedom of expression, preventing discrimination and promoting human rights in connection with security policy and counterterrorism.

According to the strategy, extra investments across the whole of human rights policy "will make human rights an *integral* part of [its] relations with other countries, [its] efforts at EU level and [its] actions in multilateral fora". It stated that "where necessary, the Netherlands will be critical of its allies, and will be equally prepared to examine its own record". There are six areas where extra efforts will be made: protection of life and the person, individual freedom of religion and protection of religious minorities, children's rights, women's rights, and discrimination against homosexuals throughout the world. To increase funding for human rights projects, a new human rights fund has been set up with a total of EUR 20 million (USD 30.6 million) earmarked for the fund in 2008. This new human rights strategy includes 102 specific proposals that set out how the Government intends to achieve this aim. Among them, the Government has stated that it wants to make an effort to integrate human rights in the work of the whole UN system, so that all parts of it, including funds and programmes, pay enough attention to human rights. This also refers to other international organizations, including international financial institutions. The Netherlands funds specific human rights programmes or programmes of which human rights are an important component. In 2008, EUR 200,000 (USD 306,000) will be given to the UNDP's Global Human Rights Strengthening Programme. The Netherlands also supports the Action 2 programme launched by UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. These programmes focus on strengthening the human rights programmes of the UN at country level.

Implementation

In spite of its strong commitment to human rights, the Government has also been criticized because certain provisions of international law, treaties and resolutions of international institutions do not have direct effect in the national legal order. This criticism has come from both national and international sources, ranging from domestic civil society organizations to UN treaty bodies.[2] The Government does not consider the concluding observations of treaty bodies as authoritative. The committee of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) itself expressed concern that the Dutch Government does not take the concluding observations of the Committee seriously.

Recent examples of this are cases in which the parties concerned unsuccessfully invoked provisions of the CEDAW or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The position of the Netherlands enhances the differentiation between economic, social and cultural rights on the one side and civil and political rights on the other side, instead of effectively recognizing their interdependence and indivisibility. Additionally, the Netherlands has been opposed to an Optional Protocol to the ICESCR. The Optional Protocol, in its present form, would provide individuals and groups with a means to seek and obtain a remedy for violations of their economic, social and cultural rights at the international level, when they are denied a solution at the domestic level.

The Committee against Torture, in its August 2007conclusions and recommendations, asked the Dutch Government to pay attention to the right to an adequate standard of living for aliens, since in the Netherlands several categories of aliens are excluded from the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing and housing. Many of them have been forced to live in the streets without money for food or clothing. This also affects families with children. In the past, minor children of failed asylum seekers were sometimes detained for prolonged periods. In part in response to interventions by UNICEF, NGOs for the rights of the child, and the Dutch Parliament, the Government has decided to limit the detention of children to a maximum of two weeks. It has also earmarked EUR 3 million (USD 4.59 million) to make detention centres more child-friendly and to organize activities for them.

1 Sixty-first session, Agenda item 105 (e), Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 14 members of the Human Rights Council, Letter dated 23 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, 28 February 2007.

2 On November 2007, Dutch NGOs submitted a report "Dutch NGOs contribution to the First Universal Periodic Review of the Netherlands by the UN Human Rights Council". The report was written by Maria Lourijsen, Jan de Vries and Femke Wegman on behalf of the Dutch section of the International Commission of Jurists with contributions of the Netwerk VN-Vrouwenverdrag (Dutch CEDAW-Network), the Johannes Wierstichting and Art. 1.

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Gender-focused aid

Every year the country spends 0.8% of its GNI on global poverty reduction and is therefore one of the very few countries that meets the applicable UN target. Part of the contribution is used specifically to protect and promote human rights. In 2007, through multilateral and bilateral aid, the Netherlands spent EUR 4.7 billion (USD 7.19 billion) ODA in trying to achieve the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights. This policy is focused on direct poverty alleviation. The Government has stated that there will be a stronger focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the harmonization of bilateral aid and pursuing new Dutch initiatives for "substantial debt relief".[3]

Its development policy pays special attention to equal rights and opportunities for girls as a precondition for the achievement of the MDGs. In 2008 the Government will strengthen the links between human rights and the MDGs in the area of water and sanitation. The Government has also stated that it wants to further draw links between human rights and other MDGs, such as the right to food. Dutch aid policy in the area of education is based on the right to education and focuses on the objective Education for All, basic education for all in 2015.

Progress in coherence

In its aid policies, the Government is somewhat critical of old fashioned one-size-fits-all economic policy conditions and it has stated there should be limited economic policy conditions by the World Bank. The Government is pushing for more frequent Poverty Reduction and Social Impact Analyses, as to assess the impact of specific economic policy recommendations on poverty and social and economic rights. However, it is reluctant to oppose all economic policy conditions as a matter of principle.

The Netherlands, as a trading nation, benefits from free trade. But at the same time it provides protection to its own industries (e.g. agricultural industry), mainly through the European Union. The Common European Agricultural Policy is a classic example of policy incoherence. Economic powers, such as the EU and the USA, traditionally protect their own farmers against competition from abroad, and at the same time subsidize their farmers, which allow them to produce at a cheaper rate than competing countries. As a result, dumping – the selling of surplus agricultural products on the world market below cost price – is a common practice, thus bringing world market prices down and making it impossible for other producers to compete.

The EU is currently negotiating new trade agreements with the ACP countries (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, signatories of the Lomé Convention) as a follow-up to the 2000 Cotonou Agreement. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are meant to liberalize trade between the EU and the ACP (Africa, Pacific, Caribbean) countries and to make sure that the agreements do not violate WTO-rules. The goal of the EPAs is to integrate ACP countries into the world economy, and to ensure sustainable development. The negotiations were supposed to be concluded in 2007 and the EPAs must be implemented between 2008 and 2020. In March 2007, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation stated that according to the Netherlands, the EPAs should be asymmetrical with regard to the level of openness of their economies. ACP countries should be allowed to exempt certain products from the free trade regime if these products are essential for local food security, rural development and the subsistence of large parts of society. Furthermore, the Netherlands thought ACP regions should be allowed to protect themselves against dumping and subsidized exports.[4]

Another example is illegal logging, one of the main reasons for the loss of tropical rainforests. The Netherlands is a major donor in the protection of tropical rainforests, but has no legally binding policy measures against the import of illegal timber. Illegal logging is related to the degradation of forests, loss of biodiversity, violations of human rights and organized crime. The 1991 Government Position on Tropical Rainforests clearly states that the Dutch Government will oppose illegal logging and trade in illegal timber, yet at the same time more than half of the timber imported into the Netherlands comes from high risk countries.

The arms trade remains an area of policy incoherence. The Netherlands is one of the world's biggest arms exporters. Most striking is the transit of arms through the Netherlands from NATO and EU members to third countries. Although the Government has not provided an export license to arms export to Israel since 2002, when it comes to transit, tons of ammunition, parts and other military goods find their way, notably through Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, despite the high risk of human rights violations.

Additionally, almost a third of the global debt burden is from export credits. In the Netherlands around 23% of these export credits were used to guarantee arms exports.[5] Despite a government decision in 2007 not to further broaden the OECD-DAC criteria to security related expenditure, the level of aid is still inflated by the amount spent on cancellation of export credit debt. ■

3 Coalition agreement between the parliamentary parties of the Christian Democratic Alliance, Labour Party and Christian Union, 7 February 2007.

4 Letter to Parliament from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 5 March 2007. Kamerbrief inzake Geannoteerde agenda van de informele bijeenkomst van Europese bewindspersonen verantwoordelijk voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking d.d. 12 en 13 maart 2007.

5 Based on calculations from the Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, 3 September 2007.

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PARAGUAY

The time has come for budget transparency

The distribution of land and income has been so skewed that inequality is among the most extreme in Latin America. Six decades of Colorado Party rule produced no policies to promote opportunities and diminish the social, economic and environmental degradation inflicted by the market. The new Government should focus on the fulfilment of rights and the promotion of capabilities. Public funds should be spent with greater transparency and civil society must participate in determining how they are managed. This is the only way to ensure that the people's money will be spent for the benefit of the people.

DECIDAMOS, Campaña por la Expresión Ciudadana
Hugo Royg

The Paraguayan economy has grown steadily since 2003, climbing more than 6% in 2007. Agriculture is the most dynamic sector, benefiting from both favourable international conditions and an excellent climate for farming. More land is being cultivated, productivity is increasing and prices are higher. As a result, profits are surging faster than they have for many decades.

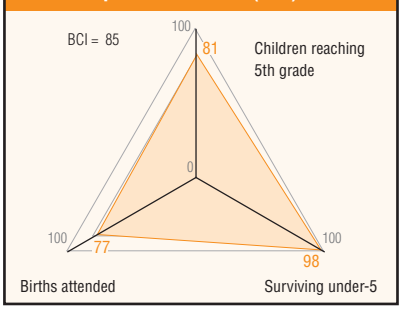
These profits go into the bank accounts of a relatively small group. Among cattle farmers, it flows to those who have modernized their technology and gained access to long term credits. In farming, it benefits new investors: Argentine companies that moved to Paraguay to escape tougher economic restrictions at home, Brazilian investors and immigrants in cooperatives, and an emerging group of Paraguayan entrepreneurs who have decided to diversify their investments.

The new agriculture is based on vast, highly mechanized farms, often on newly cultivated land. The Environment Secretariat has given out deforestation permits liberally, leading to a degradation of the environment that will endure for generations. The large farms require only a small, skilled labour force. Small proprietors and the vulnerable are being pushed off the land and into the swelling poverty belts of the cities. The unemployment rate climbed from 9.3% in 2003 to 11.1% at the end of 2006; about 25% of the workforce was underemployed (DGEEC, 2007*a*).

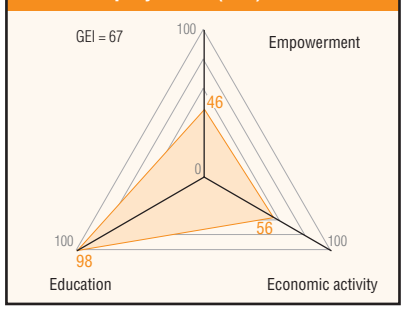
The contribution of public policies to development

The top priority of the ruling party (Colorado Party) was to stay in power by winning the April 2008 presidential elections.[1] In the course of the last five years, four different Ministers of Finance were appointed. None of them had links to the ruling party, but all shared a commitment to the Government's three macroeconomic priorities: a balanced budget, fiscal reform and restoration of the country's reputation as a debtor that made its payments on time.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The 2004 tax reform was highly regressive. As economists have pointed out, it broadened the tax base by raising revenues primarily from indirect levies. The burden fell mainly on the middle class and the poor. Paraguay still has no income tax. The Government also negotiated with creditors and succeeded in slashing the debt from 70% of the GDP in 2002 to 28% in December 2006.[2]

The impact of Government policies on poverty was hard to determine. The proportion of the population below the poverty line dropped from 41.4% in 2003 to 38.2% in 2006. The decline in the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty was more significant, plunging from 20.1% in 2003 to 15% in 2006 (DGEEC, 2007*b*). Government expenditures on the poor remained low. They consisted of highly targeted, paternalistic conditional income transfers designed to reach only 5.6% of the population. It is unclear whether even that many actually received assistance. The Government has made virtually no effort to provide the poor with land or employment. The inequities in land distribution and income are among the most extreme in Latin America.

State institutions count on economic resources that are spent in actions that only apparently address poverty or guarantee the exercise of certain rights (health, education), but do not actually respond to public policy actions aimed at improving the living conditions of the population. The very fact that public money is spent on necessary and politically correct instruments or actions implies neither effectiveness nor consistency. What is more, the current levels of poverty confirm that the state structure is compatible with a reality of poverty and inequality which remains unchanged, given that since introducing a regressive tax structure in a country that is growing the only people who are taxed are those who have less. Therefore, given its characteristics, the expenses heighten inequality.

The political agenda: merely policy development and international agreements

In economic policy, like most of Latin America, Paraguay has pursued a strategy of economic integration, liberalizing its finances and removing protective barriers to its market in conformity with the Washington Consensus.

For decades, the Government has maintained power through a strategy of clientelism. It allocates

CHART 1. The numbers of poverty

Poor (EPH 2005)	2,230,202 persons
Extreme poor	902,294 persons
Non extreme poor	1,327,908 persons
Population benefiting from poverty eradication programmes. 2008 Budget	162,000 persons
Coverage	5.6%

Source: Own calculations based on data from the Central Bank of Paraguay (BCP-CAPECO).

1 Nevertheless, this strategy failed to achieve its primary goal. Former Catholic bishop Fernando Lugo won the presidency in April as the candidate of a coalition of left and centre left parties and organizations, ending more than six decades of hegemonic rule by the Colorado Party.

2 Own calculations with data taken from the Central Bank of Paraguay's Economic Reports of several years.

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privileges and assistance to its supporters, and the rest of the population gets nothing. This system has made it difficult for Paraguayans to exercise their full rights of citizenship, and prevented them, in some cases explicitly, from developing their social capital, including relationships that would strengthen their ability to participate in the democratic process. Despite the challenges to opposing this system, seeds of change have begun to take root.

Since 1990, Paraguay has opened its doors to the world in all areas – financial, economic, environmental, political, social and cultural. This new direction is illustrated by the State's willingness to accept international commitments to human rights. In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the country has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Earth Summit, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements HABITAT II, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Education Forum, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the Millennium Declaration. The Government has modified laws and institutions to comply with these commitments, though more remains to be done.

The Government has created a legal and institutional framework for reducing gender inequality. It has expanded girls' access to primary school, and opportunities for women in teaching, the health sector and public administration. Nevertheless the scope of improvements has been narrow. In spite of being better educated, women suffer salary discrimination and higher levels of unemployment and underemployment. In occupations such as domestic work, de facto and even legal discrimination is common. Gender bias remains embedded in the discourse of politicians and bureaucrats.

Efforts to improve conditions for specific marginal and excluded social groups, such as low income women and children, have not been part of the political agenda. The failure to provide urgently needed resources is most glaring in its neglect of the indigenous population, the Guarani-speaking population, the young, old people and people with disabilities. The Government has made no effort to evaluate the impact of the spending it does offer to ameliorate the effects of poverty.

Civil society organizations can play a significant role by demanding that all of these issues become part of the public agenda.

CHART 2. Millennium Development Goals in Paraguay

MDGs	Reports	
	Civil society	United Nations System
Goal 1	Will not be met	Insufficient progress
Goal 2	May be met	Compatible progress
Goal 3	May be met	Compatible progress
Goal 4	Will not be met	Insufficient progress
Goal 5	Will not be met	Insufficient progress
Goal 6	Will not be met	Insufficient progress
Goal 7	Will not be met	Insufficient progress

Sources: Paraguay Sin Excusas. Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio. Informe Alternativo de la Sociedad Civil-Paraguay 2000/2005. Asunción, 2005; United Nations System. Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio. Informe Paraguay. Asunción, 2005.

Despite some progress, the country remains far from meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Chart 2 shows projections of what is likely to be achieved, developed by both civil society and the United Nations.

Recommendations

- Revise the development model of the country. Until now, the Government has been simply observing a socio-economic process driven by market forces; the new Government should develop policies that reduce or compensate for social, economic and environmental damage they cause and strengthen opportunities for all.
- The new Government budget must give priority to programmes that realize human rights and strengthen people's capabilities.
- Public policies must be revised to reduce inequities, rather than promote them.
- Transparency must become an integral part of public policy development and implementation to wrest government policy and administration out of the control of bureaucrats and put it in the hands of Paraguayan women and men.
- Civil society must have greater input in determining government expenditures. The public sector's current structure was developed for the benefit of individuals, not to serve the people's needs. Transforming this system will require citizen involvement in the management process. ■

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PERU

The neoliberal economic programme: cluster bomb against human rights

Since its implementation in 1990, the neoliberal programme has produced a chain of systematic violations of the rights to life, to decent employment, to a healthy environment and especially to the rights of women. The right of workers to enjoy job stability is considered by the powerful to be an unacceptable privilege, while strikes and protests are turned into crimes against investments. Crime proliferates along with poverty and the despair of the majority.

Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Participación
Héctor Béjar

Fernando Belaunde Terry, in his second term as President of the Republic (1980-1985) when the army massacres against the rural population started, stated publicly that he would happily throw Amnesty International's reports into the trashcan. Augusto Cipriani, bishop of Ayacucho during the crudest period of the civil war (1982-1992) and current Cardinal of Peru, in answer to the complaints of the families of the 'dirty war', said, "Human rights are a *cojudez* [stupidity]."

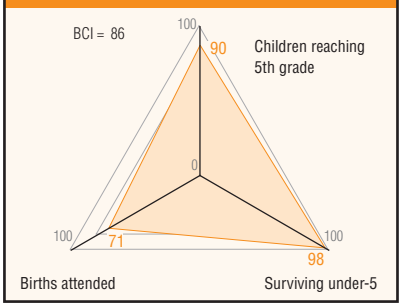
As well as expressing the views of an influential sector of the population, both statements highlight the systematic attack on human rights since the start of the stabilization and structural adjustment programme in August 1990. This was consistent with the massive sale of public enterprises, the increase in gasoline prices and food by more than 10 times in barely a day and the abrupt withdrawal of state subsidies for food. The programme, described by its own authors as an 'operation without anaesthetic', led to the creation of the sui generis dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori, who governed from the time of his 'self-inflicted' coup in April 1992 until he was forced to leave power in 2000 due to popular and international repudiation of his regime.

Fujimori-ism and beyond

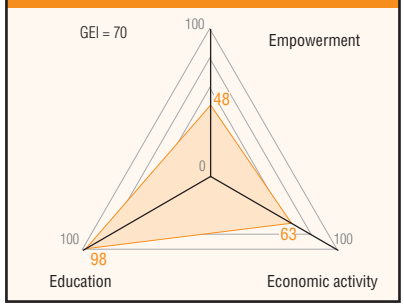
Fujimori's 'globalizing' regime drew the most conservative groups of private businessmen directly into the conduction of the ministries, putting the State at the service of his private dealings. He organized a corruption system that allowed for the appropriation of public resources by the generals and bureaucrats who collaborated with the regime; he set up a system of selective repression with the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces, which included having people followed, blackmail, buying people off, interception of personal communications and murder. He controlled radio, television and the press by paying for official advertisements and exemption of taxes to those who supported the regime.

Since then and up until today, the neoliberal economic programme has allowed for the unregulated extraction of Peru's riches, which violates the right of the country to dispose of its natural resources, as growth of the national product, while increasing the utilities of corporations.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Racism

The prominence of private businessmen such as Vega Llona, Benavides, Rodríguez Pastor, Farah and others in the government has not only an economic meaning but also a cultural and social one. Jaime Bayly, one of the most popular television hosts, recently reported that at an altitude of 2,500 metres, where the indigenous population lives, the brain receives less oxygen and is therefore less able to think. During the 2000 election campaign, the father of extreme right candidate Lourdes Flores referred to former president Alejandro Toledo, at that time presidential candidate, as "the *auquénido* [i.e., Andean camelid] from Harvard". The exclusive beach Club Regatas, frequented by upper class family groups, does not allow domestics to use the same beach parasols as the bathers they serve. At the Asia condominium in the south of Lima, another exclusive beach, house cleaners are not allowed to go into the water when their employers are bathing. The discos at Centro Comercial Larcomar, in Lima, have been reported by human rights organizations for not allowing access to their premises to people with dark skins.

The 'services' system

The rights of workers in private and public companies were badly hit when in 1991 Decree 718 made employment more 'flexible' allowing staff to be fired without cause. By means of the 'services' system, a company can 'sell' work to another company, paying its workers the minimum salary and making a profit with the difference between this salary and the salary paid by the 'buyer' company. This allows the 'seller' company to trade with the work of poor, scattered and vulnerable people; the contractors are not obligated to pay benefits or social security and have no responsibility for the worker, since there is no labour relationship. A huge number of these 'services' are the property of ex-military and police personnel. Transnational corporations in communications, supermarkets, mining, banking, security services, and the asparagus and grape exporting business, among others, all use the system. Their victims are the women and the young who work an unspecified number of hours per day for less than the minimum wage.

Textile firms that export under the terms of the Preferential Tariff Treatment with the United States and are awaiting implementation of the Free Trade Agreement – which has already been signed – have fired 1,200 workers for trade union organizing in the last year.[1] The newspaper *La Primera* reported that there are textile workers who work up to 32 hours straight, including pregnant women.[2] As many as 3,825 workers were fired for organizing unions in the last three years. Women workers are granted no pre- or post-maternity leave, nor are they given time for breast-feeding. The law for non-traditional exports (DL 22342) allows companies to take on workers for periods of two to three months and to renew their contracts indefinitely.

1 Icadie SAC, Star Print, Topy Top, Diseño y Color, Ceditex, Copetes and other companies belong to the same families who are constantly creating new firms in order to avoid respecting workers' rights.

2 *La Primera*. Special report by Paco Moreno, 27 February 2008.

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Women

With the first 'shock' programmes that eliminated price controls and allowed the market to be dominated by food import monopolies (wheat, beef and milk-cereal mixture), industrial and commercial workers in national companies lost their jobs. Hundreds of thousands of women, forced to become responsible for feeding their families gathered in the popular soup kitchens that exist to this day. With the continuation of the neoliberal programme, women are a huge part of the three million Peruvians who have been forced to emigrate. Following the economic revival that began in 2000, they comprise the majority of the labour force in agricultural exports and in the clothing industry. As well as the exhausting working hours at a minimum salary, they must see to their families, a task for which they receive no remuneration at all.

Farmers

Farmers and rural workers that do not export their produce, have no place within the system. The State no longer provides training and technical assistance for farmers and cattle breeders because it considers these to be contrary to the laws of the market. Concessions were granted to mining and oil companies for the exploitation of gas, oil, gold, copper and other metals in the Andean region, together with exemptions from most taxes and royalties. This has led to illegal occupations of Andean and Amazonian community lands, and to the poisoning of water and air, which threatens their very existence, constituting a menace to their right to life.

'Microbusiness people' and the middle class

Fired workers and the young who do not find employment and cannot leave the country as economic exiles are forced to find survival occupations, so-called 'microbusinesses' dependant on informal usurer-type credit. There are tens of thousands of small workshops, but few of them can make much money and there are hundreds of thousands of salespeople, acrobats, *llamadores* and *combi* ticket sellers, *mototaxistas*,[3] scavengers and waste vendors, street children, prostitutes and other types of urban workers. Meanwhile, the middle class is no longer able to enter the civil service, since the National Planning Institute and the Higher School of Public Administration have been closed and the scales used for staff salary designations discontinued. Currently, public employees are hired under a system of ruling party clientelism, and are under contract for 'non-personal services', a euphemism which means that the State can fire them at any time, especially when there is a change of government, minister or boss.

3 *Llamador*, person who calls out mintaxi routes. *Combi*, minibus. *Mototaxi*, motorcycle converted into a taxi.

Remittances and social investment

Successive neoliberal governments have tried, though not always successfully, to exchange gifts for loyalty; in Peru today this dependency relationship between the urban lower classes and the tyrants of politics and economics is the main obstacle in the construction of a society based on human rights and citizenship. Using the "focus" on the poor encouraged by the multilateral financial institutions, the neoliberal regime goes for a direct relationship between government authorities and the more impoverished and less educated members of society in order to neutralize the middle classes or popular leaders who are active in miners' strikes, in requests for forming unions and in rural and regional strikes.

In December 2007, 49.2% of households with children or adolescents were registered as receiving at least one food programme, whether a glass of milk, a soup kitchen, school breakfast, *papilla* or *yapita* (baby food), the family basket or others.[4]

On the other hand, in 2007 investment in education reached only 17.1% of the budget and 3% of GDP, and public spending on health was 8% of the budget and 1.6% of GDP while the debt service was 18%. The long-standing practice of paying external debt while neglecting internal social debt has resulted in dilapidated schools, discouraged families and teachers and low educational quality. To counter this situation patients have to spend more and more: 37% of health expenses are financed by the families.[5]

Meanwhile, nearly three million Peruvians (10% of the population) receive a total of USD 2.49 billion in remittances from emigrants. This is equal to 10% of exports, 1.7% of GDP[6] and four times as much as is spent on policies against poverty; and exceeds state expenditure on public health.

Statistical poverty and real poverty

The Government has been stating for the past two years that poverty is diminishing. But this is a statistical approximation based on the methodology of the World Bank, which does not measure violence, delinquency, drug consumption, loss of values, tuberculosis, alcoholism and other social ills that crosscut all sectors of society. Civil society organizations have got together to discuss alternatives to poverty and in 2007 they presented the first non-governmental report on compliance with the Millennium Development Goals and objectives.[7]

4 National Institute of Statistics and Information Technology. "Informe del cuarto trimestre 2007".

5 Ministry of Health/Pan American Health Organization. "Perú: Cuentas Nacionales en Salud: 1995-2000".

6 FOMIN, Bendixen y Asociados. "Encuesta de opinión pública de receptores de remesas en el Perú". *La República*, 6 December 2005.

7 GCAP National Committee. "Informe sobre el cumplimiento de las Metas del Milenio en el Perú". July 2007.

Successive governments have declared that the economic programme is successful and have refused to modify it. Even if the increase in GDP since 1997 might appear to be on their side, it is in large part due to international price increases and not greater productivity, and the result of refusing to see that the money that circulates is a product of the drug trade. In spite of the growth of the construction industry, of 'non-traditional' exports and fishery, the export value of these Peruvian goods during the past 15 years grew by 28%, while the volume only increased by 2%.[8] The number of supermarkets expands, exports diversify, the building of homes mushrooms, the neon lights flash over the casinos, tourism increases and employment grows; but officials say nothing about the type of employment involved: humiliating and devoid of rights.

Alternatives

Despite media assurances that the country is growing and poverty is diminishing, mass protests increase: from the Peruvian General Confederation of Workers (PGCW) and the unions to the communities affected by mining, from the regional governments to NGOs and human rights activists. When strike organizers blocked highways in last year's mobilizations, the response was Legislative Decree 982 or 'the decree of death', on 22 July 2007, which exempted the armed forces and police from responsibility for wounding or killing a civilian when "complying with the line of duty". It was in line with this that four peasants were shot dead during the agricultural strike of February 2008. But protests continue. The PGCW has announced a general strike this year, while social and political activists have formed a Political Social Coordinating Committee.

In an increasingly discredited parliamentary democracy, nothing seems to have changed in the mentality of the authorities since the time of Fujimori. In the same line as Cardinal Cipriani, the response to complaints about these deaths by Rafael Rey, Minister of Production in Alan García's current government, was: "What do they [the armed forces and the police] have guns for, to keep them at home or to use them when they need them?" Notwithstanding ten years of civil war and a hard-won democratic peace, little seems to have changed in the mentality of authorities and businesspeople and the country in general, with respect to human rights. Until when will they be considered a *cojudez*? ■

8 Business Research Centre of the Lima Chamber of Commerce, June 2007.

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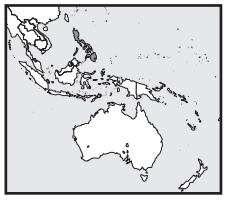
PHILIPPINES

In fear and want



Economic growth in the Philippines is sustained in large part by remittances from overseas workers, mostly women, who have migrated in large numbers. This arrangement is compromising the security of current and future generations and discounting their social and environmental rights. Currently a large part of the national budget goes to debt repayment, leaving little for poverty reduction, education, health or environmental protection. Ultimately, only regime change and policy reform can restore people's trust.

Social Watch Philippines
Isagani R Serrano[1]

To be seen as more corrupt than a predecessor who was ousted because of corruption is bad enough. But to be considered no different from, or even worse than, former dictator Ferdinand Marcos should be particularly disturbing, and that is how many Filipinos are beginning to see President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

People call her 'corrupt', 'evil', 'thief', 'bitch', but they do not go to prison for it. Under the new anti-terrorism law, or Human Security Act of 2007, the president can pursue these 'name callers' and brand them as terrorists seeking to destabilize the government. Macapagal-Arroyo will not do so however, since she is under pressure from a broad range of opponents questioning her integrity and legitimacy and asking for her resignation.

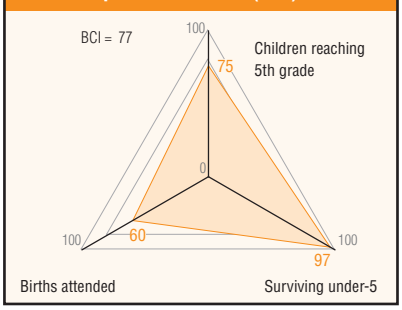
Human rights on the line

Human rights in the Philippines have been steadily deteriorating since 2001, when Macapagal-Arroyo became president. The extra-judicial killings of hundreds of journalists and activists and the arrest and disappearance of Jonas Burgos, son of a journalism icon, attests to that. However, the 2003, 2005 and 2007 Philippine progress reports on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have all been silent on this issue.

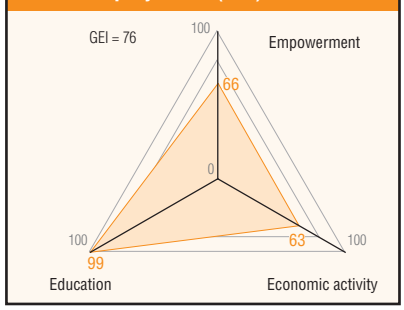
Following a number of fact-finding missions, both local and international, the Government set up the Melo Commission in 2006, but failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for the killings. In 2007 Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno organized a human rights summit focusing on extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances. He said, "If there are compelling reasons for this summit, one of them is to prevent losing eye contact with these killings and disappearances, revive our righteous indignation and spur our united search for the elusive solution to this pestering problem."

In response to the growing clamour for an independent investigation, Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions and Special Adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the MDGs, visited the country in February 2007. The Alston Report stated: "Since 2001 the number of politically motivated killings in the Philippines has been high and the death toll has mounted steadily. These killings have eliminated civil society leaders, including human rights defenders, trade unionists, and land reform advocates, as well as many others on the left of the political spectrum. Of particular concern is the fact that those killed appear to have been carefully selected and intentionally targeted. The aim has been to intimidate a much larger number of civil society actors".

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Statistical accounts of human rights violations vary widely, depending on who is doing the count. The Alston Report considered all available reports from the military, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP), human rights NGOs such as the Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights or Karapatan, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), and media organizations including the Centre for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

Chart 1 shows a median position between that of Karapatan which put the numbers on the high side and that of the government which downplayed them.

Few countries surpass the Philippines in the ratification of UN treaties, conventions, or agreements, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and including almost all later human rights agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Rights of the Child Convention.

Human rights are enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, which guarantees full respect for civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, and gives special attention to the rights of women, children and the aged and the rights of workers as stipulated in 33 international labour conventions. Human rights education is conducted in schools as well as among the military and police. Although the Human Rights Commission has a mandate to investigate human rights violations, provide protection and legal assistance to victims and monitor government compliance with treaty obligations, the agency is badly underfunded.

To enjoy human rights and basic freedoms consistent with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2000 Millennium Declaration, Filipinos must have secure food, jobs and livelihoods, health, education and shelter; the rights and well-being of women and children, the young and the old, indigenous peoples and minority populations must be protected and people must live in a safe and clean environment.

The attainment of all the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – a relatively low bar for a middle-income country like the Philippines – simply sets a basic minimum for the enjoyment of basic rights so that citizens can begin to aspire for a higher level of well-being. But even on this minimum the country might fail to deliver.

Impoverishing growth

Spending for health care, education, water and sanitation, poverty-reducing infrastructure, and environmental restoration has not paralleled economic

1 Co-convenor of Social Watch Philippines and vice president of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM).

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growth. Instead of helping the close the gap between rich and poor, this growth has excluded many segments of the population, exacerbating regional, class, gender, and generational disparities. It has failed to deliver security in the present and compromises security for future generations.

Remittances by overseas Filipino workers have grown, and with them super shopping malls and other icons of false prosperity. Taxes have increased, but while ordinary citizens continue to pay them, a select group of wealthy Filipinos not only get tax breaks, but avoid paying even their reduced tax assessments in ever-changing ways.

In 2008 the Government allocated USD 6.57 billion for interest payment and USD 7.28 billion for principal amortization, for a total of USD 13.86 billion in debt repayment compared to USD 8.08 billion for social services. Debt servicing amounts to nearly half of the record-breaking 2008 budget of PHP 1.23 trillion or USD 30.68 billion.

The percentage of people in poverty increased between 2003 and 2006, from 24.4% to 26.9%. Out of 100 Filipinos, 33 were poor in 2006 compared to 30 in 2003. Estimated at close to 90 million, the population is projected to reach 102 million by 2015. In October 2007, the estimated unemployment rate was 6.3% and underemployment 8.1%. In a country with 56.86 million people aged 15 or older, even single-digit unemployment is significant.

People of working age, mostly women, leave en masse to seek work abroad—primarily as nurses, caregivers or housemaids. The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency documented 1,221,417 migrant worker departures in 2006, an exodus of over 3,300 each day. According to the Centre for Migrant Advocacy, between 8 and 10 million people work outside the country, supporting about one-fourth of its 14 million families. Called the new heroes, their money may be the only thing that keeps the economy going.

Indigenous peoples are continually threatened by failure to respect their right to their homelands, despite assurances under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997. The aggressive promotion of mining and other extractive activities has put their security on the line. Many are being forcibly displaced to make way for invasive mega projects. Many migrate to the cities, where they swell the ranks of the urban poor. Those who find decent livelihoods or acquire some assets are in the minority. A similar threat faces Muslims, who have historically been marginalized and displaced by counterinsurgency operations.

Governance matters

At the heart of the human rights problem is the failure of governance. Mistrust of government is such that probably nothing short of a regime change and thoroughgoing reform in policies and institutions could restore people's trust.

CHART 1. Human Rights Violations – 23 January 2001- 11 December 2007

Type of violation	# of cases	# of victims
Arrest and detention	412	1,463
Torture	125	267
Harassment	107	5,008 individuals +3,482 families+10 barangays (villages)
Extra-judicial execution (EJE)	121	131 individuals
Frustrated extra-judicial execution	6	8 individuals
Massacre	14	111 individuals
Frustrated massacre	10	46 individuals
Casualties due to crossfire	8	15 individuals
Disappearance	26	59 individuals
Violent dispersal of protest	19	1,958 individuals
Forced/faked surrender	2	28 individuals ; 1 community
Destruction of property	5	691 individuals; 168 families
Forced evacuation	26	10,561 individuals ; 19, 026 families
Illegal demolition	62	34,048 individuals + 6,684 families
Violation of right to housing	2	269 families

Source: Task Force Detainees Philippines (TFDP).

The Philippines has gone from democracy to dictatorship and back. Since the 1986 people's revolution that ended the Fernando Marcos dictatorship, four regimes have come and gone. Yet the same set of problems – government corruption, poverty, inequality, social conflicts, and environmental decay – continue to fester. The country is ranked among the most corrupt in the world by the Transparency International index.

Since entering the WTO in 1995 the Philippines has become one of the most open economies in the world, unilaterally dismantling protective mechanisms beyond what is required for al members. The 2007 MDG Midterm Report considered this a big achievement for Goal 8 (Develop a global partnership for development). But if one asks the workers, urban poor, landless and small farmers, small and medium entrepreneurs and some big industry people, they will tell a different story, one of lost jobs and livelihoods, falling incomes and bankruptcies.

In a World Bank study of governance in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, the Philippines ranked worst in political stability and second worst in government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. Its second best performance in voice and accountability may have been due to its free media and active civil society.

The Government is courting disaster by relaxing social and environmental safeguards in the name of growth. Poor urban communities are displaced by big infrastructure projects, land speculation and real estate development. Rural villages and watersheds are ravaged by mining and power projects. On paper, laws and policies are in place, covering protected areas, solid waste management, clean air and water. But Philippine Agenda 21 has not changed national and local development planning. Most local governments have yet to comply with environmental legislation, even as deforestation, collapsing fisheries, falling water tables and rising temperatures threaten already insecure food production. Many health problems are linked to environmental degradation, not to mention climate change.

Alternative budget initiative

The alternative budget initiative is an example of how policymakers could make the national budget MDG-sensitive. Led by Social Watch Philippines, this has drawn the support of NGOs and legislators to advocate for an increase in MDG spending, specifically in education, health, agriculture and the environment. This sort of partnership between government and civil society needs to be replicated at all levels, national and local.

To deliver 'public goods' (e.g., education and clean air), and to eliminate 'public bads' (e.g., corruption, pollution, diseases, brain drain or trafficking) the Government requires much more than a mere subscription to sustainable development. People want action and meaningful changes in their lives. They want to see that services are made to work for them. And they want to have a real say in how that is going to be done. For this to happen, the Government must undergo a profound renewal in order to provide the kind of governance needed to safeguard human rights and create conditions for greater freedoms. ■

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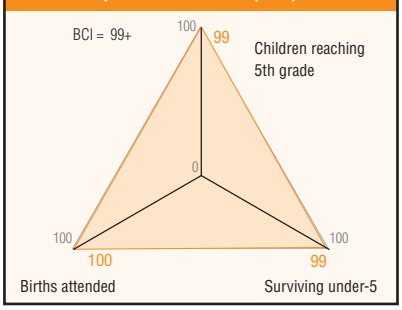
POLAND

Human rights implementation – mystification or truth?

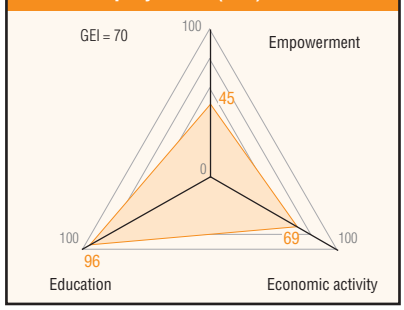
Decision makers show little evidence of capacity to respond constructively to human rights campaigns and proposals; and mobilizing broad human rights campaigns remains difficult. Citizens have little confidence that their activity could lead to progress and are extremely reluctant to become involved in civil society initiatives. However, a number of effective and tightly focused campaigns on minority issues have shown the value of civil action, and Europe's expectations and requirements have compelled the Government to introduce regulations that protect the rights of some sectors of the population.

Karat Coalition
Anita Seibert
Julia Wrede
The Network of East-West Women NEWW-Polska
Małgorzata Tarasieiwcz
Małgorzata Zuk

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



A wide range of issues could and should be addressed by civil society to guarantee implementation of human rights, however Poles are extremely reluctant to become involved in popular campaigns that might achieve meaningful progress. This hesitation is due to a number of social and historical factors, which were recently discussed in *Civil Society Index* (Gumowska, 2008). The civil society initiatives that have been launched, typically under NGO leadership, have confronted significant obstacles. Most prominently, decision makers lack the willingness, ability and knowledge to respond positively to campaigns and proposals, and the Polish lacks "access points" (i.e. public administration staff responsible for effective cooperation with civil society, as well as accessible and transparent mechanisms that could facilitate policy-related dialog between public authorities and civil society).

The limited effectiveness of activities that have been attempted further diminishes popular confidence that the status quo can be changed. Consequently, no broad or nationwide proposals or campaigns have been launched in the last few years. However, several more modest but significant campaigns addressing human rights have emerged recently. These will be described in the following paragraphs.

Sexual and reproductive rights

Women's health is not a high priority in governmental health programmes. Women's groups list the most pressing issues as the absence of compulsory and comprehensive sexual education in school, lack of family planning counselling, and limited access to contraceptives and abortion due to social and economic barriers and legal restrictions (Nowicka and Poche, 2006).

The powerful Roman Catholic Church has a strong influence over public opinion, and is opposed to all contraceptive methods other than natural ones. No state policies or programmes make contraception easily accessible and affordable. According to the World Health Organization, hormonal contraception should be reimbursed; however, hormonal pills are expensive in Poland, and use of modern contraception is relatively low. More than 45% of the women who wish to protect themselves against pregnancy depend on natural methods, which are not very effective and lead to many unwanted pregnancies. Although doctors are obliged to prescribe hormonal contraception, some refuse to do it based on the Conscience Clause, which gives an individual doctor the right to refuse to provide contraception or perform abortions, even while practicing in a medical facility that offers them. Although this Clause has not been codified in specific regulations, it is widely invoked due to pressure from the Church and official passivity.

Abortion is banned and criminalized except in cases where it is required on medical grounds, giving birth would cause a risk to life or the pregnancy results from sexual violence. The major obstacle to obtaining an abortion is the Conscience Clause. Public hospitals terminate very few pregnancies (about 200 a year, according to the Ministry of Health). Doctors frequently refuse to provide the certificate required for a legal abortion (Nowicka and Poche, 2006). Women who are entitled to one are usually turned down.

The case of Alicja Tysiac, who was denied access to an abortion even though her pregnancy posed a significant threat to her health, prompted the European Court of Human Rights to rule in March 2007 that Poland was violating Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This article guarantees respect for an individual's private and family life.

Limited access to safe abortion compels many women (an estimated 80,000 to 200,000 annually) to seek illegal termination. Many women travel abroad for what is called "abortion tourism". Although the total number is unknown, the British Health Department (2007) reports that 0.1% of the women who sought abortions in Great Britain in 2007 were Poles. Enactment of a restrictive law was meant to eliminate abortion entirely. Its effect, however, has been to divide women between the 'rich', who can afford expensive care ('underground abortion') and the 'poor' who cannot afford high quality services.

Gender and pensions

The pension and retirement system continues to be discriminatory. The legislation that established different retirement ages for women and men, allowing women to retire earlier, creates difficulties for both. Women leave work with lower pensions. Men cannot stop working earlier, even when they want to or need to (for example, to take care of family members).

Not only has the Government failed to address this problem, in 2007 it developed a plan to reduce women's pensions, on the premise that they live longer and hence the total amount they receive is higher. Under the leadership of scholars in the field, several gender-focused NGOs submitted a joint protest letter to the appropriate ministry and launched a media campaign. The letter was placed on the website of the Ministry and the proposal has not been put into effect. Hopefully, this crude exercise in gender discrimination will never be implemented.

Rights of sexual minorities

On 26 April 2007, the European Parliament expressed outrage at the growing intolerance towards lesbian and gay people across Europe, singling out Poland for special criticism. The Polish Government was urged to issue a public condemnation of comments by high government officials inciting discrimination and hatred based on sexual orientation, including a

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statement by Junior Education Minister Miroslaw Orzechowski advocating new legislation to "punish whoever promotes homosexuality or any other deviance of a sexual nature in educational establishments." The Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner has already expressed concern about a proposed measure to penalize the alleged promotion of homosexuality in schools.[1] The punishments envisioned are believed to include imprisonment.

The Government's elimination of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Men and Women is particularly alarming. This Office was responsible for promoting equal treatment of individuals, including members of the LGBT community. Its termination makes Poland the only EU country without a statutory equality watchdog.

Amnesty International has urged the Polish Government to ensure that all allegations of attacks and threats against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity will be thoroughly and impartially investigated, and that those responsible are brought to justice in accordance with international standards of fair trial.

The Government should also ensure that no authorities make public statements that could be interpreted as encouraging discrimination against, or targeting of, individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and reinstitute the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Men and Women. The authorities should make clear that any act of violence against a member of the LGBT community is a criminal offence that will not be tolerated. The State should give law enforcement officials specific directives and training on their duty to protect the human rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, as well as on how to identify and investigate homophobic crimes (Amnesty International, 2006).

Persons of non-heterosexual orientation who do not hide their preferences face discrimination in many aspects of everyday life in Poland, including health care, education, political participation and employment. The country has no official regulations on homosexual rights concerning legal status of couples, adoption of children, ability to make joint decisions regarding medical treatment, hospital visits, etc. Most politicians portray issues of discrimination against homosexuals as marginal and unworthy of serious attention.

Moreover, politicians try to ban gay and lesbian rallies. In 2005 Lech Kaczynski, then mayor of Warsaw and currently Polish president, banned a "Parade of Equality" in Warsaw. The mayor of Poznan did the same. The reaction was a moving example of civil society in action to defend human rights. Firstly, the events took place anyway. In Warsaw, the large gathering included politicians, public figures, and celebrities, as well as average citizens who probably would not have participated if the march had been legal. Secondly, the bans were contested in legal actions claiming they violated both the Polish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In 2007 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the City of Warsaw had violated the said Convention (Abramowicz, 2007).

To align Polish statutes with EU law, the Government has added regulations related to gays and lesbians, primarily in the Labour Code. These regulations prohibit direct and indirect discrimination based on sexual orientation and harassment, including sexual harassment. They also define the burden of proof required in discrimination cases.

Refugees[2]

Civil society campaigns seeking to improve the situation of refugees have been quite general and their effect has been limited. Dramatic experiences of an individual can arouse public opinion, but these incidents have not had an impact on official policies and practices.

Refugees confront severe challenges. Most significant is denial of access to basic government services, such as social security and health care. This requires an official (registered) permanent residential address, which is not available to anyone who has not acquired refugee status. In addition, refugees are effectively denied social benefits such as child support, which in Poland is only available to a parent who can show divorce documents or a death certificate of the other parent. The countries of origin of most of the country's refugees do not issue those documents.

The disabled[3]

One of the major challenges faced by people with disabilities is the difficulty of participating in public life. Despite progress increasing accessibility for persons with mobility issues (for example, wheelchair access), little has been done to adapt facilities to the needs of people with visual and hearing impairment. Legal regulations cover mobility issues exclusively.

One of the most glaring breaches of human rights for people with disabilities emerged during the last national elections, held in 2007. Polling stations were not adapted to facilitate access, and the State did not provide ballots for voters with impaired vision.

A number of civil society campaigns and initiatives have urged decision makers to increase building accessibility for both the mobility impaired and the vision and hearing impaired, for example "Warsaw without barriers".

People with disabilities typically have economic difficulties, often related to the labour market. Despite legislation designed to encourage employers to hire them, the majority of those capable of working rely on social security. The disability pension system itself deters many disabled persons from getting a job, since it puts a ceiling on what people can earn without losing their social security benefits.

The CIA and the secret detention centres

In March 2006 the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe released his opinion on alleged secret detention centres set up in Poland as a part of the secret USA programme of illegal transfers of people between states outside any judicial process. According to the European Parliament's Temporary Committee Report, the CIA moved persons suspected of being terrorists from Afghanistan to Poland, most probably landing at the small airport at Szymany. About 10 high-ranking Al Qaeda members are believed to have been subjected to harsh interrogation techniques in at least one secret prison operating in Poland between 2002 until 2005, when it was shut down after the media reported its existence. However, the Polish Government refused to present evidence to the Temporary Committee (European Parliament, 2007).

Although Poland has consistently denied involvement in any aspect of the alleged illegal activities, its cooperation with the Temporary Committee's delegation was regrettably minimal. The Committee delegation was not able to meet any parliamentary representatives. The Polish Government was reluctant to provide full assistance to the investigation and did not welcome its delegates at the appropriate level (European Parliament, 2007). In addition to deploring this lack of cooperation, the European Parliament expressed regret that Poland failed to set up a special inquiry committee of its own and its Parliament did not conduct an independent investigation. The Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe reported that Polish authorities were unable, despite repeated requests, to provide information from national aviation records that would have confirmed CIA-connected flights to Poland (Amnesty International, 2007). ■

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1 <www.globalgayz.com>

2 This section was prepared in consultation with the Centrum Pomocy Uchodīcom i Repatriantom Polskiej Akcji Humanitarnej [Polish Humanitarian Organization Center for Refugee and Repatriate Aid].

3 This section was prepared in consultation with the Fundacja Na Rzecz Transportowych Usług Specjalistycznych (TUS) [Specialized Transportation Fund (TUS)].

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PORTUGAL

Poverty, the main obstacle

In the last three decades, Portugal has become a developed country and a political democracy. While human rights are generally respected, this is not true in all situations. There are two social plagues in which human rights still have to be accomplished: poverty and social inequities. Each and every Portuguese should be free from poverty, women should enjoy equity of opportunities and be free from violence, the gap in wages should be reduced, while child abuse and human trafficking remain a very serious problem.

GT "Economia e Sociedade"/ Comissão Nacional Justiça e Paz
Carlos Farinha Rodrigues
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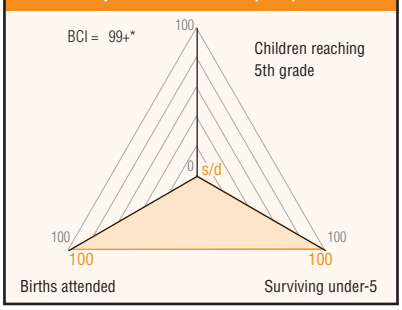
Rita Veiga

Everyone, everywhere, has the right to live in dignity. There is increasing recognition that the way poor people are forced to live often violates their human rights and that promoting human rights is basic to reducing poverty and inequality. In 2007, the National Commission for Justice and Peace petitioned the Portuguese Parliament requesting that poverty be considered a serious violation of human rights and that public policies be regularly evaluated in terms of their impact on poverty.

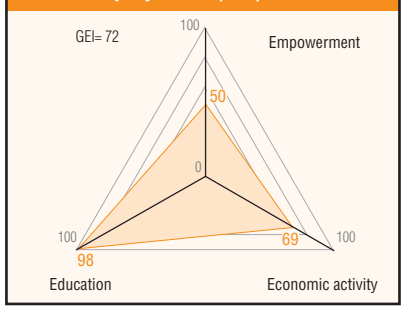
The subject of human rights in Portugal still recalls the dictatorship, which ended in April 1974, under which human rights were routinely violated, especially for those who opposed the political regime. For the great majority of the population, who simply carried on day after day, their living conditions in a poor underdeveloped country violated even the most elementary human rights. At the end of the 1960s, Portugal had the highest birth rate in Western Europe along with the lowest life expectancy at birth, the lowest per capita income, lowest rate of primary and secondary educational enrolment and the sparsest coverage of social security protection.[1]

The current Constitution, adopted in 1976, guarantees respect for every citizen's human rights. An independent human rights *ombudsman* is responsible for defending human rights, freedom and the legitimate rights of all citizens; there is an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters and citizens have access to a court to seek damages for, or cessation of, a human rights violation.[2] Yet serious challenges remain in two major areas: poverty and social inequality.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Poverty and social exclusion

The condemnation of people to lives of poverty is clearly a violation of human rights. This is especially so in developed countries, where economic growth should allow for the eradication of poverty and the full integration of each individual. In 2006, the latest year for which statistics are available, 18% of the population lives below the poverty line.[3] This figure becomes even starker when it is taken into account that Portugal's poverty line corresponds to about 52% of the value for all 25 EU members (EU-25) and to less than half the value for the original 15 (EU-15).

Moreover, Portugal is also one of the most unequal countries in the EU: in 2006, the income of the richest 20% of the population was 6.8 higher than the income of the poorest 20%. Social policies to fight poverty and social exclusion have proved inadequate. The impact of social transfers (pensions excluded) in reducing poverty levels is clearly inferior in Portugal than in other countries, although without such policies – such as the minimum income programme – the intensity of poverty would be much worse. While several measures have been introduced to address some serious social problems, the current austerity policy, focused on deficit reduction through cuts in public spending, means they are not fully implemented.

When analyzed by age groups, the incidence of poverty shows the older population specially affected, in spite of some improvements in the last 12 years. In 1995, 38% of individuals above 65 years of age had incomes below the poverty line, declining to 26% in 2006. The poverty rate for elderly people living alone is 40%, a decrease from 57% in 1995. Poverty among children is also high: 21% of Portuguese children live in families with incomes below the poverty line. Single-parent families and families with three and more children are particularly vulnerable, with poverty rates of 41% and 38% respectively.

Unemployment and wage inequalities

Unemployment has grown since 2000, reaching 7.9% in 2007.[4] Women make up the majority (56.1%) of unemployed adults, youth unemployment is twice the average for people aged 25-34; and 72.2% of people aged 55 or older are still unemployed after more than one year.[5] Job insecurity is also increasing: in 2007, 22.2% of paid workers were in part time or temporary jobs compared to 12.3% in 1993.

Wage inequalities are also increasing. In 2005, the average salary of the top 10% was 6.1 times more than the bottom 10% of earners. Men earn on average 24% more than women do. The basic salary of young men (18-29 years old) is on average 67% the salary of workers over 30 years old, even if they have a degree. This situation has deteriorated in the past ten years. In 2005, the average basic salary for workers with fixed-term employment agreements was 74% of the basic salary for workers with undetermined period employment agreements.

Women's labour market participation in Portugal is 68.1%, the highest of all EU countries, despite

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Barreto, A. (2002). "Mudança social em Portugal, 1960/2000". Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisboa. Available in Portuguese from: <www.ics.ul.pt/publicacoes/workingpapers/wp2002/WP6-2002.pdf>.

2 US Department of State (2007). "Portugal. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2006". Available from: <www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78833.htm>.

3 National Institute of Statistics (NIS) (2008). "Income and life conditions". Available from: <www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_destaques&DESTAQUESdest_boui=11230479&DESTAQUESmodo=2>.

4 11th Congress of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers.

5 NIS, *op. cit.*

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the fact that the majority of these women have both family and domestic responsibilities. However, gender discrimination is significant, as shown by data from Statistics Portugal and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity. For example, 71% of employed female workers are in the lowest paid professions while less than 2% are in the highly qualified boards of public administration, in leading positions or corporate executive boards. The differences are evident from the start, as young women have greater problems when trying to enter the professional market – 18.4% of the unemployed between ages 15-24 are women, while only 14.5% are men. Women are also disadvantaged with regard to promotion, owing to the lack of paid maternity leave and affordable childcare services. In 2005, women earned 80.7% of men's average basic monthly remuneration, an increase from 76.5% in 1995; in high-level positions, by contrast, the difference increase over this period: 88.1% in 2005 compared to 93.7% in 1995.[6]

Education and health

Three decades ago, one fifth of the population between 15 and 64 years of age was illiterate and only 5% finished secondary education. Currently, basic education is compulsory. However, some public schools lack resources and equipment essential to help create equal opportunities for all students. In addition, the high dropout rate in primary school due to poverty is alarming, and contributes to the perpetuation of poverty from one generation to the next: in 2006, the primary school dropout rate was 39.2% – more than double the EU average. That same year, 71% of the employed population had only basic education or less, only 15.3% had completed secondary education and only 14.1% had an advanced degree.[7] The professional qualifications of the majority of the workforce are limited – having worked at the same job most of their lives, many lack the flexibility to acquire new skills. Although some measures were implemented to address these problems, the results have so far been meagre.

The 1976 Constitution points out that the right to health is universal and ought to be free of charge as far as possible; it also states that healthcare should be provided by the National Health Service. Although Portugal ranks fairly low among European countries in terms of economic development, there was strong investment in this sector between 1980 and 2004. Public health expenditure as a percentage of GDP doubled over that period, from 3.6% to 7.2%, which allowed health indicators such as infant mortality rate or life expectancy rate to reach similar levels as those in high-developed countries, despite the fact that health per capita expenditure is still modest. One of the measures that improved access to healthcare is the exemption of low-income people (40% of the population) from healthcare fees.

Still, long-standing problems persist: the waiting lists for surgery and for a first appointment with some specialists are enormous. According to figures from the Ministry of Health, at the end of 2006 there were more than 380,000 patients waiting for a first appointment with a specialist and more than 225,000 waiting for surgery, with an average waiting time of 6-9 months. The present Government has implemented some measures to improve this situation, with mixed results. Over the past three years, reforms have been introduced to improve service patterns while decreasing costs and optimizing resources. This has resulted in the closure of a number of maternity clinics, emergency rooms and some specialized services, creating a feeling of insecurity, especially among those outside of the major cities. The Government is committed to making sure that each family will have a family doctor and a medical emergency room within reasonable distance, although currently this is not yet the case.

Child abuse and delinquency

Since the introduction of the First Plan for the Elimination of Exploitation of Child Labour in 1998, and its update in 2004, child labour exploitation has become negligible. However, child abuse is still a problem. The Portuguese Association for Victim Support reported 97 cases of crimes against children during the first six months of 2006.[8] Violence among youth declined from 2000 to 2005, after which it started to rise again. According to a 2007 report by the Parliament Sub-Commission for Equality of Opportunities,[9] the increase in juvenile delinquency relates directly to poverty, declining economic security and lack of job opportunities. Currently the institutions in charge of the shelter and guardianship are weak and overcrowded.

The first Plan for the Elimination of Exploitation of Child Labour was dated from 1998 and ended in 2003, so there was a new updated version in 2004.

Violence against women

Reports of violence against women are everyday occurrences, although there is no evidence that such violence is on the rise. Of the nearly 7,070 cases reported to the Association for Victim Support during the first six months of 2006, more than 86% involved domestic partners. According to the Union of Women Alternative and Response, 39 women were killed by their husbands or partners.

In 2005 the Government established the Portuguese Structure against Domestic Violence, which launched a nationwide awareness campaign, trained health professionals, proposed legislation to improve legal assistance to victims, increased the number of safe houses and signed protocols with local authorities to assist them. In July 2006 President Cavaco Silva toured several northern districts to raise awareness on domestic violence. While the law provides for criminal penalties in cases of violence by a spouse, traditional social attitudes discourage many women from resorting to the judicial system.

Trafficking in human beings

Portugal is both a destination and transit point for trafficking in women, men, and children, primarily from Brazil, Eastern Europe and Africa. Some are trafficked for forced labour and, as they entered Portugal illegally, they cannot claim their rights and usually are in hiding, living under very poor conditions. Traffickers often demand additional payments or a share of their earnings, withhold their identification documents and sometimes threaten to harm their families in the country of origin.

According to the US Department of State, about 5,000 women, mostly Brazilians, are trafficked to Portugal every year for sex work. The Government has increased its anti-trafficking efforts and reported to have dismantled trafficking networks in 2005, reducing their overall presence in the country. While many of the victims were provided with legal residency, most of them were repatriated, often with NGO assistance in reintegration. The country has about 20 National Immigrant Support Centres to assist immigrants, including trafficking victims. The Government provides subsidies for victims to receive shelter, employment, education, access to medical services and assistance in family reunification.[10]

Cases of excess of violence by law-enforcement officials persist. Increasing arrests, bad conditions of prisons, overcrowding, inadequate facilities, poor health conditions, and violence among inmates – all demand urgent measures. ■

6 Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.

7 NIS, *op. cit.*

8 US Department of State, *op. cit.*

9 <www.anip.net/noticiasdoc/apres.AP_TBrandao_07.pdf>

10 US Department of State, *op. cit.*

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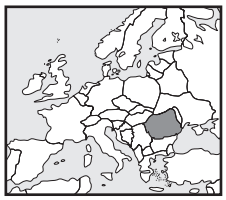
ROMANIA

Human rights, corruption and impunity



During the Communist era, human rights were overtly disregarded to benefit party members and secret police informers. A large majority of them still hold privileged positions. Those who suffered the most in the authoritarian era are now enduring the hardships of economic transition. Although the State gives formal support to human rights, enforcement has been insufficient, to say the least, due to lack of political will and the State's failure to meet its obligations.

Civil Society Development Foundation
Valentin Burada

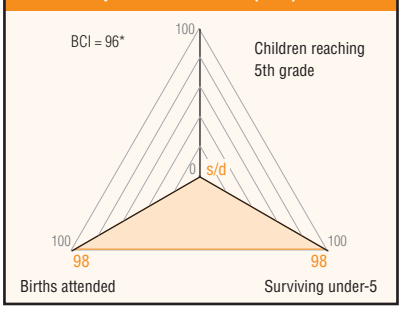
Since the authoritarian regime fell in 1989, human rights have been perceived as a by-product of democracy. The first priority has been building and consolidating democracy, primarily by promoting civil and political rights, individual freedom and a market economy. Positive rights – social, economic and cultural – have received less attention, on the premise that they would develop naturally in a democratic market economy. At the same time, state institutions have been crumbling under the weight of corruption and extreme politization, causing a steady decline in the quality and quantity of essential Government services accompanied by an erosion of popular confidence in public institutions.

Since the transition to democracy was officially launched in the early 1990s, the emphasis of domestic civil society activists has always been on civil rights (freedom of speech, property, *habeas corpus*, freedom of worship, etc.). However, a number of NGOs have begun taking an active role in promoting the rights of marginalized sectors of society such as children (particularly those institutionalized), people with disabilities, Roma, and sexual minorities. Recently, the concept of a human rights "package" has been imported under the "European standards" label. For example, references to the importance of harmonizing domestic practices concerning minorities with "European standards" have become common in public discourse.

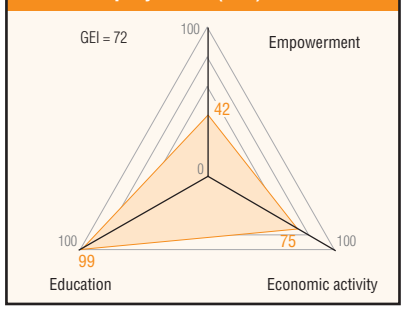
So far, however, international human rights standards have not been fully internalized in Romanian society, legislation or practices. Sound long-term policies remain notably absent, along with administrative and budgetary measures to implement them. The Government's approach has been to act only when required, usually by direct international pressure. For example, Romania's human rights policies were rigorously monitored during the EU pre-accession process to ensure that they met provisions of the Copenhagen political criteria. Sometimes, the stimulus to reform is a public scandal – which typically surfaces in the international press. Even when the Government has enacted human rights measures, it has depended on external aid to implement them, rather than mobilizing its own resources.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The rights of people with disabilities

Civil society organizations have regularly denounced serious violations of the human rights of people with mental disabilities. *Monitoring the rights of mentally disabled children and young people in public institutions*,[1] a report issued by the Centre of Legal Resources (CRJ - a Romanian NGO), and Unicef in April 2007, cited a host of violations. Patients did not have access to basic needs (food, adequate clothing and footwear, sheets, pillows or beds, heating during the winter) or adequate services and living conditions, such as activity and stimulation, of medication and treatment, training and motivation. Restraining measures and isolation were being applied abusively. The State is directly responsible for many abuses, including dehumanizing conditions in psychiatric institutions; staff violence is common. Children have been arbitrarily admitted to psychiatric hospitals without specific treatment or diagnosis. In some instances, local authorities placed orphans in psychiatric institutions temporarily when other care was unavailable.

A new law codifying the rights of people with disabilities was adopted in December 2006, filling out previous antidiscrimination legislation. The need was readily apparent. For example, a survey by the public agency for persons with disabilities in 2006 found that only 25% of all the public institutions inspected provided adequate access. (In response, additional public and private institutions modified their facilities voluntarily.) However, as in many other cases, the Government has yet to introduce effective policies to implement and enforce the reform.

1 Centre for Legal Resources (CRJ) (2007). *Mechanisms for the Protection of Persons with Mental Disabilities from the Socio-medical Institutions: from Illusion to Reality*, Bucharest, available at: <www.crj.ro/files/ProtectionMechanismReport.pdf.

Universal access is a case in point. Organizations representing people with disabilities complain that even though all buildings and public transportation are required to provide it, many of the facilities they have added cannot actually be used.

The rights of people with HIV/AIDS

Romania has the largest number of children and youth living with HIV in Europe – more than 7,200. Frequently called "Romania's miracle children", they are the survivors among more than 10,000 children infected with HIV between 1986 and 1991 in hospitals and orphanages by contaminated needles and "micro-transfusions" of unscreened blood.[2] The underlying cause was State neglect.

Although Romania is cited as the first country in Eastern Europe to provide universal access to antiretroviral therapy, it has done little to fight the stigma attached to people living with HIV and discrimination against them. They are frequently denied access to education, medical care, public services, and employment.

A report released in September 2007 by UNOPA, a Romanian non-governmental federation founded by several organizations representing people affected by HIV/AIDS, noted that the Government has not established a single program to ensure that when the thousands of children with HIV age out of the childhood social protection system they will have the skills and support they need to become fully integrated into society and the labour market.[3]

2 Human Rights Watch (August 2006). *Life Doesn't Wait. Romania's Failure to Protect and Support Children and Youth Living with HIV*, Vol. 18, No. 6(D).

3 UNOPA (September 2007). *Drepturile omului in context HIV/SIDA. Raport de monitorizare, iulie 2006–martie 2007*, <www.unopa.ro/download/Raport_de_monitorizare_UNOPA_iulie_2006-martie_2007.pdf>.

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This conclusion reinforced a Human Rights Watch Report published in August 2006, which stated that fewer than 60% of Romanian children living with HIV are getting any form of schooling, despite legislation providing free and compulsory education through tenth grade or until age 18.[4]

Despite progress in some areas, doctors often refuse outright to treat children and youth living with HIV or use a variety of ploys and excuses to avoid them, such as repeatedly rescheduling their appointments to discourage them from coming to the clinic. Other types of discriminatory behaviour include asking them to come back after all other patients have left and referring to them as "AIDS people" in front of other patients.[5]

The antiretroviral (ARV) treatment system has also been less than satisfactory. Although provided without charge during the period 2001-2006, treatment was interrupted in each of those years for several months when funding ran out. In addition, representatives of Romanian NGOs working in the field say that better treatments have been developed since the current ARV was acquired in 2003. The Government has delayed calling for new bids since 2005, even though USD 60 million has been allocated for that purpose. NGO representatives suspect that interested parties have a financial stake in retaining the current treatment.

Rights of the Roma community

Enactment of progressive legislation has not ended discrimination against the Roma in many areas, including employment, housing, health and education. Approximately 70% of Roma households lack running water, according to *Breaking the cycle of exclusion: Roma children in South-East Europe,* a Unicef report issued in March 2007. This far exceeds 50% proportion among poor Romanian household as a whole. The primary formal obstacle to Roma access to services is a lack of the necessary documents. This denies them the right to free healthcare, for example. Only one-third of the Roma are estimated to have health insurance, largely due to its relatively high cost and their low rate of employment in the formal labour market.

In the education system, Roma children continue to be segregated more frequently than other groups. Their schools typically have poorer facilities and unqualified teachers. Of the young Romanians with no education, more than 80% are Roma; 38% are illiterate. Only 64% are enrolled in primary school, while the national average is 98.9%.[6]

Human rights, corruption and impunity

Over the last two decades, the most serious threat to human rights has been corruption and impunity. This represents a direct assault on one of the fundamental principles of human rights: equal treatment for all members of society. The only beneficiaries are the minority with access to power and decision-making positions. The rest of the population pays the price. The poor, particularly those living in rural or de-industrialized areas, now stagnating throughout the country, have been neglected by each successive government. For most of them, the only escape from economic hardship has been emigration. While Romania's accession to the EU has encouraged a healthier political and judicial system, so far corruption and impunity have seemed more pervasive and powerful than ever.

One of the primary roles and responsibilities of the State is to create an environment conducive to the protection of human rights; tolerance of corruption is increasingly considered as a *per se* human rights violation.[7]

We share Pearson's insight that "the discourse of human rights enables us to recognize the effects that corruption has on the ordinary person, especially in his/her contact with the State. Too often, the sufferings of people as a result of corrupt practices are hidden behind vague euphemistic statements of development and poverty levels that fail to draw national or international attention and stimulate the necessary action."[8]

Romania is a case study for how "in most corruption-ridden countries, the possibility of enriching oneself is often the raison d'être for engaging in politics, whether it is for selfish and personal reasons or for patronage purposes to entrench oneself in power."[9] In this sense, it seems reasonable to term Romania a "multiparty kleptocracy". This characterisation is supported by the opposition of all parties to current attempts to reform the justice system[10].

Since 1989, the national judiciary system has been notoriously corrupt and politically dependent. This is illustrated by its failure to bring indictments for crimes perpetrated under the Communist regime or during the revolutionary period that followed. Doing so would have threatened the new establishment and its network of supporters – former *nomenklatura* (government officials) and *Securitate* (secret police) officers who had transformed themselves into business entrepreneurs. They and their allies span the entire national political spectrum.

Even though the corruption was growing more and more blatant, justice only became a major public issue during the final years of negotiation with the EU. At that point it emerged as the most serious obstacle to EU membership and the struggle to overhaul the system made some headway. The State developed a new institutional capacity to deal with "high-level corruption"; when Romania finally achieved full membership in 2007, the EU invoked a clause allowing it to continue monitoring the country's justice reform efforts.

However, now that the country has entered the EU, the Romanian political class has become less responsive to pressure from Brussels to keep the reforms on track.[11] Alarmed by corruption investigations that are entangling more and more leading politicians (former and present ministers and MPs), representatives from every political party have created a new "coalition of the willing" with the undeclared aim of stopping the reforms, rolling them back and restoring impunity. After an initial phase when the first high-level politicians were indicted and the judiciary's political ties became more blatant than ever, the system seems to have mustered the courage to go after "high-level corruption" prosecute former and current ministers and MPs. Recently however, opponents of the process have begun levelling charges that the new-found zeal of the magistrates is fuelled by political interests that wish to damage rival parties.

In January 2008, the Constitutional Court removed the executive of the National Council for Research on the Communist Secret Service Archive (CNSAS), the only institution committed to bringing justice to those who suffered under the Communist regime, and suspended its major activities. This decision came just before an election year, as researchers were about to review the files of magistrates and Constitutional Court members. Before it was silenced, CNSAS unmasked a number of public figures – former ministers, MPs, journalists, top clerics – as informers of the *Securitate*. Many others, however, have been protected by the current secret service agency, which continues to block access to some of its most controversial archives.

Corruption has also permeated the economy. Property rights, strongly promoted after 1989 as a cornerstone of the new "liberal democracy" have been flagrantly violated by manipulators who gamed the privatization process. Some of them grew rich through their former affiliation to the *nomenklatura* or *Securitate*. Others pulled strings in the judicial system and used blackmail and fraud to seize most of the properties nationalized by the Communist regime from their rightful owners.[12] Still others have made fortunes with the help of former comrades now in key public offices, gaining preferential access to State assets being privatized or to Government contracts.

"Impunity for the powerful and connected is the single most important factor in the perpetuation of corruption, and indeed in all human rights violations."[13] Romania's plight illustrates this perfectly. ■

4 Human Rights Watch, *op. cit.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Romania educatiei, Romania cercetarii* (July 2007). Available at: <edu.presidency.ro/edu/cv/raport.pdf>.

7 UNDP, Oslo Governance Centre, Democratic Governance Fellowship Programme (September 2004). *The impact of corruption on the human rights based approach to development*, available at: <www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs05/Thusitha_final.pdf>.

8 Pearson, Z. (n.d.) "Human Rights and Corruption". A research paper produced by the Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University 3, available at: <www.cdi.anu.edu.au/research_publications/research_HumanRightsandCorruption.htm>.

9 Kiai, M. (2007). *The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Combating Corruption*, The International Council on Human Rights Policy, Review Meeting, Corruption and Human Rights, Geneva, 28-29 July, available at: <www.ichrp.org/files/papers/133/131_-_Maina_Kiai_-_2007.pdf>.

10 Romania is just one out of the many examples proving that a corrupt or politically dependent judiciary can facilitate high-level corruption, undermining reforms and overriding legal norms.

11 See, for instance, "Blacksliding on reform is seen in new EU states", in *International Herald Tribune*, 1 April 2008, available at: <www.iht.com/articles/2008/04/01/europe/union.php>.

12 See, for instance, "Vanatorii de terenuri fac afaceri cu functionarii din primarii: retrocedare cu santaj", *Hotnews*, 9 March 2008, available at:<www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-2539539-vanatorii-terenuri-fac-afaceri-functionarii-din-primarii-retrocedare-santaj.htm>.

13 Kiai, *op. cit.*

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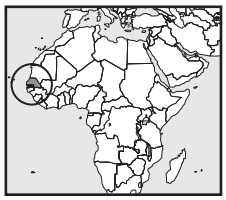
SENEGAL

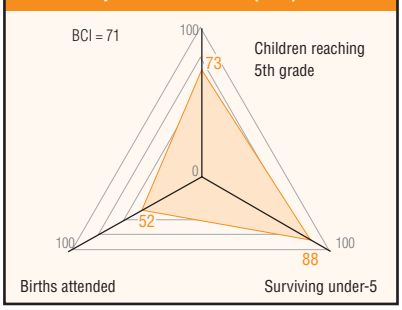
Weaker protection of human rights



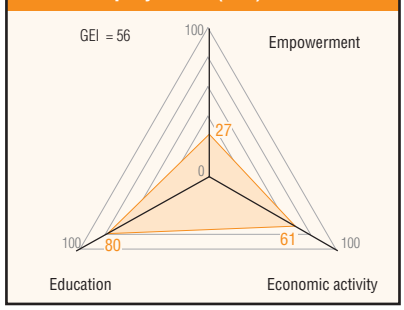
In the last few years national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights have grown weaker. Social, economic and cultural rights are rarely implemented. Democratic rights and liberties were egregiously violated during the election campaign. The national legal framework is not adequate to meet commitments the country has made, nor is the Constitution in many areas, particularly those related to gender discrimination and reproductive health rights. Civil society has been protesting the deterioration in the quality of life of the Senegalese.

Association pour le Développement Economique Social Environnemental du Nord (ADESEN)
Oumar Ndiaye

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Despite the Government's enactment of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for 2003-2005 and a successor PRSP II – which is in effect for the period 2006-2010 – as a mechanism for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the population's access to basic services has not improved.

More than 60% of households live in poverty. In 2005, 29.6% of the population had no access to fresh water (the percentage was higher in rural areas). Only 58% of households were connected to an adequate sanitation system (in rural areas, only 17%).[1] Dakar, the capital, produces 20,000 cubic metres of raw sewage per day; the treatment system can only process 19,000.

Access to education is also low. In 2006 the enrolment rate was 9.1% at the pre-school level, 81.8% for primary school and 49.1% for secondary education.[2] Thousands of children, particularly girls, still have no access to school; many who do attend drop out before they have learned anything substantial. Retention rates are 11% and 13% for primary and secondary education, respectively.[3]

Access to health and social security services is still minimal and their quality remains low, despite declared intentions of the State and community authorities to improve maternal and infant health, as well as the health of older people (the "Plan Sésame" promising free health services for persons over the age of 60 has yet to be implemented). Malaria continues to be one of the chief causes of mortality, as are annual diarrhea epidemics.

Nutrition is also poor. An estimated 61% of children under the age of six are deficient in vitamin A; 17% of children under the age of 5 are underweight, while 84% suffer from anaemia. So do 61% of women. Many women are deficient in iodine as well, particularly in the southeast, where this condition is endemic – afflicting 34% overall and 51% in some areas.

Structural adjustment policies, including privatization of most basic services (water, energy, transport) have not achieved their stated goal of revitalizing the economy. In fact, these policies have de-industrialized the country, with disastrous social consequences: the loss of thousands of jobs, extremely high unemployment, and massive migration to urban centres. The economy is once again growing at 6%, but this has not improved living conditions for most of the population or reduced poverty substantially.

In recent years official mechanisms to promote and protect human rights have become weaker rather than stronger. The President of the Republic opened an office for human rights in 2000 and introduced reforms that resulted in the creation of a High Commissariat of Human Rights, now moribund. A Senegalese Committee for Human Rights, created in 1970, functioned in some form between 1993 and 2000 but currently has no staff and is therefore incapable of responding to violations of human rights.

Violations of human rights that have aroused public opposition include the following:

- *Bans on public protests*. Even though the right to hold protests is recognized in article 8 of the Constitution, prohibition is the norm and authorization the exception.
- *Criminalization of free expression*. The Criminal Investigations Division has been transformed into a political police force that calls in political leaders and members of civil society for merely expressing their opinions and puts journalists in jail without due process of law.
- *Impunity*. Individuals who commit political crimes, embezzlement of public funds or torture are not prosecuted. In one recent case, Dominique Lopy, a youth, was tortured to death at the Kolda police station; those responsible suffered no repercussions.
- *Violations of the rights of women and children*. These violations have reached disturbing proportions, marked by cases of sexual harassment and abuse, rape, murder, forced marriages, genital mutilation and paedophilia.

Senegal ratified the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its supplementary protocol, passed a law prohibiting violence against women and added new provisions to the penal code dealing with domestic violence, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation. Since then the Government has been officially committed to protecting the rights of women. However, this formal commitment has not been translated into legislation. The family code, for example, still has provisions that discriminate against women. Women's reproductive health rights remain unrecognized.

Although the 2001 Constitution affirms the principles of gender equality and equity, no law has been passed to ensure that women and men have equal access to elected positions, let alone parity. Social, cultural, economic and political factors all play a role in this failure to follow through.

New provisions regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been added in the 2001 Constitution and several laws concerning children. The Government has made some progress in modifying legislation in this area to conform to the Convention and International Labour Organization conventions

1 UNDP. Progress report on MDGs 2006.

2 In non formal education (grassroots community schools, functional literacy teaching, *daara* or Koranic schools, etc.) the number of students is not taken into account when estimating the enrolment rate.

3 According to the sixth economic and financial report of the Ten-year Programme of Education and Training carried out by the Consortium for Economic and Social Research, published in June 2007.

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numbers 138 and 182, including passage of laws that forbid child marriage, begging and other forms of inhuman treatment. Realizing the intent of this legislation will take time: despite the law prohibiting begging, Senegal still has an estimated 800,000 street children. Many factors, including poverty and the persistence of traditional practices and customs, retard full implementation of Convention provisions regarding the rights of children, particularly girls.

The economy

To obtain a reduction of its external debt the Government agreed to institute a series of structural reforms within a Strategic Framework for the Struggle Against Poverty before the end of 2001.

As noted above, the PRSP became the framework for economic and social programmes that were supposed to promote development and reduce poverty. This framework was a new version of prior structural adjustment plans imposed by international financial institutions. Reforms have included the elimination of tariffs on some imports and a reduction in charges on others, required by international commitments (external tariff in common with the West African Economic and Monetary Union, agreements with the World Trade Organization and between the European Union and the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries). For most Senegalese, these measures have resulted in a sharp deterioration in the quality of life. The State has not alleviated their plight.

Political barriers that prevent promotion of human rights include minimal separation between the three branches of government and the overwhelming predominance of the executive branch; a lack of transparency in the administration of public funds; the existence of a multitude of agencies with budgets not subject to public scrutiny, to the detriment of the technical ministries and general administration; a weak Parliament that does not exercise its prerogatives to control the budget and supervise its execution; the incapacity of financial control institutions (the General State Inspectorate, the Accounts Tribunal), which encounter enormous challenges in fulfilling their mission due to their subordination to the President and a lack of resources; and the absence of mechanisms that would allow popular participation in the formulation and implementation of Government policies and programmes.

To make its debt payments, which currently absorb one quarter of State revenue (7% of the gross domestic product), the Government has cut other parts of the budget. Education expenditures have been reduced to 3.7% of gross domestic product; health to only 2.6%. The Government has imposed a hiring freeze on qualified staff in both sectors.

Civil society advocacy

The deterioration in the quality of life has not gone unopposed. Civil society has protested against the privatization of public services (water, health, electricity), a steady rise in the cost of living, violations of rights and liberties, impunity and the manipulation of the institutions of the Republic, violence against women and children, and the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. Activist organizations have also made a variety of proposals for reform, including recommendations for streamlining the State, reducing debt payments to finance social services, improving transparency in the administration of public funds, investing in branches of the agricultural sector that promote food security, and making the economy competitive before exposing it to free trade. ■

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SERBIA

How politics chips away the economy and human rights

Seven years after the collapse of former President Slobodan Milosevic's regime in 2000, Serbia is going through a difficult transition that will lay the foundation for future prosperity. Since the beginning of 2008, however, the country's economy has worsened due to a series of non-economic factors. Macroeconomic stability is still fragile, democracy semi-consolidated and corruption widespread. The most vulnerable groups – the unemployed, the handicapped, the elder, the poor and excluded, women and children – still find it difficult to obtain basic services.

Women's Centre for Democracy and Human Rights
Mirjana Dokmanovic, PhD
Danica Drakulic, PhD

The year 2008 began with dramatic political turbulence, which will affect the country for years to come. On 17 February Kosovo and Metohija[1] issued a unilateral declaration of independence. The Serbian Government immediately rejected it, but the international community has strongly supported independence for Kosovo and Metohija. The consequences of this situation included a slowdown in negotiations with the EU on a Stabilization and Association Agreement; the fall of the Government; the setting of a May 11 date for parliamentary, provincial[2] and local elections; expressions of concern by foreign investors; and a jolt to the stock market.

Although government officials profess optimism about the country's macroeconomic performance and satisfaction about all that has been accomplished, independent experts have been more reserved in their prognoses. No political consensus exists on integration into Europe and political instability has surfaced again. Permanent political crises are endangering the economic reforms, which are being implemented slowly and with poor results.

Key macroeconomic indicators

Serbia has achieved significant economic results in its transition to a market economy. Since this transition began seven years ago GDP has grown almost 50%. However over the last two years the economy has fluctuated dramatically. The highest GDP growth was recorded in 2006; in 2007 industrial production grew only 4%. This unbalanced growth has been accompanied by a huge increase in salaries – an average of 20% to 30% – and a major relaxation of financial restraints, resulting in significant economic deterioration. A GDP surplus of 0.75% in 2005 was followed by a 1.5% deficit in 2006. The deficit in the balance of payments reached 13% of GDP in 2006 and 13.9% in 2007. Foreign debt has climbed to 62% of GDP.[3]

The domestic market relies heavily on imports since domestic production is still inadequate to satisfy demand. This has increased the foreign trade exchange deficit. Expanding domestic demand, the foreign trade deficit and rising debt are jeopardizing achievement of the macroeconomic plan. In its 2008 national budget the Government announced cuts in public expenditures (10%), subsidies (5%) and investment (around 20%). However, in spite of a declared policy of strict control of salaries in the public sector, the Government recently agreed to pay raises.[4]

This macroeconomic situation is a consequence of combining long-term expansive fiscal policies with restrictive monetary policies. Salaries and consumption grow too quickly in an environment of insufficient and inadequate domestic supply, thus increasing obligations to foreign countries. In the entire transition period, salaries have been rising steadily in both the public and private sectors, at a faster rate than productivity (Bureau of Statistics).

In March 2007, after an evaluation of Serbian macroeconomic trends in 2006, an IMF mission recommended a significant reduction in public consumption and a budget surplus of 2.75% of GDP for 2007. The Government proposed a budget *deficit* of 2.75%.[5] The IMF recommendations run contrary to the Government's efforts to implement an expansive fiscal policy. The IMF position is that the Government should not use fiscal policy to stimulate production until the public sector is reformed (meaning that salaries and employment in this sector should be reduced). Fiscal policy should be restrictive in the future.

The low level of investment as a percentage of GDP was a weak point in the previous phase of transition. This has been associated with a high unemployment rate. At a time when the official unemployment rate is 20%, fixed investments constitute only 18% of GDP (Ministry of Finance). The former figure is far above European standards while the latter is far below. Increasing foreign investment is crucial to Serbia's economic success, but this will require political and macroeconomic stability, as well as high-quality institutional systems and a business-friendly environment.

In the current environment, radical political forces are gathering strength amidst dissatisfaction with the results of the transition. This adds further complexity to a political scene already burdened by unsolved political problems. Growing uncertainty is likely to lead to a stalemate in European integration, the strengthening of economic monopolies, a further decrease in economic competitiveness, significant fluctuations in stock exchange prices and exchange rates, increased corruption, heightened social differences and declining living standards.

Poverty

More than 450,000 citizens receive some form of social subsidy. The absolute poverty line amounts to USD 160 per consumer unit/month. The poverty rate dropped from 13.3% in 2002 to 6.6% in 2007, a decline of almost half a million people. However, another half a million citizens remain very close to the poverty line. Getting or losing a job is the crucial factor in determining a household's consumption level. More than half of all households with children (56.2%) declare that they are poor and characterize their personal financial situation as bad or very bad.

Retired people are also at great risk. In January 2008, 60% of retirees (760,000) received less than USD 300 per month, while 13% of them had to live with barely USD 150.[6] Other groups at risk, such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities and the Roma, need continued and expanded assistance.

Children

UNICEF data show that many social welfare challenges remain. Poor children; Roma children; children with disabilities; children who are victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence; and children living in residential institutions, all face exclusion. Reform of the cash benefits system is essential to improving their situation. Improved financial support would enable them to achieve minimum living standards and improve their access to services.

Over 300,000 children live in poverty or on the verge of poverty. Poor households with children spend almost 80% of their income on food, rent and housing. This leaves very little for other needs. A majority of children from poor families live outside urban areas, which means schools, hospitals, healthcare centres, sport facilities, etc. are typically further away. More than 6% of children living below the poverty line do not attend primary school. Rates of chronic disease are above average among them.

* Due to the recent separation of Montenegro in June 2006 there are no available data on BCI nor for GEI components of Serbia alone.

1 Serbian province which status has been regulated by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

2 In the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

3 Economist magazine, No. 323/2006.

4 Economist magazine, No. 403/2008.

5 Economist magazine, No. 356/2007.

6 Blic Daily, available at: <www.blic.co.yu/ekonomija.php?id=30849>. Accessed: 18 February 2008.

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Children living in rural and less developed areas (Southeastern and Western Serbia) are potentially vulnerable to being socially excluded due to 'socio-cultural' poverty as well as low income.

Roma children are particularly at risk: more than 80% are poor; only 4% attend kindergarten. Among the Roma, mortality rates for infants and children under five are three times higher than among the rest of the population. Although 76% attend primary school, only 13% finish it. Only 4.8% of girls and 12.2% of boys attend secondary school.

Children with disabilities are not only excluded from healthcare and education but also exposed to isolation and rejection. Their parents often do not receive adequate governmental support. Almost half the poor children do not receive a child allowance, while 19% of the richest families do.

Handicapped people

Serbia adopted the Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities in 2006 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. Under the law, state authorities are obliged to provide persons with disabilities with public services and access to facilities. Until now, this law has not been adequately implemented. Data from the Center for the Development of an Inclusive Society indicate that 79% of persons with disabilities are jobless, 70% live in poverty and 50% have not finished primary school. Of 23,000 registered with the National Employment Service in 2006, only 316 found employment, despite the adoption of affirmative action measures. Among the primary reasons for this failure are employer reluctance to alter offices to accommodate persons with disabilities and lack of transportation to workplaces.

Although people with disabilities account for 8% to 10% of the population, they are invisible in public life.

Women

Women still suffer widespread discrimination in both public and private life. Employers discriminate them at work in violation of the Labour Law. Women often accept this, out of fear of losing or not getting a job. Research by the Independent Trade Union indicates that the gender wage gap is 10-30%. Women often suffer from multiple types of discrimination, based on age, ethnicity, disability and sexual orrientation. Violence against women is widespread, including domestic violence and sexual harrasment.

Workers' rights

A restrictive economic policy runs counter to workers' interests. Social dissatisfaction has continued to grow, but trade unions are weak. In 2007, police, metal and textile workers, judicial staff, primary and secondary school staff and public administration workers staged a strike to protest against low salaries. A number of workers went on hunger strikes.

Inadequate workplace safety is a major problem. Due to increasing injuries at construction sites, which resulted in 14 dead workers and 112 heavily injured at the beginning of 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy announced a six-month campaign of intensified inspections to ensure that employers were meeting safety standards. Human rights NGOs insist that this level of inspection should be the norm.

Abuse and harassment at work, a widespread problem, has only recently caught the public eye. Studies show that 1 out of 14 men and 1 out of 3 women have been victims of sexual harassment at work at least once. At the beginning of 2008, the Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, supported by trade unions, the Association of Employers and NGOs, began drafting a law that would ban emotional abuse in the workplace.

Health care

Economic reforms have been accompanied by reforms in public expenditures. Since 2001, public spending on education, health care, social protection and general public services has gradually increased as a proportion of GDP. In 2007, Serbia allocated 6.5% of GDP for health care. Beginning in 2002, the country has gradually been shifting from mandatory state health insurance to private health care.

In this new environment, the huge gap between a few rich citizens and the great number who are impoverished has threatened the wellbeing and survival of many families and their access to health care. Poor, unemployed and retired people have difficulty obtaining health care services, particularly privatized ones, due to high prices.

Inspectors have found that 40% of maternity wards still have infrastructural and hygienic problems and UNICEF has reported a series of alarming facts, such as the hardships the marginalized groups face. Scores of children lack access to health and other protection services. Infant mortality rates are significantly above the European average and are exceptionally high in some municipalities and among Roma children.[7]

Until now, the Government has adopted or drafted a number of national strategies and/or action plans aimed at promoting social status, employment, health and education of vulnerable groups such as children, youth, women, Roma and persons with disabilities. The Social Welfare Development Strategy, adopted in 2005, was designed to provide effective and better social services. However, a lack of efficient implementing and monitoring mechanisms undermines its effectiveness.

Discrimination and corruption

The civil sector is extremely active in promoting international and EU standards for the protection of human rights, including women's rights, minority rights and children's rights. Shadow reports and analysis by numerous NGOs indicate that international standards for the protection of women, children, Roma, national minorities and other vulnerable groups are not applied and economic and social rights are not well protected. Although both the Constitution and a number of laws prohibit discriminatory conduct, they have not been adhered to. Serbia still lacks a comprehensive protection system that could adequately deal with widespread direct and indirect discrimination. And, despite the demands of NGOs, the Government has not passed either an anti-discrimination law or a law on gender equality.

In addition, widespread corruption in all spheres of public life undermines efforts to establish the rule of law and implement the principle of equality of access to resources and basic services. The Anti-corruption Council, a governmental advisory body, has denounced multiple cases of corruption. The council has also shown how the Law on Privatization, approved in 2001, has paved the way for unbridled corruption and the creation of monopolies, money laundering and the 'robbery' of state-owned and socially-owned companies by 'tycoons' and 'a group of powerful people' who make laws to benefit their personal interests. ■

7 According to the *Multiple Cluster Survey 2005*, the infant mortality rate in Roma settlements is 26 per thousand, while the under-five mortality rate is 29 per thousand, both almost three times higher than the official average for Serbia (9.1 and 10.4 per thousand respectively).

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SLOVAKIA

More development aid, though discrimination remains

Tensions between the ruling coalition and the opposition in Slovakia became acute in 2007. Although the country is indisputably democratic, discrimination and violation of basic rights (especially of the Roma minority) remain significant issues. One positive change has been an increase in development assistance as a result of strong economic growth and successful international integration.

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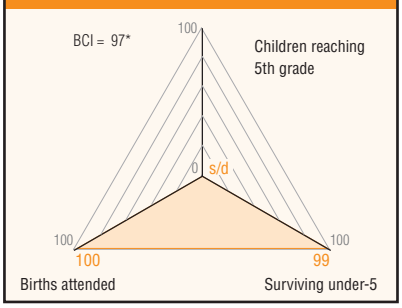
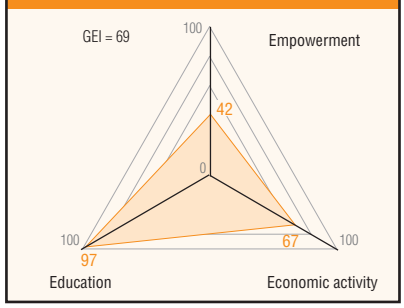
Daniel Klimovský

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



In the relatively short period since 1989, Slovakia has made dramatic progress. Some of the changes had begun previously, when the country was part of Czechoslovakia; none of them are complete. The need to consolidate democracy through implementation of human rights, horizontal and vertical division of political power and other essential elements was evident after the overthrow of the Communist regime in 1989. However, new institutions emerged very slowly, quite often in a chaotic manner.

After Slovakia became an independent state in 1992, the lack of political consensus developed into an increasingly bitter conflict that during 1995-1997 descended into a "struggle over the rules of the game", with members of the Government often acting against the law. In this environment, a consolidated democracy was regarded as highly unstable (Szomolányi 2004: 9). Paradoxically, this political situation activated civil society, and some NGOs played a significant role in the development of a new policy-making process (Klimovský 2005).

The first part of this report focuses on domestic human rights issues (especially the so-called "Roma problem"); the second on the Government's relationships with other countries and selected international organizations.

The "tyranny of the majority"

In 1998 a coalition composed of two right-wing parties, the Democratic Party and the Slovak Democratic Coalition, and two left-wing parties, the Democratic Left and the Party of Civic Understanding took power. In 2004 the country joined the European Union, and since then its respect for human and political rights has been regarded as satisfactory by outside observers.[1] However the reality is more complex. The current ruling coalition, created in July 2006, brings together the social-democratic party (Smer),[2] a Christian-nationalist party (SNS) and the centrist people's party ('S-HZDS),[3] forming a "tyranny of the majority" (Mesežnikov 2008) that seeks to annihilate the opposition and dominate political life. The Prime Minister repeatedly attacked individual media outlets and statements by a number of public interest groups, and the Government began employing nationalistic rhetoric in its references to national and ethnical minorities (Sáposová and Šutaj 2008). In the same year, the ruling coalition threatened the fundamental principles of the rule of law, as a number of critics have noted, expressing concern about the coalition's attacks (albeit largely symbolic) on the role of the opposition in Parliament, and its refusal to consider any bills drafted by opposition MPs (Bárány, Hrabko and Pilát 2008).

Threats to human and political rights

A "Report on Observance of the Human Rights in Slovakia in 2006" by the National Centre for Human Rights concluded that other than discrimination against the Roma minority, human rights violations in Slovakia consisted of delays in legal proceedings, domestic abuse and racially motivated violence. However, the report focused on a few selected rights while ignoring many others guaranteed in the Slovak Constitution (Fialová 2008).

One of the primary concerns related to ethnically or racially motivated violence has been flawed police proceedings, which is often downplayed by the authorities. The 2007 "Hedviga Malinová"[4] case, for example, aroused so much outrage that it strained relations between Slovakia and Hungary. While Government officials tried to minimize the importance of the incident, the Chief of Police and General Attorney announced in July that police had not followed proper procedure and recommended establishment of a five-member investigatory team to review the case.

Other critics have condemned the Government's social policies as propagandistic and ineffectual, pointing out that it has taken a few high-profile measures, while failing to address the most serious problems, such the situation of the Roma (Ďurana, Karpiš and Reptová 2008). Improving the condition of the Roma may be a difficult challenge, but the need for action is evident. In 2006 the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe declared that "despite improvements in all areas, and numerous programmes and policies, progress remains slow and, inevitably, fails to equally reach all Roma communities. Moreover, the social and economic precariousness of the Roma population is a crucial obstacle for the homogenous and equitable development of the country's population as a whole" (Follow-up Report… 2006). Manifestations of discrimination against the Roma include ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, bias in the labour market, inadequate housing, social bias and exclusion.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 In 2007, Freedom House categorized Slovakia as a free country with top scores on political rights and civil liberties.

2 In Slovak this word means "direction".

3 The Movement for Democratic Slovakia (ĩS-HZDS) and the Slovak National Party (SNS) were the strongest members of the ruling coalition during the period when many considered Slovakia an unstable regime (1994-1998).

4 Hedviga Malinová testified that on 25 August 2006 she was attacked by two men because she was speaking Hungarian. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior called this a fabrication to damage the reputation of the Government and the police stopped the investigation and started to prosecute her on grounds of false testimony.

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Roma living conditions remain far below the European average.[5] In 2005 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination ruled that the cancellation of a Government plan to build social housing for Roma in response to explicitly anti-Romani pressure constituted an act of racial discrimination.[6] The Government has yet to take action on this matter. An Amnesty International report (2007) found that Slovak Romani children have been denied the right to a proper education[7] by a system that routinely discriminates against them. Scores of children are segregated in Roma-only schools, the report related, while others have been placed in "special" schools despite not having any mental or learning disabilities.[8]

One noteworthy positive trend fomr the Roma has been greater political representation. More than 200 Roma candidates were elected to municipal councils in 2006, an increase of almost 40% over the previous elections. The number of Roma mayors jumped more than 70%.[9]

Development assistance

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation – Slovak Aid – on 1 January 2007. Parliament adopted an Official Development Assistance Act, which codified the principles, goals, and forms of official development assistance, at the end of the year. As this act only became effective in 2008, its implementation and impact are not covered in this report.

The "Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance: 2003 – 2008" established development assistance for Serbia and Montenegro as the main priority; this policy has been implemented. In December 2006, Parliament adopted commitments of EUR 250,000 (USD 375,00) to a fund for the Balkan countries administered by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and to the "Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative" for heavily indebted poor countries.

The "National Programme of the Official Development Assistance" was adopted in April 2007.

CHART 1. Official bilateral Slovak development assistance in 2007

Projects / Programmes	Total (in thousand EUR)
Projects in "programme countries" (Montenegro and Serbia)	2,215
Projects in "project countries" (Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Ukraine)	1,415
Projects in "other countries"	769
Development of capacities and projects related to development education, public awareness, and monitoring of projects	331
Co-funding of projects approved by the European Commission	154
Sub-programme on international humanitarian aid	308
Overall	**5,192**

Source: Národný program oficiálnej…, 2007.

Slovak Aid was inundated with applications, and could not approve all of them. Countries receiving the most funding were Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Serbia, and Ukraine. The aid budget also allocated a lump sum to projects in Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

On 10 December 2007 'lovek v ohrození (People in Peril) became the first Slovak NGO to complete a "Framework Partnership Agreement" with the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission and become an official partner. This gives it the right to apply to the Office for financial support. ■

5 Tensions between the Government Vice-Chairman for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities and the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities ended in June 2007 when the Government dismissed the Plenipotentiary and nominated a new one (Hojsík – Lajčáková 2008: 195).

6 "Human Rights Organizations Welcome Call on Governments to End Housing Crisis of Roma in Europe", document published by a group of European NGOs, October 2007.

7 Although the Roma have been recognized as a national minority in Czechoslovakia since 1991, its language is not one the group of languages which can be used at the primary education level.

8 In these segregated classes Romani children, regardless of their individual abilities, receive a substandard education, jeopardizing their future employment prospects, and reinforcing the cycle of Roma marginalization and poverty (Slovakia. Summary: Still separate… 2007: 1).

9 However, of the approximately 2,900 municipalities in Slovakia, Roma are mayors in only 19.

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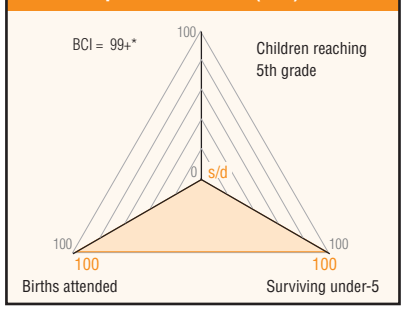
SLOVENIA

"On the erased side of the Alps"

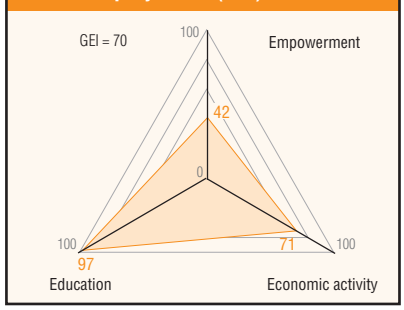
Although political rights are mostly respected, other fundamental rights are consistently violated. Income inequality is growing as poverty spreads among the most vulnerable demographic groups – the elderly and the young, especially children. Employment discrimination against the Roma community remains common. Statistical data and other evidence that would document these issues are manipulated and suppressed. Even though the Constitution bans incitement to ethnic violence, hate-speech is emerging in media and blogs, and no measures have been taken to suppress it.

HUMANITAS Društvo za 'lovekove pravice in 'loveku prijazne dejavnosti - Society for Human Rights and Supportive Action
Manca Poglajen
Rene Suša

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The Government's Statistical Office[1] has calculated that in 2004 approximately 12% of the population was getting by below the relative poverty threshold, set at EUR 5,278 (without social transfers and family income, the poverty rate would have jumped to 25%). The data also revealed yawning demographic disparities: Poverty rates were worst among the unemployed (25%), retired women (21%) and other economically inactive persons; even the self-employed had a surprisingly high rate (13%). Just a year later, the numbers were sharply higher –33% among the unemployed, 25% among retired women and 18% among the self-employed. The Government has not published more recent data.

The 2005 data revealed that poverty among the elderly and children had grown over the previous decade. In families with children where both parents were unemployed, the rate had climbed to 54% by 2004 and 59% in 2005; even among unemployed couples without children the rate was 31%.

NGOs working with marginalized groups and the Human Rights Ombudsman have condemned the social discrimination that leads to high levels of poverty and homelessness among the old, the ill, the Roma, mothers with young children and other social groups with minimal assets.

Tax reform and inflation

In 2005-2006 the Government introduced a series of reforms to simplify the tax system and boost economic growth. After considerable deliberation and public debate, it cut personal income tax brackets down from five, ranging from 16% to 50%, to three, ranging from 16% to 41%. Some of the country's leading economists warned that the reform was too narrow and might accelerate inflation. They were right. Prices leaped 6.4% in between February 2007 and February 2008 up from 2.4% during the previous 12 months. The cost of energy and basic foods (dairy products, flour, oil and fresh fruit) soared between 25-30%. Although the tax reform was not totally to blame, the overall increase was the sharpest for any period since Slovenia began adhering to the Maastricht criteria. The vertiginous climb in the cost of staples undermined the fundamental right of the economically vulnerable, to access to healthy and nutritious food.

Unemployment and workers' rights

Although the government has provided subsidies to employers for hiring the long-term unemployed (290 grants totalling EUR 1.6 million are available for 2007-2008[2]), these incentives are clearly insufficient and fail to address the root causes of long-term joblessness. The Government has already raised the retirement age to 62 for women and 65 for men and is likely to up it further, but this will not solve the critical problems of the aging population and unemployment among the young. Even many who have jobs are angry. Conflicts with private employers and the Government have proliferated over the past two years, building to massive workers' demonstrations in November 2005 and 2007. More strikes were scheduled for 2008.

Suppression of unemployment statistics

In 2006-2007 official statistics showed a precipitous plunge in unemployment, from 91,889 (10.2% of the working population) in 2005 to 85,836 (8.6%) and only 72,573 (7.7%) in May 2007.[3] However, this statistical decrease merely reflects a rise in the number of people dropped from the rolls, as shown by Urša Marn.[4] A total of 22,617 people were cut in 2005 and 29,717 in 2006– an increase of nearly 30% in a single year. In the two years combined, 33,849 people were removed for breach of obligations (18,811 in 2006 alone), 73% of them for failure to report and 11% for refusing work – usually because it was below their qualification level.

Elimination of tens of thousands of people from the unemployment rolls has increased poverty and related problems; many of these workers and their families had depended heavily on social support from the employment office.

Immigrants

Threatening non-citizens with termination of their residency permit if they refuse jobs way below their qualifications constitutes an offence to the dignity of the individual. The unresolved status of non-citizens removed from the Slovenian registry of permanent residents 16 years ago (the so-called "erased") remains a fundamental violation of human rights. At least 18,305 inhabitants lost their status in February 1992; about 1,000 of them remain in limbo, without any status whatsoever. Others have either received citizenship or managed to obtain some other status, typically a residency permit.

The "erased" were primarily people from other republics in the former Yugoslavia (mostly of non-Slovene or mixed ethnicity, including many members of Roma communities), who had been living in Slovenia and had not applied for or had been refused Slovenian citizenship after the country declared its

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Employment Service of Slovenia: Labour Force Data. February 2008.

2 Employment Service of Slovenia: Javno povabilo delodajalcem za izvedbo projektov Usposabljanja na delovnem mestu za leto 2007/2008. December 2007.

3 Employment Service of Slovenia: Labour Force Data. February 2008.

4 Urša Marn: Krivi'en izbris. Kako je Janševa vlada umetno zmanjšala brezposelnost. Mladina, June 2007.

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independence. As a result, they became de facto foreigners or stateless persons illegally residing in Slovenia, also losing their jobs, homes, social security etc. In some cases, the "erasure" was followed by the physical destruction of the identity documents, and others, belonging to the individuals concerned.[5] In July 2005, the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee, while acknowledging the efforts made by Slovenia on this issue, expressed concern for the situation.

In 1999 the Slovenian Constitutional Court ruled that the "erasure", resulting from the failure of legislation to regulate the transitional legal position of citizens of other former Yugoslav republics who had been permanent residents in Slovenia, violated the principle of equality. The legal status of citizens from other former Yugoslav republics was less favourable than that of those who, foreigners before 1991, were automatically granted the right to permanent residence in Slovenia. Since that ruling, no law has been passed to end the situation. Those affected by the "erasure" continue to be denied access to other forms of reparation, including compensation. In his last report,[6] the Slovenian Human Rights Ombudsman underlined that the Court's decision should be respected and the status should have been resolved. The Government's prolonged failure to do so represents a serious failure to observe rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), especially the right to work, social security, health and education.

Roma

The Roma is one of the three ethnic groups specifically mentioned in the Slovenian Constitution, which foresees a special law regulating the special rights of this minority. So far, such law has not been adopted and the specific problems (e. g. education) are dealt with by issue-area laws. Two Roma-related cases exemplify the discrimination and intolerance this group suffers in South-Eastern Slovenia (Dolenjska). During the school year 2004-2005, one elementary school in Dolenjska created a special class for Roma children as non-Roma parents protested, claiming the number of Roma children at this school was "too high". The second was the case of the Strojan family, who had to leave their home in the village Ambrus as a mob of local residents demanded they move, allegedly because of not respecting the law. In order to protect their lives and prevent any violence, they were removed from the family's property to several different locations. In the end, they were granted a permanent home in the outskirts of Ljubljana, in exchange for their property in Ambrus.

Hate-speech

At their meeting with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, held in Ljubljana in January 2008, NGOs pointed to the hate-speech surfacing in Slovene media (for instance, the case of the Strojan family, covered with hear-say and assumptions and insufficient critical insight) and the internet (e-forums, chat-rooms). The hate-speech targets vulnerable groups, such as homosexuals, the Roma, other Non-Slovene ethnicities (mainly people with ancestors in former Yugoslav republics) and foreigners, to name just a few. Although the Constitution (Article 63) bans any incitement to intolerance and discrimination, little or no legal action has been taken.[7]

Asylum seekers

Most of the 18,251 foreigners who immigrated to Slovenia in 2006 came from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. If Slovenia shows one of the lowest refugee recognition rates in Europe (only one asylum seeker was recognized as a refugee in 2006, and two in 2007) the International Protection Act, approved in January 2008, has risen serious human rights concerns. Although Slovene asylum legislation follows the common EU asylum policy, this Act transposes all EU asylum directives, the main one being the restricted access to asylum procedure, caused by accelerated procedures and possibilities to conduct procedures without a personal interview. Even more, basic human rights of migrants are at stake due to extended possibilities of detention and the lack of free legal aid at the first instances of the procedure. At some stages in the new process, appeals do not have a suspenseful effect; thus, even before their case has been evaluated, asylum seekers could find themselves returned to another country where their life or freedom may be threatened. Further, the law foresees the widespread use of detention for asylum seekers, with no exemption for persons with special needs such as families with children.[8]

Mental health legislation

At the meeting with Ms Arbour, NGOs stressed the need for improving the legislation in the field of mental health (treatment in psychiatric institutions, the need for "mobile" psychiatric service, the need to move the focus from mental "illness" to mental "health"). The Ombudsman's February 2008 report underlined the same issue in same issue. Mental illnesses/disorders still have a stigma and are not properly dealt with, neither by financing the medical assistance nor in the provision of drugs. Again, the poorer strata pay the utmost price.

Official development assistance

According to the official statistics, Slovenia's ODA amounted to EUR 35 million or 0.12% of the GDP. Sixty percent or the EUR 21 million ODA was channelled through multilateral aid; EUR 14.8 million of them was the contribution to the EU budget. About EUR 11 million was channelled through bilateral aid, 83% of it to former Yugoslav republics and other East European countries, with Serbia being the largest recipient. According to expert Robin Dewa, at least 20% of the ODA is not quality aid, since administrative work, scholarships for foreign students in Slovenia, provision for asylum seekers and migrants are also included in it. Even more controversial is the inclusion of costs for training troops in Iraq and membership fees in organizations, such as OECD. The actual amount of Slovene ODA is much lower than the official one.[9] ■

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9 Robin Dewa: Preliminary data from Slovene ODA analysis. March 2008, personal communication.

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SOMALIA

New thinking is imperative

Crime, rape and forced recruitment of child soldiers are on the rise in a country already registering some of the worst social, political and economic indicators of exclusion in Africa. Donors and a future national government will have to change in their thinking radically to revitalize the country. Somali political leaders, with the help of all private sectors, donors, multilateral institutions and official and non-governmental organizations should take concerted action to develop the country.

Somali Organization for Community Development Activities (SOCDA)[1]
Mohamed Ali Shidle

Seven hundred thousand civilians fled in 2007 as members of the Council of Somali Islamic Courts (COSIC) fought against the Ethiopian-backed Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) troops in Mogadishu. Neither the COSIC nor the pro-TFG forces had mercy on the general population during the clashes. Both employed mortar attacks and remote-controlled landmines, which killed and maimed vulnerable Somalis.

Human rights abuses are increasing, crime is rampant and ordinary Somalis are murdered every day. Forced recruitment of child soldiers for all types of combat, including the handling of remote-controlled landmines and hand grenades, is growing. Armed groups rape girls of any age and ethnicity (unless they belong to a powerfully armed clan able to retaliate). Journalists and civil society activists have been targeted and brutally assassinated.

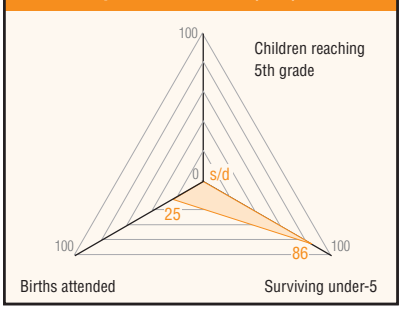
Continued fighting between the opposition groups and the Ethiopian-backed Somali Government troops has greatly exacerbated poverty in Mogadishu. Marginalized groups such as beggars, child collectors of *qat* (a narcotic herb widely chewed in the country), street children, orphans and displaced children cannot feed themselves – or even sleep at night, due to rockets fired at their living quarters in tents, huts or makeshift structures. Future generations will continue to suffer from this genocide disguised as struggle for power.

This report is devoted primarily to describing the human rights abuses and insecurity endured by the inhabitants of South Central Somalia, where the rule of law is nonexistent. In the words of the late President, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, "I left wolves in Mogadishu and I fear their barbarism against innocent peace-loving Somalis."

Human rights violations and insecurity

Criminal activity, including violent crime, has reached an extraordinary level in Mogadishu. Even some Somali policemen commit crimes against humanity.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Some human rights activists, such as Issa Abdi Issa, have been assassinated. Every day youngsters abandon the city, heading for the Gulf Region.

Mrs. Mulki Mohamed Maye, Chairperson of Afgoi Centre for Education and Community Development (ACECOD) in Mogadishu has stated that the tragic war between the rebel groups and the Ethiopian-backed Somali forces has caused the injury or death of many innocent civilians. The more than a million members of disadvantaged minority groups are particularly at risk.

Agriculture has also been heavily damaged, worsening the hardship of the general population. "The climate of insecurity has had an adverse impact on local products," according to Abdifatah Abbas Muridi, a Somali human rights defender from the Lower Shabelle province. "Confrontations between the warring parties make it impossible for poor farmers to till their fields. They have abandoned the productive areas and headed for countries where they will be able to feed their families and live in a peaceful environment – the Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates) and Europe."

"Insecurity has been on the rise since 1991," observed Ibrahim Abdulkadir Osman, known as "Ganga". "This has led to the emergence of warring groups reluctant to engage in peaceful negotiations unless the Ethiopian Army withdraws from Somalia."

Marginalized groups

Even though Somalis are Muslims and Islam prohibits racial discrimination, Somalia has some of the worst social, political and economic indicators of exclusion in Africa. Minority groups such as the Bajuni, the Jareer Weyne, the Eyle, the Reer Hamar and the Bravenese have suffered systematic discrimination for many years, particularly in South Central Somalia. The Bantu, the largest minority, have been in the southeast since 500 BC; now the land they have farmed for generations is being progressively expropriated.

Before the outbreak of the Civil War, two major socio-economic groups, the urban poor and landless farmers, were particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable. Their situation has become even more precarious over the past two decades. An influx of stigmatized sub-groups and others displaced from zones of conflict and natural disaster (drought and floods) has swelled the outskirts of the big cities, particularly Mogadishu. Many marginalized Mogadishu young people (street children, disabled children, displaced and returnee children, children of sex workers and orphans) depend on local philanthropists and charities for their survival.

Islam forbids discrimination and social exclusion, and encourages communal collaboration of all people in human development activities. During the six months of rule by the COSIC, the rights of marginalized groups were respected. Members had an opportunity to experience security and happiness, and were even able to compete with members of other Somali communities. It must be said, however, that ensuring the political, social, cultural and economic rights of minority groups will require an Islamic constitution that enumerates these rights and protects them.

The current Somali Prime Minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, known as "Nur Adde", is committed to ending instability and human rights abuses by building peace and developing both the nation and the country.

Child soldiers in Mogadishu

After the collapse of the central government, child soldiers became a common phenomenon in Somalia. Children of both sexes are recruited by warlords to defend their clan or the warlord's properties. They end up with no alternative to a life of mayhem, knowing nothing other than how to hold a machine gun, pull the trigger and kill people in a brutal manner. Without proper training in using a weapon, they sometimes accidentally kill themselves. When a child soldier is killed or maimed, he or she is simply replaced by another one.

* There are no available data on GEI components.

1 SODCA houses the Secretariat of SW Somalia Coalition. Mohamed Ali Shidle edited the report.

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Potential regionalization of the conflict

The current conflagration was caused by the intervention of Eritrea and Ethiopia in war-torn Somalia's affairs. It seems as if the leaders of these two neighbouring countries are determined to bring about the partition of Somalia into smaller states. However, that desire will not be fulfilled as long as the current generation is on the lookout for Islam. Many people, within and outside Somalia, fear that the fighting could trigger new confrontations and civilian massacres in the capital and escalate to an uncontrollable level, especially since it is being linked to the USA-led "War on Terror".

The rapid rise of the COSIC has threatened the authority of the TFG, which is based in the provincial town of Baidoa, 240 km south of Mogadishu. Nevertheless, it has also opened a 'Window of Hope' for the Somali people. The COSIC appears to be under the guidance and constitution of Islamic teachings. The TFG and its backers, especially Ethiopia, regard the COSIC with suspicion; however international donors have affirmed that they would be ready to rebuild Somalia if the TFG and the COSIC reach a power-sharing arrangement.

Piracy

"Groups of outlaws continue to intercept boats, ships and other vessels along the coast of Somalia to take hostages," according to Mr. Aweys Abdi Abduh, a Somali human rights defender and advocate currently residing in Minnesota, USA. "These gangs, formally called pirates, often demand a huge ransom for the release of the vessels and their crews."

Victims of these attacks include commercial vessels, relief fleets and even fishing trawlers. The International Maritime Board and the International Maritime Organization have issued repeated warnings that the Somali coast is among the most dangerous water routes in the world. Many shipping lines have been scared away; insurance rates have escalated for vessels that still brave those waters. More importantly, chemical poisonous substances have been dumped.

HIV/AIDS

Somalis have benefited from globalization, which in some aspects has transformed the globe into a small village in which the world's population can share information, exchange ideas and engage in activities with one another. Somalis can travel from Mogadishu to Addis Ababa and from there journey across the Mediterranean to Europe, Latin America, USA and Canada.

However, two-thirds of all Somalis coming back to the country in early 2007 were discovered to be carrying HIV/AIDS. The majority was returning from African countries, but one-third came from Western countries. Due to the destruction of the capital's entire infrastructure in the fighting, the diseased are not receiving the medical treatment they require.

The economy and the role of political opposition groups

The collapse of public institutions has battered the economy. Even before the outbreak of Civil War, the country's private sector initiatives and market mechanisms struggled to survive without good governance – an efficient public service, a reliable judicial system and an administration accountable to the public. Since the collapse of the central government in January 1991, bias and self-centred extremist ideology have prevented social, political, economic and behavioural progress.

The country urgently requires measures to foster grassroots, non-governmental and intermediary organizations, as well as nurture – rather than obstruct – the informal sector. This is not an impossible dream. Despite formidable difficulties, civil society organizations emerged after the 1993 arrival of the USA-led international coalition forces to save the starving population, especially in South Central Somalia.

Recommendations

Somalia's continuing economic crisis presents an extraordinary challenge to the development community. Somalis are almost as poor today as they were 48 years ago, when the country achieved independence. Donor agencies and foreign advisers have been heavily involved in the past Somali development efforts; thus, responsibility for the economic crisis is shared. Both donors and a future national government will need to modify their thinking radically if they are to succeed in securing the country's future and prosperity. Somali political leaders, the private sector, donors, multilateral institutions and official and non-governmental organizations can and should join together in concerted effort to develop the country.

That said, the Somalis themselves should shape their country's future; external agencies can only play a supportive role. Therefore, the *Somali Social Watch Coalition* calls upon the warring parties in Mogadishu, the Ethiopian-backed Somali troops and the Council of Somali Islamic Courts, all of which have been vying for power since 2006, to propose reasonable solutions to the current conflict.

Once calm is restored in the capital, a future Somali democratic government will be able to reduce poverty and inequality, especially by increasing the access of the poor to productive assets. A primary mechanism for this will be capacity-building programs for civilians in the Mogadishu and Bossaso regions provided by the Somali Organization for Community Development Activities (SOCDA). SOCDA's mandate is to provide a high level of training to Somali civil society organizations, community-based organizations and networks engaged in social development. ■

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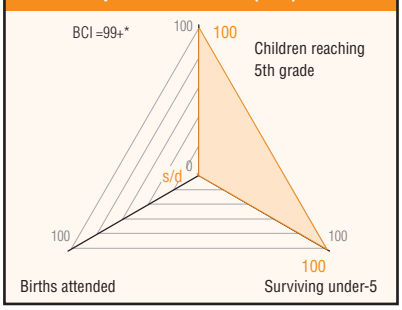
SPAIN

Impending challenges

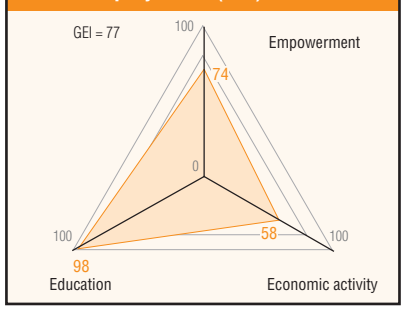
In domestic affairs, the Spanish State must do more to protect immigrant and housing rights. The right to asylum is in crisis; economic, cultural and social rights of immigrants are not respected. Current housing policy is based on economic growth rather than on need and lacks the necessary controls. In foreign policy, Spain must be more forceful in making its voice heard in international fora.

Observatori DESC Barcelona
Ada Colau
Intermon Oxfam
Isabel Kreisler
Plataforma 2015 y más
Pablo J. Martínez Osés

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



This report is based on contributions by several social organizations[1] and is divided into two parts. The first discusses the domestic situation and offers policy recommendations designed to promote the rights of the immigrant population and housing rights. The second focuses on promoting human rights internationally.

Externalization of immigrants

Each year 600,000 immigrants arrive in Spain. The root cause is systematic infringement of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in which the first article establishes the right of peoples to economic, social and cultural development, as well as the right to control their natural resources.

The European Union (EU), together with the Spanish State, have responded with repatriation methods that are sometimes unlawful. Erika Feller, UN Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, declared on her visit to the Canary Islands that the main objective of national and European fleets controlling irregular immigration should be to transport people rescued at sea to 'safe places' and not force them to return to their respective points of departure. However the 'historical' policy of the EU, with Spain in the forefront, has been to construct detention centres in third countries, thus *externalizing* immigration and asylum policies.

With European funding, in April 2006 35 Spanish engineers opened a 'jail' in Nuandibu, Mauritania, with a capacity of 250 people. The Spanish Government plans to build or open new 'jails' in Mauritania and Senegal. In giving control of the immigration process to countries with serious human rights deficiencies, externalization through creation of internment centres abroad violates human rights in a variety of ways.

The right to asylum crisis

The Centres for Internment of Foreigners, which are under the Ministry of the Interior, are the clearest expression of the punitive and intimidating characteristics of the legislation for dealing with foreigners lacking documentation required to reside in the country. People interned in one of these centres after being intercepted by the police do not have prison status. They must remain there while waiting for their expulsion process to be completed.

Contrary to regulations, the centres maintain their almost penitentiary character. Interns live in deplorable conditions. They are deprived of information and experience persistent problems in obtaining access to and visits from family and legal counsel (as this report was being completed, five interns went on a hunger strike to secure their rights).

The 2007 report of the Spanish Committee to Assist Refugees (CEAR in Spanish) describes in detail the difficulties they have encountered in advising and providing assistance to people in the centres, which constitute impediments to exercising the right to asylum. This trend reveals a crisis in the right to asylum, not only in terms of the large numbers of people involved, but also in the limits these policies place on access to asylum and respect for its guarantees.

CEAR and other social organizations continue to collect testimony on practices that violate legal standards, including expulsion to countries from which migrants did not originate. Many francophone Africans are deported to Senegal, while anglophones are sent to Nigeria (countries that have signed agreements regarding the expulsion of their citizens). This practice has been denounced by Médecins Sans Frontières on several occasions.

Discrimination against migrants

Immigrants outside the detention centres suffer from discrimination and rights violations, including difficulties in finding adequate lodging, legal insecurity when they do and the high cost of rent. These difficulties increase their dependence on the resources of the welcome system, which is increasingly saturated, and has lead to the development of ghettos in most cities.

Despite legal advances over the last few years that have made it easier to obtain work permits, immigrants seeking equal access to the labour market are still plagued by obstacles. Foreigners are often shunted to occupations with harsher working conditions and poor wages. This condemns them to the lower strata of society.

Immigrant women face triple jeopardy, as immigrants, workers and women. Their access to the job market is severely restricted, and they find it hard to obtain permanent employment. Many are forced to take domestic service jobs. Although employment discrimination is against the law, on numerous occasions foreign workers who have reported discriminatory behaviour have been unable to win redress, stymied by the difficulty of getting proof, the indifference of the authorities or the absence of effective mechanisms for obtaining justice.

The right to housing: an impending challenge

After an official visit to Spain, in March 2008 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Miloon Kothari, presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council warning that Spain was suffering a serious housing crisis and urging the Government to take strong measures to regulate the market for land and housing.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 The complete reports are available at: <www.descweb.org>, <www.intermonoxfam.org> and <www.2015ymas.org>.

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International treaties tend to link the 'adequacy' of a home to its 'affordability'. Institutions like the UN have consistently reminded governments that no one should have to spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In Spain the percentage is frequently far higher, particularly among more vulnerable groups: older people, the young, women and immigrants.

In general terms, it may be said that in recent decades Spanish housing policies have been characterized by:

- Privileging private property as the principal tenancy system through tax exemptions for buyers. In Europe as a whole, social housing has been the most affordable form of habitation. In Spain, less than 2% of the population lives in them.
- Continuous and indiscriminate encouragement of private housing construction, regardless of the locality, how it will be used or its contribution to meeting basic residential needs. In the last few years Spain has built 40% of all homes constructed in the EU, however at the end of 2007 the Ministry of Housing calculated that more that 30% of them do not serve as a primary residence (they were either empty apartments or second homes). In addition, much of the construction has been ecologically unsustainable. New residential areas have destroyed green spaces. They are often far from work locations, contributing to increases in traffic and requiring expensive investments in infrastructure such as highways, water mains and electricity lines.

This evolution and the transformation of dwellings from user goods into investment goods have produced high rates of speculation, corruption and harassment of tenants. Factors that undermine the right to adequate housing include:

- A shortage of affordable social housing. State residential construction most frequently takes the form of Officially Protected Housing. However these dwellings are not only insufficient in number – amounting to only 8% of total new residences – they have been used to strengthen the construction industry rather than to guarantee the right to housing. This is evident in the exclusive reliance on new units rather than renovations. Rent protection in the new housing units ends after 30 years in most cases. In addition, even though they are sold at below-market prices, the most vulnerable groups still cannot afford them.
- A lack of adequate controls over the market and the right to private property. The State's failure to protect the right to housing has had several consequences:
  - An increase in purchase price. Between 1995 and 2007, the price of housing jumped 202% while salaries increased only 30%. Meanwhile, mortgage loans and their interest rates soared. The average mortgage rose from EUR 98,700 in 2003 to EUR 147,268 in March 2007; total household indebtedness climbed to EUR 796.42 billion, according to the Bank of Spain, 84.5% of GDP.
  - An increase in rents. Rents also went up far more rapidly than the consumer price index. The current Law for Urban Renting establishes a 5-year contract. When it expires, the owner can refuse to renew it or raise the rent indiscriminately. These conditions, added to the lack of genuine social housing, leave many tenants vulnerable to eviction or even complete homelessness.

The fact that dwellings are no longer user goods but have become investment goods has produced high rates of speculation, corruption and harassment of tenants.

Economic crisis and new interventions

In mid-2007 demand for unsubsidized housing began to falter. In 2008, saturation in the real estate market was compounded by the international financial crisis. In this context, the Government announced a series of measures to support the housing market.

Most prominently, it has introduced legislation to encourage people to rent. However cash aid is limited to young people under 30, it is inadequate, and applicants must meet restrictive qualifications. Other vulnerable groups such as older people and immigrants are not eligible at all.

On the assumption that owners of the more than three million empty dwellings do not rent them out of fear that tenants will fall into arrears (despite official data indicating that this is true in less than 2% of cases), the Government has changed the State Housing Plan to allow subsidies of up to EUR 6,000 when an empty dwelling is rented. This benefit, which is not subject to requirements such as renovation, subsidizes sectors with a low social priority, and 'rewards' owners who have not been occupying their property.

These rental subsidies have gone hand in hand with measures to speed up the eviction process. 'Express eviction' is facilitated by newly created special courts and a reduction in procedural guarantees for the tenant.

The Government has also authorized construction of 1.5 million new Officially Protected Housing units, predominantly under private ownership in new urban developments. Genuine social housing, in contrast, would emphasize use of empty dwellings, renovation and innovative forms of tenancy that guarantee security and affordable expenses. These might include social rent, tenancy transfer or life tenancy. Without this kind of reorientation, housing policies will continue to be shaped by the requirements of economic growth rather than satisfaction of popular needs. The Government also reformed the mortgage law in December 2007 to limit potential financial turbulence. However most of the measures in this legislation are designed to assist banks that experience financial difficulties, not indebted families.

To sum up, state responses to the housing crisis primarily help promoters, owners and credit institutions. Government housing policy has not yet established adequate controls over the real estate and financial markets, nor on antisocial uses of the right to property such as unoccupied dwellings, failure to meet renovation requirements and tenant harassment. Measures adopted so far will not ameliorate the housing crisis generated by the absence of affordable housing.

The promotion of human rights in the multilateral field

Since 2004, 'active, selective and strategic multilateralism' has been the main objective of Spanish international cooperation. In 2006 multilateral Spanish aid rose 47%. Spain's financial commitment to the multilateral system, particularly the UN system, is undeniable. The Fund for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that Spain established together with the UNDP and its contribution of about USD 700 million are proof of this, although it remains to be seen if the fund will be implemented in a way that ensures financial sustainability. Also significant is the increase in Spanish contributions to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, which was established to ensure a rapid international community response to humanitarian crises. For 2008 Spain has promised a contribution of EUR 20 million, 30% more than in the previous year. This increase makes Spain the sixth largest contributor to the Fund.

However Spain must go beyond financial support and play a larger role in the promotion of human rights and human development in the multilateral field. It must be said in this regard that in 2007 the voice of the Spanish Government was heard in some areas related to human rights, including negotiations on the UN Arms Trade Treaty.

In 2006, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of establishing an international treaty for the control of the arms trade. In 2007 the Spanish Parliament passed a Law on Foreign Trade in Defence and "Double Use" Material that included a provision urging the Government to take an aggressive position in favour of an "effective and legally binding" international arms trade treaty as a member of the UN Group of Government Experts. Through this stance, the Government is showing that the country is up to the challenges that must be met in promoting development and human rights at the international level, although assessment of the Law must await its implementation.

During the next few years international fora will make crucial decisions on a range of issues concerning social development and human rights, such as how to achieve the MDGs and putting the Responsibility to Protect principle into practice. Those who have the power to establish priorities among these objectives in the international agenda will also have the duty to carry them out. It is vital for Spain to make itself heard on these matters more and more emphatically. ■

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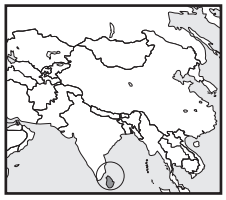
SRI LANKA

Zero poverty reduction and mounting human rights violations



By the beginning of 2008 it was evident that the economic policies adopted over the last 30 years have deprived low-income citizens of their most fundamental rights, including the right to a decent diet. These policies, designed to intensify income disparities as a means of promoting growth, were implemented under the guidance and pressure of international financial institutions. Their implementation has contributed to massive violations of human rights. Today, the very survival of almost half the country's population is under threat.

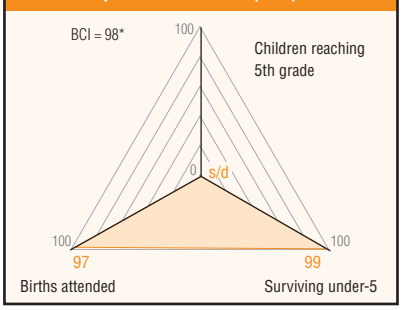
Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR)
Law & Society Trust (LST)
Sarath Fernando

The most visible and discussed violations of human and democratic rights are disappearances and killings, accompanied by suppression of media and their staff, including several killings and disappearances. These violations have increased significantly, particularly with the escalation of the war in the North since the Government decided to abandon the ceasefire agreement.

In addition to these glaring violations of civil rights, for the past three decades successive governments have pursued economic policies that have violated other basic rights. Prior to 1977, Sri Lanka embraced an economic model that emphasized social welfare, keeping income disparities to a minimum and providing support for small-scale farmers producing food for the domestic market. In contrast, for the last 30 years the country has pursued economic policies determined by large companies, a small wealthy elite and top governmental advisors who have been appointed with the approval of the international financial institutions and other foreign aid providers. Their "export-oriented growth model" has informed budgets, trade agreements, allocation of finances for infrastructure development, tax concessions to foreign and local investors, privatization of local and international trade and even essential services such as health and education, as well as borrowing to provide facilities for the rich. While social welfare and food subsidies have been cut, salaries of cabinet ministers and parliamentarians have been steadily increased to win their support for plans and decisions benefiting foreign investors and the domestic elite. Although the country claims to be a democracy, once a government is elected poorer citizens have no say in its economic plans and decisions.

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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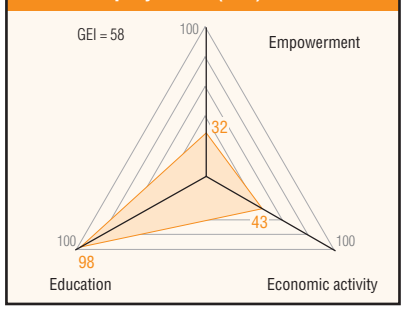

An undernourished population

Food price inflation currently exceeds 60%. The average person in Sri Lanka eats a little more than 100 kg of rice a year; the average family needs about 40 kg per month. Buying it costs a family LKR 2,400 (USD 22.35) a month, at a time when 2.1 million families have an income less than LKR 1,500 (USD 14) per month, according to official figures. Even if their income were double that, after taking possible unrecorded incomes into account, they still wouldn't be able to buy enough rice to meet their needs, let along pay for anything else. The cost of other basic foods has also soared in recent months. Prices of bread and wheat flour have jumped to LKR 40/lb and LKR 75/kg respectively, leading to a 60% plunge in their consumption in the country as a whole – 90% in rural areas. So far, the Government has been very pleased with this "reduction in consumption," since it reduces the food import bill. As rice becomes unaffordable, a similar reduction among poor people will reduce their basic food intake below the minimum necessary to survive. Even now, only half the country's 20 million people consume the minimum daily requirement of 2,030 kilocalories. In a report entitled *Poverty Indicators - Household Income and Expenditure Survey - 2006/07*, released in March 2008, the Government's Department of Census and Statistics reported that "an average poor person in Sri Lanka receives only 1,696 kilocalories per day while a non-poor person receives 2,194 kilocalories."[1]

According the UN World Food Programme (WFP), the highest rates of under-nourishment are in the north and east, as well as parts of the dry zone towards the centre of the island. "These areas are some of the poorest on the island, with very high malnutrition rates, poor education levels and poor sanitation, all of which contribute to malnutrition," declared Jean-Yves Lequime, deputy head of WFP in Sri Lanka. The rural poor need to consume a greater number of calories than the average person, and most are getting less. "Especially in the agricultural areas, they engage with heavy work, so they need more calories," explained Gordon Weiss, chief of communications at the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital. "Most of the agricultural-based areas are considered poor areas."

Child nutrition

"Sri Lanka has a significantly higher child underweight rate than would be expected on the basis of its [annual] per capita GDP [of USD 1,599]," according to the WFP's Lequime. "Indeed, the rate may be three times as high as would be expected from a country with Sri Lanka's level of infant mortality." Infant mortality may soon rise dramatically: 14% of children under five show signs of acute underweight and chronic underweight, while 29% are underweight, according to UNICEF. Last year's vertiginous climb in food prices portends far worse data in the months to come.

Remittances and semi-slavery

The primary sources of foreign income are remittances from workers who have gone to countries in the Middle East in search of employment as cheap labour in export-oriented garment factories. Recent governments have permitted and even encouraged vicious exploitation of these workers while ignoring the degrading and insecure working and living

1 Extracts taken from IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks) website: <www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=77985>.

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conditions they must endure. In addition, about a million rural workers are kept in conditions of semi-slavery, which the plantation economy requires to maintain its rate of profit and competitiveness in the international marketplace. In spite of a great deal of struggle by the plantation workers, their daily wage remains LKR 200 (USD 1.86) More than half of them are women.

Economic failure, uprisings and war

The failure of the growth model is dragging the country down into an economic abyss. Absolutely none of the promised "trickle down" or reduction of poverty has occurred over the past quarter-century. On the contrary, economic and social disparities have increased. The breakdown in rural agriculture – a direct result of the termination of supportive government policies – has increased farmer debt enormously, leading to suicides.

During the first 17 years of these economic policies, governments enforced them through extreme repression. All opposition and resistance were suppressed. Trade unions were crushed. Political parties that criticized the policies were banned. Political victimization of those who disagreed became common practice. Official poverty alleviation programmes were used to compel political support. These programmes, such as the Janasaviya and Samurdhi movement, provided very small financial grants to families with incomes under USD 0.50 a day. To be entitled to a subsidy, families had to submit to the decisions of the party in power, disseminate its political propaganda and participate in its election campaigns. These programmes effectively erased the political freedom of 2.1 million families, about half the population.

Under these conditions, rural youth are finding it more and more difficult to make a living in agriculture or other rural livelihoods. Many have responded by intensifying their efforts to obtain an education and find employment elsewhere. However, opportunities outside the rural economy have not expanded to absorb them. One consequence of their frustration has been a series of armed uprisings, beginning with one in 1971.

The paucity of opportunities for education or employment in industry or services was also the basis for the Northern youth uprising. The participants believed that they were the victims of ethnic discrimination, and demanded for a separate state. This conflict expanded into a war in the North and East that has lasted nearly 30 years, caused well over 60,000 deaths and generated more than 1.5 million refugees.

Brushing aside evidence that its neoliberal economic policies were causing widespread strife, the Government continued to pursue them. This contributed to another armed uprising, led by youths in the rest of the country (the Southern Sinhala majority areas) between 1987 and 1990. Their attempted to seize state power and establish a different economic and political system resulted in 60,000 deaths over two years.

The Government has used war and its declared commitment to defeating terrorism militarily to take power and retain it, while adopting economic policies that are devastating the poorer sectors of society. It uses militarism to win as much support as possible from parties and groups, including those who adhere to chauvinist ideologies. By manipulating the very real fear and insecurity, primarily in the Sinhala majority areas, inspired by the continuing war and Tamil Tiger attacks on civilians, the Government has been able to overcome its loss of popularity and justify all of its other violations and suppression of rights, despite the tremendous economic burdens its policies are inflicting on a majority of the population.[2]

A government that adopts more people-friendly economic policies will be in a far stronger position to convince the people of Sri Lanka that a negotiated settlement of the war and the ethnic conflict is the best route to peace and prosperity.

Contradicting the will of the people

The comprehensive loss of human rights, including the right to food and decent livelihood, was a direct result of government polices pushed by the wealthy local elite as well as the international financial institutions and global economic powers – the so called "donors" – and implemented despite the repeatedly expressed desires of the majority of the country's population for a different, more humane economic model.

This becomes very clear when we look at the promises that political parties made during elections – and abandoned once in office. Both Chandrika Bandaranayake and Mahinda Rajapakse, during their presidential campaigns in 1994 and 2005, respectively, promised to halt privatization and other policies demanded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, once in power they blatantly violated their campaign promises and pursued the same policies they had denounced, attempting privatization of water, education and health, and allocating even more money to infrastructure investments designed to make the country attractive to foreign investors.

During her election campaign, Chandrika denounced land ownership laws advocated by the World Bank to facilitate a "free land market" as "killer policies". Quite justifiably. These proposed reforms in land ownership structure envisaged a rural transformation that would make 20% of the total population landless and destitute, forcing them to migrate to urban areas. After becoming President, Chandrika tried to introduce these same policies. The present Government is about to implement a similar *Bim Saviya* (Strength of Land) programme that will give tradable land titles to 1.2 million families.

In addition, the Government has massively increased the already huge foreign debt burden by allocating LKR 389 billion (USB 3.6 billion) of borrowed money to build infrastructure, at a time when the World Bank itself has declared that it no longer approves of this type of loan.

Preventing people from using their creativity to overcome hunger and poverty in order to please global economic powers that seek to extract the greatest possible profit is a violation of rights – the worst of all, since it is linked to violations of other rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to social security, the right to organize and the right to live in security. Sri Lanka has enormous potential if it adopted a "people-friendly" and "environmentally-friendly" strategy for reducing hunger, poverty and social disparities. This potential is currently being ignored, along with popular efforts to realize it. ■

2 Another illustration of the manipulation of a catastrophe against those who suffered it more directly is what happened with the December 2004 Tsunami. While generous donations from all over the world were received to assist the victims, these revenues were diverted to building tourism and modernizing towns, in the process displacing the people it was supposed to help and depriving them of their livelihood as small-scale fisherfolk.

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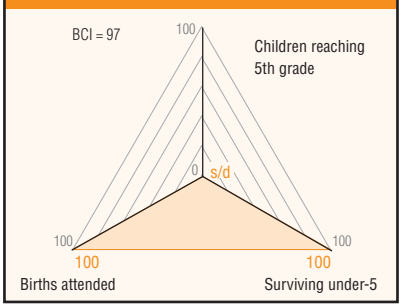
SWITZERLAND

Inadequate commitment

One of the world's richest countries, Switzerland falls woefully short when it comes to honouring international commitments. The country provides meagre development aid, does not take part in efforts to develop innovative global funding mechanisms and, while remaining a magnet for funds derived from tax evasion, the country is not cooperative in matters of international tax policy. It is important that Switzerland change its tax policy in order to help developing countries generate resources for development.

Alliance Sud[1]
Bruno Gurtner

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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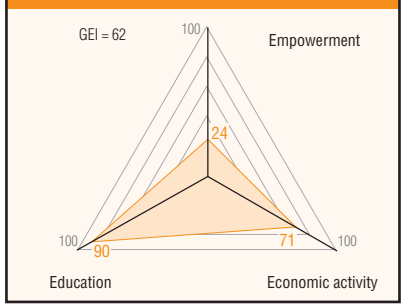

The Swiss economy performed impressively during the recent global upswing, according to the International Monetary Fund 2008 annual review of the country's economic and monetary policy.[2] Indeed, Switzerland has ridden the global economic expansion with much success. Its economic growth rate exceeded the Euro area average in the past four years. Exports and imports showed strong growth. The current account surplus reached 17% of gross domestic product. Inflation remained low, and unemployment fell to 2.6%. On balance, public budgets (confederation, cantons, municipalities) are showing considerable surpluses and debts have been reduced.

True, the Swiss economy has been affected by the financial crisis emanating from the United States – UBS and Credit Suisse have taken considerable losses and will pay fewer taxes – and growth forecasts are only cautiously optimistic. But the level of satisfaction among working people is higher than ever, even while income inequality has grown, the number of welfare recipients is still high and social welfare benefits are being quietly curtailed. The new poverty is affecting young families in particular, and especially households headed by single parents. The situation is tough for undocumented immigrants. Minimum daily allowances are being used to make remaining in Switzerland unattractive for rejected asylum seekers.

As a development agency, Alliance Sud does not address questions of poverty within the country.[3] In what follows we focus on how Switzerland practices solidarity with the world's poor.

ODA target still not met

Switzerland has never officially recognized the international goal – endorsed by the 2002 Monterrey Consensus – of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) to be allocated to official development assistance (ODA). At the 1991 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Switzerland promised to increase aid to 0.4%. At the September 2005 UN Millennium Summit, it held out the prospect of raising its ODA after 2008. Swiss NGOs and the Government's Advisory Committee for International Development have repeatedly called for aid to be increased to 0.5% by 2010.

In 2003 Switzerland's aid reached 0.39%, rising to 0.4% one year later and to 0.44% in 2005. Yet this increase was essentially attributable to substantial debt relief (mainly for Nigeria and Iraq) and to spending connected to asylum seekers. Debt relief has been computed as aid since 2003 and asylum spending since 2004. In 2006, the figure fell back to 0.39% and in 2007 to 0.37%. If asylum-related spending and debt relief are subtracted, Switzerland's aid allocation comes to just 0.31%, equal to the 1990 level.

With its mid-term financing plan, Switzerland is committed to reaching 0.4% by 2015. This year, Parliament will have to vote on the proposed new development cooperation strategy, based on three pillars: poverty reduction, human security, and development-friendly globalization. Under the proposal, the level of ODA would stay at 0.4% of GNI, but parliamentary motions for an increase are being drafted. With regard to current discussions on Financing for Climate Change (mitigation and adaptation) and Financing for Development, the Government is urging development partners to distinguish between the two and to ensure that an increase of available funds for climate change does not come at the cost of lower ODA.

Alliance Sud launched a campaign jointly with some 70 relief agencies, environmental protection, youth and women's organizations, trade unions and churches to raise Swiss ODA to 0.7% of GNI by 2015. A petition was signed by *over 200,000* persons and delivered to Parliament and Government at the end of May.

Aid effectiveness and financing for development

Switzerland has reiterated its commitment to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) aid effectiveness agenda as the overall framework in which to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It acknowledges the need to align aid with national development priorities and poverty reduction strategies and utilize country systems for implementation. It has urged developing countries to continue to improve democratic governance and public administration, making government more responsive and transparent. The country strongly advocates the integration of the non-OECD donors into discussions on aid effectiveness and recommends coordination and information sharing between the Accra meeting on aid effectiveness in September and the Doha meeting on financing for development in November-December 2008.

Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, IDA and AfDF replenishment

Switzerland long hesitated to commit definitively to the second tranche of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) and the internationally agreed replenishment of the International Development Association arm of the World Bank (IDA) and the African Development Fund (AfDF), and decided in January 2008 to only partially support replenishment. This meant a reduction in Switzerland's IDA burden sharing from 2.26% to 2.1%, and from 3.38% to 2.3%

1 Swiss Alliance of Development Organizations: Swissaid, Catholic Lenten Fund, Bread for All, Helvetas, Caritas, Swiss Interchurch Aid.

2 Switzerland: 2008 Article IV Consultation, Concluding Statement of the IMF Mission Bern, 17 March 2008, <www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2008/031708a.htm>.

3 For a good overview, see the Caritas yearbook on the social situation in Switzerland: Caritas, 2008 Sozial-Almanach, Luzern, December 2007 (in German only).

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for the AfDF – a saving of CHF 138 million (USD 125 million). For the coming three years, the IDA will still receive more funds from Switzerland than it did in the previous years. In contrast, the Swiss contribution to the AfDF will be CHF 8 million (USD 7.25 million) less than it was before. To make up the shortfall, half of the additional funding required will be offset against bilateral aid, while the remainder will be funded from the overall budget. Thus, it is clear that Switzerland's second contribution to the MDRI will not be entirely in addition to other development assistance.

Switzerland, the world treasurer

The Swiss Financial Centre continues to manage one-third of all assets held outside their countries of origin, where a large part of them are not properly taxed, and Switzerland has not changed anything in the configuration of this centre.[4] The Swiss National Bank puts the security holdings of foreign private customers as of end-2007 at CHF 1,036 billion[5] (USD 937.58 billion). In addition, there are trust funds worth some CHF 328 billion (USD 296.84 billion). Most of the balance sheet liabilities to foreign customers (CHF 629 billion – USD 569.25 billion) must also pertain to private customers. Lastly, some part of the assets of domiciled companies owned by foreigners must be added, although they appear in Swiss National Bank statistics as domestic customers.

International estimates of these private foreign security holdings are even higher. The Merrill Lynch/Cap Gemini 2007 World Wealth Report estimates overall assets held abroad by private customers at USD 12,400 billion; the Boston Consulting Group estimates USD 5,700 billion. It is generally agreed that about one-third of this amount is managed by the Swiss Financial Centre.

Funds currently managed by Switzerland should therefore fall somewhere between CHF 2,500 billion and CHF 4,000 billion (USD 2,262-3,620 billion), one-third to one-half from developing countries. It is estimated that 50% to 90% of this amount either has not been taxed at all or not properly taxed in the countries of origin. The treasuries of developing countries are therefore foregoing billions in revenue that cannot be used to fund the MDGs.

The need for a new tax policy

Switzerland is reluctant and uncooperative in matters of international tax policy. In 2005, the country rejected proposals for global taxes and did not join the Leading Group on Solidarity Levies to Fund Development.[6] It still refuses to join the Global Forum on Taxation, in which OECD countries work out binding rules jointly with offshore centres, for example, for cross-border tax information sharing. It has not signed the joint Council of Europe/OECD Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. The ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption too has been postponed indefinitely.

Alliance Sud advocates that Switzerland adopt an international tax policy that is less harmful to countries in the South and instead helps them to generate internal resources for development. Such a policy must also include combating tax and capital flight. In particular, Switzerland should do away with its distinction between tax fraud and tax evasion, and also provide legal and official assistance in cases of tax evasion. Switzerland has in fact concluded double taxation agreements with many developing countries, yet it does not provide them with the same access to information it provides to the European Union countries and the United States.

It is only in the recovery of illegally acquired public assets that Switzerland contributes actively in different forms. The country supports the joint UN and the World Bank StAR Initiative (Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative) and also launched and funds the International Centre for Asset Recovery, assisting developing countries in capacity building and the establishment of institutions to make effective use of international legal assistance in criminal matters related to the recovery of stolen assets.

Switzerland returned more than CHF 400 million (USD 362 million) to Nigeria's central budget and signed an agreement with Angola for the repatriation of USD 21 million identified and blocked in Swiss bank accounts. However, NGOs in Nigeria and Switzerland were critical of the inadequate monitoring of the restitution of funds to Nigeria, which provided no certainty that they would go towards social development. These funds should be allocated to social and humanitarian programmes under the supervision of the field office of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Innovative funding

Switzerland acknowledges the potential of certain innovative global funding sources and the need for further research into their feasibility and applicability. The country emphasizes, however, that funds collected through innovative financing schemes should be disbursed through existing multilateral institutions and mechanisms.

In sum, if Switzerland is to become a genuine development partner, in line with the EU countries whose growth it equals or surpasses, it needs to revisit its long-standing position on international tax policy and adhere to international commitments on the financing of IDA, MDRI and AfDF. Subject to its internal politics it should also commit to raising the percentage of GNI it allocates to ODA to conform to European standards. ■

4 *Social Watch Report 2006*, chapter on Switzerland, p. 246 ff.

5 Swiss National Bank (SNB), *Banks in Switzerland* 2007 edition, Zurich 2008, available from <www.snb.ch>.

6 *Social Watch Report 2006*, *op. cit.*

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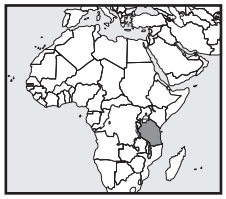
TANZANIA

New hope for stalled economic, social and cultural rights?



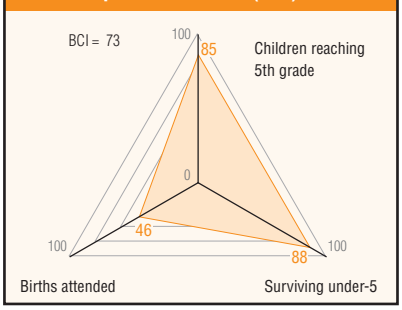
Ensuring economic, social and cultural rights is paramount to achieving all human rights under the Universal Declaration. In Tanzania, implementation of these rights remains stalled. It is therefore essential that the Government, jointly with civil society, implement effective measures towards the realization of these rights for all. Recent developments indicate there may be some hope.

SAHRiNGON Tanzania Chapter
Rehema Kerefu Sameji
Richard Shilamba
Armando Swenya

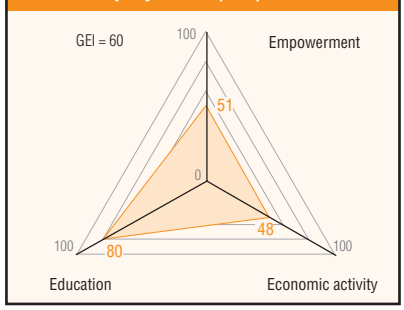
The 10th of December is the Anniversary of the UN General Assembly adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This year on 10 December, members of SAHRiNGON-Tanzania Chapter will be joining thousands of human rights organizations around the world to honour the anniversary and reflect on the extent to which economic, social and cultural rights – milestones for the realization of all human rights – have been respected, protected and fulfilled.

Examining various governmental and non-governmental reports touching different aspects on human rights in Tanzania, SAHRiNGON-Tanzania Chapter members note that while the implementation of almost all economic, social and cultural rights remains stalled, there is emerging hope of recovery, as portrayed below.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Improving international aid delivery and nationally owned development

International development cooperation has helped little to maximize the ability of all people to enjoy full economic, social and cultural rights in Tanzania. More than 60% of development aid from bilateral and multilateral partners is not destined to meet real and urgent peoples' needs. Instead, these huge aid flows cover the partners' administrative and technical assistance costs, as well as debt relief and purchases from their overseas companies, industries and markets.[1] In addition, policy conditionalities have led to the lay-off of many workers, the sell off of local companies to foreigners, cuts in nurse and teacher salaries and subsidies to poor farmers, and the privatization of essential services such as health care, electricity and water provision.

There is, however, some hope. In December 2006 for example, the Government, together with 19 development partners, signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing these 20 countries and their institutions to implement the Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania. Among other things, the strategy requires development partners to increase official development assistance and to channel it through the General Budget Support, as the preferred modality. The strategy emphasizes the need for government leadership and national ownership of development priorities and the choice of technical assistance, without unnecessary influence.[2]

Curtailing counterfeit drugs

Globalization has turned Tanzania into a market for fake pharmaceutical drugs, including counterfeit versions of antibiotics, hormones, steroids, and anti-malaria, anti-cancer and anti-viral drugs. In 2005, sales of fake drugs worldwide exceeded USD 3.5 billion per year, and could reach USD 75 billion by 2010 if action is not taken.[3] Anti-malaria drugs are particularly deadly: a million people die from this disease each year; an estimated one-fifth of these deaths could be avoided, according to the World Health Organization, if drugs used to treat them were genuine.

The Ministry of Health is developing a plan to ensure that Tanzania's health care system meets professional standards and obtains good clinical outcomes, and that services are appropriate to patient needs.[4] This brings hope that the tide of fake pharmaceutical drugs may be turning.

Addressing public resource embezzlement

Embezzlement of resources allocated for achieving economic, social and cultural rights is another major concern. According to the State House Press Statement on 9 January 2008, audits of the External Payment Arrears Account conducted between September and December 2007, showed that payments of USD 116 million were made to 22 domestic companies under the External Payments Arrears scheme in 2005. Some USD 79 million was paid to 13 companies based on fake and forged documentation. The other nine companies were paid the equivalent of USD 37 million without any justification or supporting documentation. Reportedly, two companies, Rashtas (T) Ltd and G&T International Ltd were not even listed on the books of the Business Registration and Licensing Agency.

A Parliamentary Special Committee reported in January 2008 that the Ministry of Energy and Minerals contracted with a non-existent Richmond Development Company Ltd to supply electricity; this obliged the Tanzania Electrical Supply Company to increase electricity prices to consumers in order to cover daily payments of USD 121,811 to this non-existent company.[5]

The country has some reason to hope that further embezzlement of public funds can be prevented and those involved will be punished. In 2005 the Government made an emphatic pledge that it will deal relentlessly with those who embezzle public resources.[6] Since then it has set up the Prevention and

1 Social Watch (2006). *Impossible architecture. Why the financial structure is not working for the poor and how to redesign it for equity and development*, Montevideo: Instituto del Tercer Mundo, p. 18.

2 Speech to the National Assembly by former Minister of Finance, Hon. Zakia Hamdani Meghji on estimated revenue and expenditure for financial year 2007/2008, 14 June 2007.

3 A. Adam Ihucha, "Africa major dump of fake medicine" in The Guardian, 16 July 2007.

4 <www.moh.go.tz/index.php>

5 Report in Parliament in January 2008 on the circumstances that enabled a non-existent Richmond Development Company from Houston, Texas, USA, to win an electrical energy tender.

6 Speech to the Tanzania Parliament by President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete on 30 December 2005.

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Combating of Corruption Bureau, and both the prime minister and two other ministers have resigned in a demonstration of government accountability. A Government investigation of the External Payment Arrears scandal is ongoing.

Promised reports to monitoring bodies

Timely submission of government reports to UN monitoring bodies is essential if they are to assist states parties to effectively respect, protect and fulfil the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights. In ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1976, Tanzania committed itself to submitting an initial report within two years and a follow-up report every five years thereafter. Although the Government submitted its initial report on 10 September 1979, it has not submitted one since – a 29-year delay.7

Some hope emerged in 2007, when parliamentarians asked the Government to explain its delay in submitting the reports. In response, the Government promised that a combined periodic report under the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was to be prepared and submitted to the Committee by the end of 2008.[8]

Unlocking social security coverage for the majority

An estimated 900,000 people – only 5% of the Tanzanian labour force of 18 million – are covered by social security legislation. Former Minister of Finance Zakhia Meghji declared that only 2.7% of the total population were covered, emphasizing that "efforts are needed to reach the remaining 93% of the Tanzanian population."9

The overwhelming majority of the country's population still depend on the traditional extended family for social security, a system that takes care of those family members in need but is getting weaker every day, owing to continuing urbanization and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, which have frayed the traditional social fabric and undermined access to public services, especially by disadvantaged groups.

There is, however, reason to hope that social security coverage may be extended to the majority, including the large number of people working in agriculture and the informal sector. The Community Health Fund Act (CHF) of 2001 created a separate district-level prepayment scheme designed to provide primary health care services for the rural population and the informal sector. A household joins by paying an annual membership fee, which guarantees unlimited access to outpatient services at CHF facilities. Families that cannot afford to pay the annual membership fee are supposed to obtain a CHF Card without charge.

Increasing rights to adequate housing

An estimated 70% of Tanzania's urban population are considered squatters, living in 'illegal' areas that have not been planned or surveyed. In many rural districts, between 90 and 95% of the houses have earth floors, although in extreme cases floors are made of animal dung. Rural districts have the highest percentage of houses with poor roofing materials (grass, coconut leaves, plastic sheets, etc). The proportion of inadequate housing in rural districts is estimated to be as high as 90% in Mkuranga; 87% in Kishapu, Kilwa and Lindi; 86% in Igunga, Sumbawanga rural and Dodoma urban; 85% in Uyui and Nkasi and 84% in Urambo and Sikonge. In urban districts the proportion of inadequate housing range from 0% in Moshi and to 2% in Arusha, 3% in Kinondoni, Ilala, Rombo and Mbeya, 4% in Bukoba, 6% in Temeke, and 8% in Morogoro, Moshi and Musoma.[10]

Recently, however, the Government adopted the Property and Business Formalization Programme, a community empowerment initiative to facilitate the transformation of property and business entities in the informal sector into legally held formal sector. Designed to increase people's access to property and business opportunities through an expanded market economy, the programme enables property owners in the informal sector to use their assets to access capital.[11]

The exception that proves the rule? Discrimination against women continues

One area in which hope for change is less certain is that of gender discrimination. Gender- sensitive laws and practices are essential for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights for all men and women. In Tanzania, however, discriminatory laws and practices are still very much in force, especially concerning marriage and inheritance. For example, under the Local Customary Laws Declaration Order No. 4 of 1963, a widow is not given a specific share in her husband's estate, an omission reinforced under Rule 27, which states that the widow has no share in the estate if there are questions about the legality of their union. Rule 20 provides that a widow can inherit use rights only, which revert to the husband's family if she remarries or dies.

Customary Law requires the widow to marry a male relative of her dead husband. Rule 62 provides that the deceased's relatives may ask the widow if she wishes to inherit and that if she agrees, she may remain in the house as a wife but without control over landed property. This practice is harmful and degrading to women and treats them as property passing between one man and another through legacy.

The Marriage Act of 1971 legalizes nuptials of girls aged 14 and 15 years with the consent of the court and parents or guardians. Some parents or guardians force girls to marry in order to receive a dowry, thereby not only compromising their health but also denying them the right to education. Girls aged 14 or 15 are still growing and need more care and nutrition themselves. Pregnancy and childbirth at that age is unhealthy and dangerous, both physically and psychologically. In addition, girls this age have only completed primary education, provided they enrolled on time, a level not really sufficient to manage the challenges of a changing world.

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania is replete with prejudicial clauses, making the enjoyment and enforcement of women's economic, social and cultural rights almost impossible. Article 30(2) effectively permits legislative discrimination, stating: "It is hereby declared that no provision contained in this part of the Constitution, which stipulates the basic human rights, freedom and duties, shall be construed as invalidating any existing law or prohibiting the enactment of any law or the doing of any lawful act under such law, making provision for ensuring that the rights and freedom of other or the public interest are not prejudiced by the misuse of the individual rights and freedom." ■

7 <www.unhchr.ch/TBS/doc.nsf/newhvsubmittedbycountry>

8 Hon. Dr. Harrisson Mwakyembe, "Serikali yashindwa kutoa report miaka 28" ("Government fails to submit report for 28 years"), in *Tanzania DAIMA*, 30 January 2008.

9 Minister of Finance, Zakhia Meghji, "Social security funds cover five per cent of the labour force," quoted in *The Guardian*, 16 November 2007.

10 Tanzania Government, Poverty and Household Report 2005.

11 The United Republic of Tanzania President's office report on the Property and Business Formalization Programme, its Kiswahili translation is Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge Tanzania, shortened as MKURABITA.

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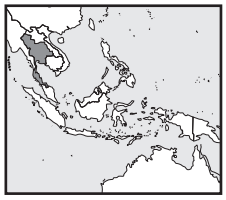
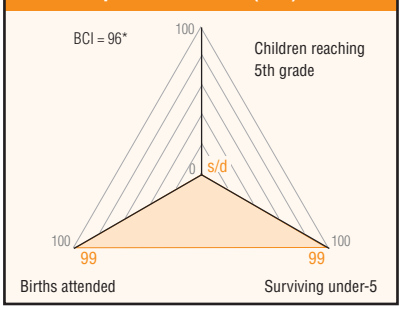
Structural violence in the southern provinces



Numerous conflicts in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat have resulted in communities being abandoned and families broken. Social problems abound in these largely Muslim communities, which are both ethnic Thai and Malay. Rice fields have become idle while large-scale industries are partly depleting natural resources along with the livelihoods of local communities. It is important to appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of local peoples in order to foster the cultural coexistence needed to prevent them from being branded as "separatist".

Social Agenda Working Group
Ranee Hassarungsee
(translated by Suntaree Kiatiprajuk)

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



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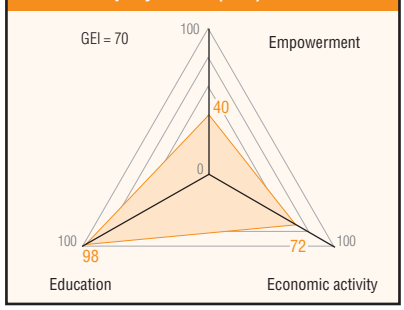

Since 2004, the Research Team on Local History and Culture of the Thailand Research Fund has been conducting gender-related research among the dominant Muslim populations, both ethnic Thai and Malay, in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.[1] Among these Muslim populations, who most often live in separate communities from non-Muslims, the status of men has declined owing to their reduced income from indigenous small-scale fishing and agriculture. Commercial fishing trawlers, capitalist shrimp farming and industrial development projects have taken away nearly all fishing grounds and farmland. With little education and rapidly declining fishing resources, these indigenous fishers are obliged to seek work in factories or become migrant workers in Malaysia.

As a result of these changes, women have had to increase their household production, selling products in the villages and markets and also working in the factories. However, they can no longer stay in their local communities and some have migrated for work in Malaysia alongside the men, or some have found work in leisure industries.

As these changes began to upset the environmental, economic and social balance of Muslim communities, government and private sector development projects were introduced, worsening this loss of equilibrium by bringing in outsiders and reducing control by the local population of natural resources as well as economic and political decision-making. Traditional institutions, such as families, communities, local administration, district chiefs, and village heads could not survive, while no new institutions emerged to replace them. This environment fostered the emergence of militants throughout these communities.

Volatile issues such as unequal access to justice and state benefits, as well as mutual mistrust among Muslims and Buddhist Thais have fuelled ongoing conflict and violence. However, villagers, development workers, students and academics all point out that, contrary to media reports, the conflict is not about religious issues or racial origins.

Globalized competition for resources

Domestic and foreign capitalist enterprises have already grabbed a vast area of farmland and public lands. Today, a growing number of profiteers are robbing a large number of poor Muslims of even their customary housing and land rights. When outsiders entered, they mistreated the local population, instead of accepting their traditions and becoming part of the communities. To the devout Muslims, housing areas and farmland belong to Allah, but in the capitalist world, land is a personal property that can be traded. Therefore, land purchases and competition for land ownership as well as the occupation of public fertile lands are widespread.[2]

While the current armed conflict may end, so long as structural violence – especially regarding the use of natural resources – is not addressed, it is likely to recur within four or five years.[3] The people must come together to find ways to untangle this complicated problem.

People's roadmap to peace

Studies have shown that the conflict in these provinces goes beyond a dispute between the "local population" and the "Thai State". It is also a reaction against globalization, with opposing factions within the communities and also collaborative action between locals and outsiders. This conflict has involved families, communities, society and also an entire way of life and of using resources.[4]

Since only the locals know their reality, any solution to the ongoing conflict – be it confrontation or submission – should come from them; outsiders are not in a position to determine what is right or wrong. Will the local population allow the next generation to keep killing each other or will they wait for the outcome of the struggle? If the provinces succeed in gaining a certain degree of autonomy, they may face new dangers, in the form of conflict between the old and the new generation.

To avoid this outcome, people need to come together to build new alternatives, organizing across religious differences to develop alternative economic, political and cultural institutions to enable them to control the influx of outsiders and their destruction of social resources. They have to seek alternative cultural and economic approaches that could respond to global changes and negotiate with wider society.

Importance of local community rights

Formerly, when locals were empowered by their sense of community, they were capable of negotiating with the government as well as with outsiders. For instance, outsiders view natural resources as separate from human resources, without considering the close relationship between them and discounting ecology or biodiversity, which are

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 A workshop to help people deal with the situation in the three southern provinces was organized by the Social Agenda Working Group, Thai Health Promotion Foundation and allies, in June 2007.

2 Srisak Vallibhodom, "Will the southern fire be quenched?", paper given at a seminar organized by the Social Agenda Working Group, Lek-Prapai Viriyaphan Foundation and Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University, 2006.

3 See "Tackling conflict for development: principles, progress and challenges", a paper prepared for the UK Department for International Development, 2006.

4 This and the section on resource management and community justice are based on Srisak Vallibhodom, seminar on ecological culture in southern border and life security, April 2007.

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fundamental to the local communities. Based on generations of traditional knowledge, the Buddhist Thais and the Muslims knew which resources were useful for which purposes, which were medicinal and which poisonous.

The State typically considers people to be technical resources, valuing intelligence over morality, thereby undermining Buddhists traditional idealism. A great deal could be learned from Muslims' perspectives on nature and religion. Muslims local peasants, including the community spiritual leader, pay more attention to people's goodness, and oppose mainstream values.

Local research has described how the locals, both Buddhists and Muslims, lived in harmony with nature, turning an ecological system into an ecological culture. Buddhists and Muslims shared their use of natural resources by asking the *Toh khru* (Islamic teacher) to help in establishing common rules. In this ecological culture, in which everyone believed in collective obligations to the homeland, Buddhists and Muslims lived in a sympathetic social structure. With the influx of outsiders, equipped with "modern" and scientific thinking, humans are viewed as living robots.

Natural resource management and local community justice

The local communities of yore had adopted many resource management tools, including a local judiciary system based on shared community norms and values. The current law enforcement and judicial system, ranging from the police to the court, has not been able to integrate these norms, making it unable to adequately address community conflicts. Conflicts over inheritance, for example, are no longer resolved by the justice imam, as prescribed by traditional or *shari'a* law, but are also not resolved according to the Thai laws. In such cases the concerned parties typically went to a well respected community leader, who might or might not be an imam, and detailed their assets and positions as to their allocation. The community leader would then propose a division that followed neither *shari'a* nor Thai laws exactly but could satisfy both parties. Such a course was so honoured among community members that dishonest people did not dare to disagree with the decision.[5]

As these mechanisms have been replaced, people find themselves no longer in control of local resources. A case in point was the capitalists' occupation of all the coastal areas, leaving small-scale local fishers unable to continue to make a livelihood. A vast area was cleared for oil palm plantations but the local villagers could not voice their opposition.

Knowledge-based alternatives: creating collective local awareness

Groups from the Faculty of Science and Technology Prince of Songkhla University (PSU), Pattani Campus, working on peat swamps, sand dunes and mangrove forests, and dealing with local people in resource management, have found that to regenerate a communal spirit or sense of belonging, four things are needed:

- Natural resources and the environment;
- Traditions, beliefs, religion and culture;
- Groups, organizations, and networks;
- A strong body of knowledge.

These four elements can be developed through an integral learning process that becomes a complementary and relevant part of people's lives, enabling the local community to sustain itself. Ideally, these four ingredients will merge into a community sense of belonging. In practice however, this merging depends on a variety of factors related to community security. So, to bring about community security, the relationship of the four components must be harmonious and balanced. This relationship could be expanded via participatory resource management activities.

A local knowledge bank should be created to promote local peoples' awareness of their own history, wisdom, culture and way of life, as opposed to that of the State. With such firmly established knowledge and wisdom of their own, the local communities will be adequately resourced to deal with the changes brought by globalization.

This undertaking requires that local communities work together to understand various aspects of ecological culture so that they can negotiate among themselves and prevent outsiders from taking advantage of them. Local and community organizations, such as the Shura council, have to be established to facilitate peaceful negotiations within the communities. This would enable new generations to understand the value of old ways of doing things and the dangers posed by consumerist culture. Local communities in the three southern provinces should communicate more with the entire country's society in order not to be quickly branded as a "separatist movement". Learning from the local people's uniqueness and diversity has the potential to bring about a cultural coexistence that can lead to collective nationalism. ■

5 The same happened in Nidhi lawsriwong's closure of the workshop on how to deal with different situations in the three southern provinces, organized by the Social Agenda Working Group and allies, June 2007.

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UGANDA

Investment and labour rights: a case study

Investments are increasing considerably, labour rights continue to be violated, and efforts to enforce compliance and protection of workers' rights through legal means often meet political interference. The majority of workers in the flower and hotel industries, ignorant of their legal rights, are unable to obtain justice. Monitoring by ministries, trade unions and civil society is required, as well as research on labour issues, including gender and how regulations are applied *in situ*.

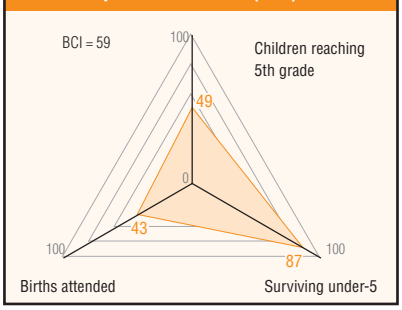
DENIVA
David Obot

Uganda has increasingly sought to attract private investments in order to boost market-led economic growth.[1] The cost of labour is cheaper than it is in other East African countries, making it relatively attractive to foreign investors.[2] Between 1990 and 2006, FDI in Uganda grew from USD 82 million to USD 207 million.[3] In 2007, the inflows were between USD 200 million to USD 400 million.[4] According to the Uganda Investment Authority, a total of 330 projects worth USD 1.75 billion in the first three quarters of 2006-2007, and in 2005-2006, 348 projects valued at USD 761 million were licensed. These were to create 42,950 and 33,910 jobs respectively.

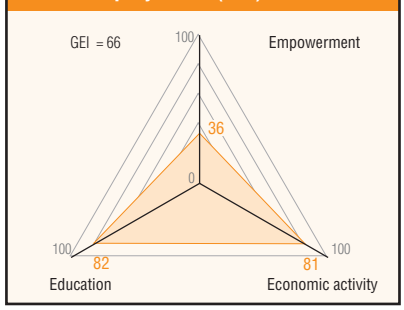
However, while promoting growth and job creation are important for development, the State's overall mandate is to protect its citizens and make sure the constitution, laws and policies facilitate protection. The question is; how does the existing legal framework protect workers' rights?

For workers, the relatively higher waged jobs created by such investment may lead to better living standards, but to do so, it is necessary that investors respect human rights, rather than care only about profits. Well-managed investments, observant of human rights, are more likely to contribute significantly to a country's economic development. However, while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes the right to work, just and favourable conditions of work, the right to equal pay without discrimination, and the right to just and favourable remuneration,[5] investors in Uganda for the most part totally disregard human rights.

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



This article will examine the extent to which protects workers' rights, focusing on investment and human rights issues affecting workers in the flower and hotel industries. The flower industry[6] has been chosen because of its export earnings, which increased from USD 17.4 million in March 2002 to USD 32.6 million in June 2005. The hotel industry is another big contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP), which, at Factor Cost, was 42.9% in April 2003 and 47.1% in July 2006.[7] Private investors now own 90% of the hotel-related facilities, the Government having divested its interests entirely.[8]

Labour and human rights laws

Ugandan workers rights derive from international and domestic human rights laws. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 87[9] and 98[10] allow collective actions and organization of labour unions. Some relevant conventions to workers' rights ratified by Uganda include the Convention 105 (1957)[11] on the abolition of forced labour, the Convention 138 (1973)[12] on the minimum age of entry to employment, and the Convention 182 (1999)[13] on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

The Government has also ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966),[14] the International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),[15] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966).[16] Following the adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which States Parties are expected to respect and promote, the Ugandan Parliament enacted the Employment Act; the Labour Union Act; the Occupational Safety and Health Act; and the Labour Disputes (Arbitration and Settlement) Act. In addition, the 1995 Constitution provides for "the right of persons to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions; to ensure equal pay for equal work without discrimination; and to ensure that every worker receives reasonable working hours and periods of holiday with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays."[17]

However, partly due to secrecy regarding the details of investment agreements between government and investors, there is little available information on the terms and conditions for labour in the flower and the hotel industries, partly owing to difficulties in organizing union locals, and no mechanisms to inform workers about their rights. There is little knowledge of labour law in general, owing to the difficulty in getting access to legislation, let alone understanding of it, and there are few available copies of the labour laws.

1 Low income countries obtain resources from the international, continental, regional and domestic sources in the form of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) or loans and guarantees from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), export credit agencies, bilateral trade agreements and regional finance institutions.

2 Uganda Investment Authority (2000). *Investing in Uganda: The Tourism Industry*. Kampala: UIA, p. 17.

3 UNCTAD (2007). "Investment Report". New York and Geneva: United Nations.

4 UNCTAD, FDI/TNC database <www.unctad.org/fdistatistics> and annex table B.1.

5 United Nations (1948). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 23 (1).

6 Republic of Uganda (2007). "Background to the Budget 2007/8". Kampala: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, p. 19.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

8 UIA (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

9 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/j_ilo87.htm>.

10 OHCHR, <www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/j_ilo98.htm>.

11 OHCHR, <www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/32.htm>.

12 OHCHR, <www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ageconvention.htm>.

13 OHCHR, <www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/childlabour.pdf>.

14 OHCHR: <www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm>.

15 OHCHR: <www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm>.

16 OHCHR: <www.unhchcr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm>.

17 RoU (1995). The Uganda Constitution, Article 40.

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Since the Government usually approves investment proposals and extends preferential treatments such as tax holidays and repatriation of profits,[18] labour department officials are expected to compare workers' terms and conditions of service as contained in the investment proposals and workers contracts, and take appropriate actions where necessary.

The Labour Union Act 2006 guides the activities of trade unions. Within the flower and hotel industries, there are the Uganda Hospitality, Leisure and Allied Workers Union, the Uganda Hotels, Food, Tourism and Allied Workers Union, and the Uganda Horticultural and Allied Workers Union. However, unions depend on memberships at the local or branch level and, at present, these are very poorly organized, even after the passage of the Labour Union Act. The majority of informal workers are not able to join or set up trade union branches. It is suspected that critical employment data are deliberately manipulated to conceal the agreements regarding workers' rights, and workers are generally intimidated and threatened when trying to become members of the unions of their choice. Some employers facilitate the formation of company unions whose leadership is appointed by, and respond solely to, management. When workers refuse to join such unions, they are usually fired. The majority of workers in the flower and hotel industries are therefore unable to present their legal cases for arbitration.

In 2007, the number of registered flower investors in Uganda was estimated at 21, while those in hotels were estimated to be slightly more than 50. The majority of investors in these industries employ workers informally, which leaves them outside legislative regulation regarding minimum wages, hours or other working conditions. Various stakeholders have asked the Government to do more to protect workers' rights in these industries. For example, the Uganda Human Rights Commission in its 2000-2001 report[19] asked legislators to amend the minimum wage legislation to eliminate wage disparities between public and private workers, and other conditions guaranteeing basic conditions of living. Instead, however, the Ugandan President has stated that legislators should help [him] "attract industries and stop those slogans on minimum wage and on workers organizing in unions",[20] thus encouraging investors to intensify workers' rights violations.

In its 2003 report, the Uganda Human Rights Commission concluded that successive governments "have sacrificed the rights of workers in favour of foreign investment and the liberal economy."[21] The report also noted the weaknesses of the trade unions, which are rarely recognized by employers. In the hotel and textile industries particularly, the report noted, "workers are helpless because the Government supports investors irrespective of the way they treat workers". Investors make no effort to comply even with existing laws, many of which until 2006 were outdated, and frequently harass officers attempting to make them comply.[22]

The National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU)[23] has also expressed concerns regarding the Minimum Wages Board and the Councils, which are currently resisted by both employers and the Government. The same is happening with the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives (FHRI)[24] on inhuman conditions at workplace and with the Platform for Labour Action (PLA)[25] on lack of comprehensive employment policy. Issues relating to political will, enforcement, effectiveness of the trade unions, and advocacy by the civil society need urgent attention.

Efforts to enforce workers' rights

Although the law empowers the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to protect workers' rights, their invisibility in enforcement shows the constraints under which they operate regarding legislation and regulations as well as resources. Resources available to the ministry are insufficient, for instance, to enable them to carry out countrywide consultations. The Ministry has insufficient human resources both at headquarters and in each district. Staffs are poorly equipped and facilitated, making enforcement a disheartening task for labour officers.

The serious and deteriorating situation regarding workers' rights has led to a number of civil society organizations starting to take up advocacy for workers' rights. For example, the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives (FHRI), the Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users (NURRU), the National Organizations of Trade Unions (NOTU) and the Platform for Labour Action (PLA) have researched and mobilized on workers' rights issues. All these efforts need scaling up in order to bring pressure on the Government and legislators to protect workers' rights.

Compliance with human rights needs monitoring and evaluation by the Uganda Investment Authority, the Parliament, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, NOTU and the civil society. Research on various issues, including gender, in all investment areas demands support. Critical analysis of the terms of employment as contained in the investment proposals and applied to each investment sector is necessary. International, regional, national and local collaboration of stakeholders for the protection of workers' rights must be supported, strengthened and intensified. The Government must regulate minimum wage and convene a Minimum Wages Board and Council. ■

18 UIA (2007). *Invest in Uganda*, Kampala: UIA, p. 20.

19 UHRC (2001). *4th Annual Report*, Kampala: UHRC.

20 Olupot, Milton (2005). "Museveni warns on minimum wage", *The New Vision*, 6 April, pp. 90-93.

21 Uganda Human Rights Commission (2003). *6th Annual Report*, Kampala: UHRC, p. 129.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

23 NOTU (2007). *A simplified trade union guide on new labour laws*, Kampala: NOTU, p. vii.

24 FHRI (2005). *Uganda: Human Rights Status Report 2005*, Kampala: FHRI, p. 83.

25 PLA (2007). *Adult domestic workers in Uganda: An analysis of human rights and social justice*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, p. 40.

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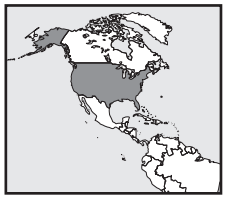
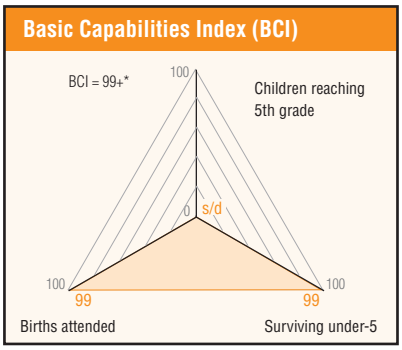
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

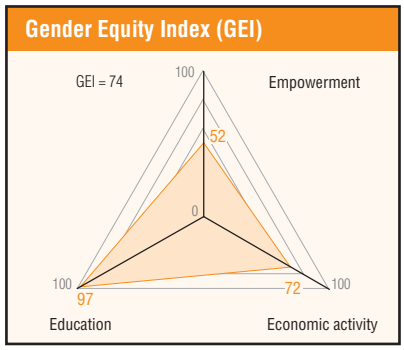
Sixty years and waiting



In 2008, the 60th anniversary year of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US presidential election provides a window of opportunity to re-engage the country in the human rights framework and to find common agreements domestically and globally. US communities are bringing innovative approaches to advance human rights that should be expanded and strengthened so that they can influence the national debate.

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Alexandra Spieldoch
Hunger Notes
Lane Vanderslice
Center of Concern
Aldo Caliari
Action Aid USA
Karen Hansen Kuhn
Global-Local Links Project
Tanya Dawkins





In 1948, the US was a noted leader in establishing the United Nations and Eleanor Roosevelt was working with other member countries for the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The country also took leadership in establishing the Bretton Woods Institutions, including the World Bank and the IMF and what was to have been the International Trade Organization, only one part of which, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (which later became the World Trade Organization) entered into force. Sixty years later, the US has distanced itself from the UN system it helped to create – a trend which undermines the potential for collective solutions to the critical problems we face today, such as climate change, rising food shortages, poverty and war. Since World War II, the US government has promoted deregulated markets as a means to reduce conflict and support policy goals, both within and outside of its borders. This includes privatizing public service provision and relaxing labor and environmental regulations to promote investment and increase trade.

The rigid government adherence to free market ideology as the final arbiter of national priorities has blocked the development of a policy and investment structure to support rights-based social and economic development in the country. There is a long tradition and broad public agreement on 'negative' obligations, or what the government cannot do, such as abridge free speech, or subject citizens to unreasonable search and seizure. These obligations fall in the category of civil and political rights. Yet, there is far less agreement or even discussion of the construct of 'positive' obligations, which concern government obligations regarding social and economic rights. This is in part due to the fact that civil and political rights are present in the US Constitution, while economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs) are not. There are those who insist that ESCRs should remain outside of the Constitution, rejecting the legal obligations that would come with their ratification, especially in a context of declining funding for public services generally.

In terms of international law, the US has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, and does not recognize their provisions as rights. This makes it very difficult to develop a comprehensive national social and economic rights agenda.

The Right to Work

Although the US (perhaps more than anywhere else in the world) places great emphasis on productivity, efficiency and measurable outcomes associated with work, the 'right to work' ethos is understood differently in the US than it is elsewhere. The Universal Declaration states that "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment." It adds that everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to just and favorable remuneration to ensure human dignity and social protection, and that everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions.

In the US, by contrast, the Right to Work has come to mean the ability to work regardless of whether protections and programs such as healthcare, pension and unemployment provisions are in place. Because union membership is now at 12%, the lowest it has been since the early 1930s,[1] it is difficult for workers to receive the labor protections for which unions have long fought.

The concept of favorable remuneration, or a living wage, although embraced by wide segments of the public, is opposed by many business and political leaders. Thus for example, it took nearly 10 years for the US Congress to agree to raise the minimum wage in stages, from USD 5.15 an hour in 2007 to USD 7.25 an hour in 2009.[2] Even the higher rate will not allow families to escape poverty, with the resulting USD 15,080 of income from a 40 hour week 52 weeks a year still being below the poverty line – which was USD 17,170 for a family of three in 2007.[3] Most of those workers in the lowest paid category do not receive benefits such as paid sick days, vacation time, health insurance, or employer contributions to a private retirement fund (i.e. other than Social Security).

Unemployment compensation is available only to those who have been laid off rather than to those who may have left a job, no matter how justifiable the reason. Even when workers do receive unemployment compensation, it is limited to 26 weeks. Those who find work having been unemployed often receive less pay and less benefits, while those who want to work but cannot find employment after 26

* One of the BCI components was imputed based on data from countries of similar level.

1 Union Members Summary. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, <www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>. 25 January 2008.

2 L. Montgomery, "Congress Approves Minimum Wage Hike," *Washington Post*, 25 May 2007.

3 US Department of Health and Human Services, "Prior HHS Poverty Guidelines and Federal Register References," <aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/figures-fed-reg.shtml>. Accessed 25 February 2008.

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weeks receive almost no support at all. This is due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is racial and gender discrimination.

The Right to Food

As with the Right to Work, the Right to Food is not widely promoted or discussed in the US. This is not to say, however, that issues related to food and hunger are ignored. The largest single budget item in the US Farm Bill is funding for food assistance to poor people ('food stamps') and school lunch programs, which together account for two-thirds of expenditure under the bill. Expenditures, however, have not kept pace with increasing needs. Due to higher food prices and low reserves, the U.S. is experiencing extreme food inflation,[4] which means that even more people will lack access to food. By 2007, the number of children who are hungry or malnourished had grown to 12.6 million (17.2% of all children in the country).[5] Additionally, there are what are called 'food deserts' throughout the country, where low-income families simply do not have access to affordable, fresh healthy food.

The current farm system has worsened the situation for farmers, workers and consumers. Deregulation in agriculture over the last several decades has led to overproduction in commodities and increased subsidies to agribusiness, changing the nature of food production. Surplus corn resulting from overproduction now supplies a key ingredient in processed foods of dubious nutritional value as well as the industrial feed market for pork, cattle and chicken. Fresh fruits and vegetables are notably more expensive for consumers. Numerous scientific studies and news articles highlight the problems of obesity, even among children, caused in part by the overabundance of cheap processed foods, especially starch and fat, in the US diet.[6] Increased meat consumption is also contributing to long-term health problems among the public.[7]

Growing consumer demand for organic, locally produced food could contribute to more nutritious and safer food, but the fact that it is more expensive and less widely available also raises concerns. Patty Lovera of Food and Water Watch observed: "The growth in organic and local food is encouraging and means that many consumers are finding healthier options. But unless we fix our broken food safety system, many people without access to these markets are left out. If we don't strengthen minimum standards for food safety, we run the risk of creating a two-tiered food system: healthy food for middle and upper class consumers for those who can afford higher prices; and less healthy, less regulated food for everyone else."[8]

4 "Energy and Food Prices Push Up U.S. Inflation," Associated Press. 15 July 2008.

5 Food Research and Action Center, <www.frac.org/html/hunger_in_the_us/hunger_index.html>.

6 M. Pollan (2006). *The Omnivore's Dilemma.* New York: Penguin Books.

7 "High Meat Consumption Linked to Heightened Cancer Risk," *US News and World Report,* 11 December 2007.

8 Interview with Patty Lovera on 18 March 2008.

The Right to Health

Healthcare is one of the most explosive issues in the country today. And yet, the fact that the Right to Health rarely forms part of the national debate about whether and how to provide universal healthcare shows how strenuously this is opposed by the health industry and elected officials who depend on it for campaign contributions.

The US spends 16% of GDP on health, the highest ratio in the world.[9] It also has the highest health spending per capita. However, its performance, as measured by many indicators, does not live up to the expectations that one might get from such figures.[10] The US has fewer physicians and nurses per capita than in most other OECD countries; life expectancy is now 77.8 years, almost one year below the OECD average, and the infant mortality rate is 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, above the OECD average of 5.4.[11]

Rising health care costs, accompanied by decreasing insurance coverage, are major hindrances to greater public access to healthcare.[12] The number of uninsured has gone from 10 million to 48 million in the last two decades. This means that currently one-seventh of the population is uninsured. Without health insurance, people are more likely to postpone doctor visits and more likely to go without needed medical care, including prescription medicines. According to one survey, almost all uninsured adults cited cost as the primary reason they did not receive care when they needed it. Only 29% of low-income adults have private insurance.[13]

A basic standard in the Right to Health is the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of income as well as race, gender, religion and other social markers. In the US, where these categories usually overlap, racial and ethnic minorities tend to be in lower income brackets and have less access to proper care. Nearly half (45%) of Hispanic adults, 41% of Asian-American adults, and 35% of African-American adults reported difficulty paying for medical care, compared to 26% of white adults. In 2004, 30% of African-Americans and 25% of Hispanics with chronic health conditions had to forgo prescription drug purchases due to the high cost; this compares to 17% among the white population.[14]

9 WHO (World Health Organization) (2006). *The world health report 2006 - working together for health.* Available at: <www.who.int/whr/2006/en/index.html>.

10 While the implementation of the right to health may imply various different roles for the state, it noteworthy that the US is the only OECD country where more health spending is done by the private than by the public sector.

11 OECD (2007). "Health Data 2007. How does the United States Compare".

12 Kaiser Commission, "How Trends in the Health Care System Affect Low-Income Adults: Identifying Access Problems and Financial Burdens," Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. 2007.

13 Health Policy Institute of Ohio, "Understanding Health Policy Disparities", 2004. <www.healthpolicyohio.org/pdf/healthdisparities.pdf>.

14 *Ibid.*

The health crisis has been steadily growing and is now affecting the middle class as well as the poor, although not to the same extent. Once again it is a major issue in the 2008 presidential elections.

Taking a step forward

Despite opposition from powerful interests, new media campaigns and popular education initiatives are taking place across the country. Campaigns and strategies to build on-the-ground support for human rights are gaining momentum. There are some wonderful examples:

The Center for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has created a US network focused on the need to adopt and implement these rights. They have produced a primer and other materials that explain the importance of rights to health, food, work, housing, and so on in the US context.

In 2008, under the leadership of the US Human Rights Network, an unprecedented delegation of US youth, public interest lawyers, housing activists and workers traveled to Geneva to challenge the official US report under the International Convention to End All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This 'Shadow Report' Network was the result of a year-long national grassroots effort to help citizens hold their government accountable to international human rights norms by challenging the rhetoric of compliance vs. the reality on the ground.

In the absence of commitment at the national level, citizens are building awareness of international agreements and seeking enforcement at the local level. For example, a campaign in the City of San Francisco is pressing for the use of Human Rights Impact Statements that establish minimum standards across the municipality.

One of the larger human rights campaigns in the US is the Living Wage Campaign, led by ACORN,[15] demanding work for all, a fair minimum wage, as well as access to affordable housing. Gulf States, especially Mississippi and Louisiana, that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina have become a battleground and a testing ground for a range of legal principles traditionally thought to belong in the international realm, ranging from the rights of internally displaced persons to the right to land and housing. And the US National Committee for World Food Day, a decentralized organization with representatives around the country and an office in Washington, D.C., organizes World Food Day events in different states every month of October.

These and other examples indicate that US communities are revitalizing efforts to advance economic and social rights within the country. Ensuring that these initiatives are expanded and strengthened is the challenge we all face; it is also our commitment to one another that is based in hope and partnership. ■

15 Living Wage Campaign web site: <www.livingwagecampaign.org/index.php?id=1959>.

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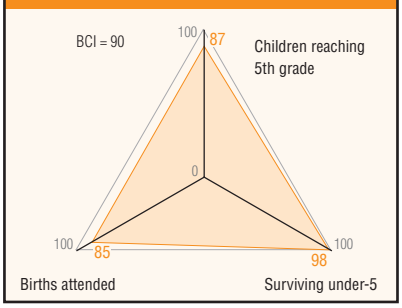
VIETNAM

Economic progress and increasing disparities

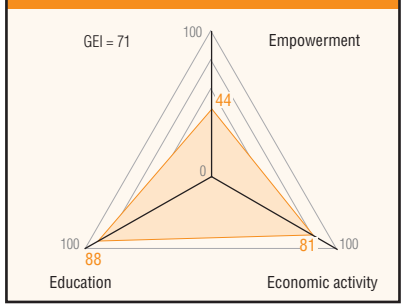
Vietnam's aspiration and commitment to become a middle income country by 2010 seems achievable. Economic reforms have significantly enlarged people's choices and improved participation in the development process. However, economic disparities are increasing; for much of the population, progress remains precarious. The Government should pay more attention to ensuring that all citizens have access to services, information and opportunities to improve their lives. A burgeoning civil society may help control and reduce corruption.

ActionAid International Vietnam (AAV)
Phan Van Ngoc
Saroj Dash

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



During the past five years, Vietnam has made remarkable social and economic progress, even as development has slackened in the rest of Southeast Asia. The country's macro-economic performance has been remarkably strong; GDP growth rate has averaged 7.6%. The percentage of people living in poverty has plunged from 58% in 1993 to approximately 20% today, without causing significant social instability. Other social development indicators show similar improvements.

This impressive socio-economic development has been generated and largely sustained by the *Doi Moi* (economic renovation) process, which has included land reform, price liberalization, and agricultural de-collectivization. The Government has also implemented radical policy reforms. These include the 2001 Constitution, which empowered the National Assembly to hold votes of no-confidence in the leaders it elects, including ministers; legal reforms, such as new laws that allow the establishment of social development organizations; and concerted efforts to combat corruption. Moreover, the 10th Communist Party Congress in April 2006, approved a five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010, reinforcing Vietnam's intention to become a middle income country by 2010. The landmark resolution of the 10th Party Congress also established human rights as a key priority in future development.

These reforms have significantly extended the range of choices open to the Vietnamese people and improved participation in the development process. However, the rights of poor and excluded people are still being compromised by growing disparities between rich and poor, rural and urban, and the (majority) Kinh and ethnic minorities. For the large number of people subsisting on incomes only marginally above the poverty line, progress remains precarious. Economic shocks from external factors such as natural disasters or trading partners could push millions of households back below the official poverty line.

The ethnic gap

Conditions in remote, rural districts, particularly among ethnic minorities, are a glaring exception to the country's success in reducing economic poverty without generating significant increases in overall inequality. Ethnic minorities make up only 15% of the overall population, but 40% of the "poor"; by 2010 that proportion is expected to reach two-thirds.[1] The severe poverty rate among ethnic minorities is 19.2%, compared to only 2.6% among the (majority) Kinh. Women and girls are at the bottom. They have less access to health and education services and economic opportunities than ethnic minority men, and Kinh and Chinese women. Poorer households tend to be larger, with more children and elderly members, and are usually headed by women.

Many farmers have been pushed into vulnerable situations by rapid urbanization, which will only increase as industry continues to overtake agriculture as the most powerful sector of the economy. Various calculations of consumption and income inequality point to a widening divergence between rich and poor, particularly between urban areas and the rural communities where the vast majority of the population still live and work. Every major indicator of inequality shows an upward trend since 1998. The Gini coefficient for consumption expenditure began its ascent earlier, rising from 0.33 in 1993 to 0.35 in 1998 and around 0.37 in 2002.[2] Wide disparities also persist in other vital areas, such as child nutrition, maternal health, and access to education and clean water.

Gender gaps

Vietnam has made more progress toward gender equality than many comparable countries, however significant disparities remain. Further sustained effort and societal change will be needed to secure additional progress towards gender equity.

Women must still overcome barriers to full participation in public life. Although their involvement in legislative bodies is relatively high (27% in the National Assembly), they continue to be underrepresented in public office, particularly in local administration. At the provincial, district and commune levels, only 5% of the members of executive decision-making bodies such as the People's Committee are women. In addition, despite legislative reforms, women are still often denied equal rights to productive assets.

In most parts of Vietnam, net enrolment rates for girls and boys are fairly equal in both primary and secondary education. The rates in upper secondary education were 66% for girls and 61% for boys in 2004. Women's labour force participation is nearly equal to that of men. In the 15-to-64 age group, 83% of men and 80% of women were in paid employment in the 12 months preceding the most recent household survey. Women still get paid less for the same job, but the gap has narrowed dramatically, from 30% in the early 1990s to 17% today.

Urban poverty issues

The progressive changes in public policy that have promoted industrial development have made urban poverty a more pressing issue. The links between rural and urban poverty are clear; migration to urban areas is likely to accelerate as the growing wealth of the cities far outpaces economic development in the countryside. Several factors combine to keep migrants in poverty: the insufficient development of urban infrastructure, restricted access to social services (in the case of unregistered migrants), and the absence of the kind of strong social network

1 World Bank 2006.

2 UNDP, Closing the Millennium Gaps, 2003.

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typical of the Vietnamese "villages" that most migrants have left behind.

Most migrants are women who have little familiarity with the area they are moving to and, more importantly, limited knowledge of their rights and entitlements. Many end up in enterprises where working conditions are extremely difficult and wages are low. Others find themselves in a vicious poverty trap, compelled to seek out any means available to survive, however risky it may be. The most vulnerable social groups, such as trafficked people, sex workers, and people living with HIV/AIDS are composed primarily of women and children. Sex work is not only dangerous, but stigmatized, defined in Vietnam as a "social evil".

HIV and AIDS are likely to become even larger and more serious problems, threatening the sustainability of socio-economic development. Although the official infection rate may appear low, at 0.28%, all 64 provinces and urban areas are now reporting cases, particularly among the young. Most experts fear the numbers will grow. In addition, a cataclysmic event like the rapid spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) throughout the region in 2003 and the outbreak of avian flu, or natural disasters such as typhoons and floods, as well as significant climatic changes could raise new and difficult challenges.

Economic integration issues

As Vietnam continues to pursue tighter economic integration into the global economy, it will become increasingly vulnerable to volatile commodity prices and fickle bond-market investors. Tariffs and non-tariff barriers have gradually been reduced, and further liberalization is planned to fulfil World Trade Organization (WTO) membership obligations. Unless the potential adverse impacts of these reforms are explicitly addressed, poor and excluded people across the country may be unable to benefit from this open-door policy.

Although the Government recognizes many of the issues and unresolved problems that economic integration generates, it has yet to offer concrete proposals to deal with them. If current trends continue, economic integration will far outpace the agenda to reduce poverty. Without a comprehensive strategy to improve conditions for the most vulnerable groups, poverty and injustice could worsen.

Issues in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Sanitation is the MDG target for which the country is furthest off track. Although 76% of the urban population had access to proper sanitation in 2004, only 16% of the rural population had such access.[3] Reasons for this inadequate progress include the absence of a unified sanitation policy, unclear institutional responsibilities and weak inter-ministerial co-ordination, along with a lack of attention to this issue among the international community.

BUILDING A BETTER LIFE AFTER BEING TRAFFICKED

Dinh Thi Thuy from Hai Phong province is one of many Vietnamese women trafficked to foreign countries. Her family paid a local broker to arrange her marriage to a Korean man. After a long legal process, she arrived in Korea, but her husband was nowhere to be seen; instead, she was received by a woman who acted as translator. Thuy was taken to a mountain side where she met more women in the same situation. All day long, they were forced to work on toothbrush manufacturing and rubbish collecting with poor food and no proper rest.

Thuy managed to escape. Now she is regaining strength and resides in a shelter for trafficked women in Hanoi, the only shelter in the northern part of Vietnam which is supported by ActionAid Vietnam (AAV). She is also receiving support to attend vocational training to gain economic independence for the future. She also wanted to complete divorce procedures. "I want to begin a new life. Who will marry me if I am still married?" As she is hoping to take legal action against the marriage broker, AAV is supporting her efforts through coordination with other organizations. AAV also coordinates with the Korean and Vietnamese legal sides to push forward the divorce process for Thuy so that she can build her new life. "My dream is to open a beauty salon in Hai Phong after I finish a two-month intensive training course here. It is amazing!" says Ms Dinh Thi Thuy.

Increasing corruption

Corruption is a serious national problem; it received considerable attention at the 10th Party Congress in April 2006. Transparency International's corruption index put Vietnam at 2.6, a worse rating than other Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of the Philippines and Indonesia.

Enforcement of the newly passed anti-corruption law appears to be difficult in the local cultural context, particularly while the Government lacks the human resources needed for aggressive action. At the local level, corruption, lack of responsibility, and low leadership capacity could become major obstacles to implementing planned reforms in governance.

The media's active role

Traditionally, the role of the State-controlled media was considered to be simply to educate the general public. However an emerging cadre of newspaper editors and professional journalists has begun to produce independent reports on significant issues related to poverty, poor governance and lack of democracy. Recently, the media exposed corruption and abuse of power by Government authorities who appropriated land and other resources. This kind of active engagement plays an important role in civil society by encouraging debate, expressing the perspective of the general public on critical issues, and helping to safeguard the rights of citizens.

The road ahead

It is essential that the Government focus more on ensuring that vulnerable groups get access to services, opportunities to improve their living conditions and information. Policy and institutional reforms that promote democracy and good governance will help create an open space where people could potentially participate in decision-making processes, particularly at the local level. Appreciation of the valuable role that civil society can play in the country has been growing over the past decade. It could help control and reduce corruption, which has become a serious threat to the Government's legitimacy. ■

3 DfID – Vietnam Country Assistance Plan 2007-2011, p. 10.

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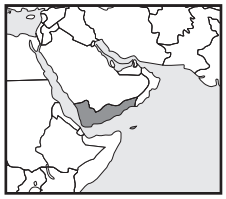
YEMEN

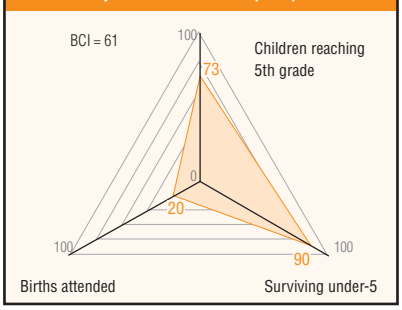
Civil society gaining shape



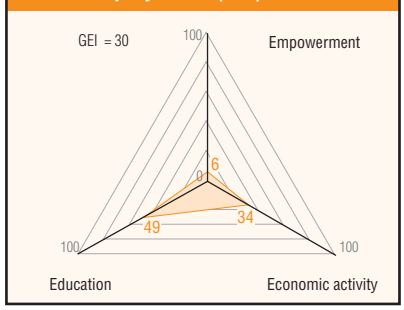
In recent years the State has failed to honour commitments it has made to protect human rights. Its violations include authoritarian rule, increasing corruption, lack of transparency, failure of a majority of government officials to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, and failure to act on issues such as gender equity. Civil society organizations, although few in number and broad in focus, have recently helped shape new legislation by influencing the elite and decision-making institutions.

Social Forum Yemenite Alliance[1]

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



The Republic of Yemen has ratified most international and regional human rights agreements; respect for all human rights is also enshrined in the Constitution and legislation. The Government established a Ministry of Human Rights in 2003 and has permitted the creation of a variety of civil society organizations to defend these rights. However over the last few years the Government has restricted democracy by introducing a wide range of obstacles, hindrances, sanctions and prohibitions that severely limit free expression. Many independent newspapers have been taken to court and closed down. Demonstrations and peaceful marches are violently suppressed; participants have been arrested, taken to court and given harsh sentences – including the death penalty, imposed in special trials on some political prisoners (although the Supreme Court has then granted them clemency).

During election campaigns, the governing party mobilizes all the resources at the disposal of the State on its behalf, including finances, public employees, the military and the media. This heavily tilts the playing field. As a result, the governing party currently occupies 80% of the seats in both Parliament and local councils.

The UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008 puts Yemen at 153 among the 177 countries listed. The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2007 has Yemen in 131st place out of 180 countries.

Economic and social situation

When North Yemen and South Yemen formed a unified country on 22 May 1990, the country's economic situation was poor. Since then it has deteriorated further. Among the many reasons have been:

- The return of more that 800,000 émigrés from neighbouring countries as a result of the second Gulf war in 1991.[2]
- The 1994 war between the two factions then in power (the General Popular Congress and the Socialist Yemenite Party).
- Security deficiencies and ethnic conflicts. The most devastating combat has been the war between an insurgent group and the central government in the northern Sa'dah governorate. This has dragged on since 2004, draining the economy and heightening public dissatisfaction.
- Government delays in introducing democratic reforms, economic reforms and measures to prevent the abuse of official financial and administrative power. This has provoked popular protest demonstrations and marches since 2007, particularly in the southern governorates.
- The state general budget has relied on income from oil extraction for 80% of its revenues in recent years. However reserves appear to be dwindling. Production plunged from 420,000 barrels per day down to 350,000 in 2005, and has continued to fall since.
- More than half the country's farmland is devoted to qat[3] cultivation, which requires large quantities of water. Aside from draining the country's aquifers at an alarming rate, qat is an economic plague, sucking up more than USD 7 million and 20 million working hours per day. More than a quarter of the labour force is engaged in the qat industry (agriculture, transport and trade).
- Collapse of the official currency due to the country's weak economy. In the early 1990s USD 1 was worth YER 20; now it can buy YER 200.

These factors and others have left 42% of the population struggling to survive below the poverty line, according to estimates from the 2006 food programme. It is widely expected that this percentage will climb even higher in 2008 due to soaring global food price inflation (in Yemen's case, the price of wheat in particular). Most independent research institutions and organizations are in agreement that the Government does not follow standard economic principles in formulating its strategy. Instead, it develops and implements policies haphazardly for the benefit of a corrupt minority. These wealthy few siphon off the money and resources of the State and compel the poor majority of the population to shoulder the burden of so-called "economic reforms" that provide no visible benefits.

The effect of trade agreements

Yemen liberalized all of its trade as part of an economic reform programme adopted with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1985. The Government cut customs duties as low as 5%, with a maximum of 25%. These reductions have devastated farmers unable to compete with imported crops. The country runs a permanent trade deficit on a range of items integral to the national diet. Foods now make up 33% of total imports, a heavy

1 The Alliance is formed by the Social Democratic Forum, the Information Centre for Information and Facilitation of Human Rights and the Yemenite Observatory of Human Rights. The Social Democratic Forum made the proposal and coordinated the preparation of this report. The document was drawn up by the following committee: Nabil Abdelhafid Majad, Mohamed Yahia Assabri, Rena Ahmed Ghanim and Dr. Abdelbaki Chamsan.

2 This refers to the war between an international coalition and Iraq to expel the latter from Kuwait. This war, known as the First Gulf War, is in fact the second, since the first was the war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988).

3 *Catha edulis*: A stimulant of vegetable nature, not unlike tobacco, which is chewed. Used in Yemen and other neighbouring Arab countries.

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weight on the country's balance of trade and balance of payments.

The industrial sector is small and provides jobs for only a small part of the workforce. Manufacturing depends, to a great extent, on imported raw and semi-finished materials. Private investment has dropped, along with the participation of private investors in total production.

The situation of women

Education

The data we have on women's employment indicate it has dropped dramatically. Women constitute 25.7% of the total wage labour force; the rest work in traditional occupations (agriculture and shepherding). The education gap between men and women is vast. The illiteracy rate among females above age 10 is 65%, one of the highest proportions among developing countries; the rate is 78% in rural areas and 40% in urban areas.

Statistics show that for every 100,000 live births 366 women die from complications and lack of medical assistance. In rural zones, 55% of women receive no assistance during their pregnancy or labour. Most women have no access to family planning or reproductive health services; many marry at a very young age. The fertility rate is 6.2, according to the family budget census.

Political participation

Although more than 42% of Yemenis on the electoral roll are women, they have made up only 0.5% of the candidates in parliamentary elections (1993, 1997, 2003) and local elections (2001, 2006).

Although the country has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the gender gap remains wide and steep. Some laws explicitly discriminate against women. Civil society organizations and leaders, both women and men, who believe in gender equity, are making great efforts to change attitudes, as well as to persuade government officials and political parties to adopt policies that promote increased participation of women in political life, such as quotas in elections and appointments.

Enjoyment of social rights

The right to education

The Constitution and the general education and teaching law affirm that basic education should be compulsory and free. However the Government has not introduced the policies and measures necessary to make this right a reality, let alone to ensure quality and equity in gender opportunities and between rural areas and cities, etc. The Government allocates 17% of the budget to education, while spending 26% on defence and security.

The third report on human development in Yemen concludes that levels of effectiveness in education are very low, based on a rise in dropouts and academic failure and poor distribution of teachers. Most teachers are in the city; in rural areas, classes sometime have more than 100 pupils. The faculty education level is often low: 78.8% of schools heads have not been to university; 4.4% have no academic qualifications at all. Teachers who have a university education earn USD 150 at most, which compels them to seek other work to improve their standard of living. About 17.5% of all teachers are women.

Although the country has 14,632 schools, most of them lack essential equipment; a large fraction is unsuitable for educational purposes. Fully 20% are closed for refurbishing or function without roofs, or under trees, or are made of tin.

Teaching methods and curricula are outdated and do not prepare students for the job market. According to the Human Development Report, the methods and styles of teaching do not encourage intellectual development or critical thinking.

The right to health

Only 3.5%-4% of the general budget – 1.2%-1.5% of the GDP – goes to health. Services are grossly inadequate to satisfy current needs, which are expanding rapidly due to demographic growth – which is itself due in part to the deterioration in family planning services. Other problems include poor distribution of health services, inefficient administration of human resources, insufficient training and qualification opportunities, poor sanitary conditions and a decline in staff awareness of sanitary precautions.

In 2006 Yemen had seven hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). It had approximately 6,700 doctors in 2004, an average of three per 10,000 inhabitants. These facilities and services are not evenly distributed. Although 75% of the population lives in rural areas, just 30% of the people there have access to health care.

WHO reports that 60% of Yemenites live in areas affected by malaria and three million people are infected each year. Around 12 million inhabitants suffer from diseases related to contaminated water, according to a study by the Parliament Water and Environment Committee; 10% of the population suffers from schistosomiasis, and three million have been infected with hepatitis. The study concluded that contaminated water is responsible for 50% of infant mortality (20% from diarrhea and the other 30% from malaria and typhoid fever).

The right to work and social protection

The Constitution and labour and civil service laws conform to the international declarations regarding the natural right of every citizen to work and the right to a decent life based on fair wages. In recent years, government policies have ignored these commitments. The State employs only 20% of all graduates; the rest must seek work in the private sector, in most cases outside their specialization. Many end up joining the burgeoning ranks of the unemployed.

The social security system covers all government employees, but only 70,000 workers in the private sector. This leaves four million economically active adults without coverage. Yemen has no public health insurance system. The social welfare system is limited to coverage for the elderly, widows and orphans, an estimated number of 603,000 people in 2005. More than 500,000 children of school age (6-14 years old) drop out of the education system and in most cases help their parents by doing specific jobs reserved for them, such working in the field and shepherding. A good number of children end up begging. Many are taken to neighbouring countries to work in this capacity, or as domestic servants.

The role of civil society organizations in defending human rights

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Work, which has responsibility for authorizing civil society organizations, lists around 6,000; more than 75% of them are charities established to offer a variety of services to poor families. Organizations involved in human rights activities are few, and have a broad focus. A single organization might work on women's rights and children's rights, or civil, political and economic rights. Despite their small numbers and lack of specialization, these organizations have provided a considerable number of training sessions for different sectors of society, as well as talks, activities and discussions on human rights issues. Their activities have generated a sort of movement, albeit one limited to the intellectual class – human rights issues are not yet part of the public discourse.

Despite its small size, this movement influences state decision-making institutions, such as Parliament and the Executive; their members have begun discussing human rights issues and problems. So far successes of this effort have been limited to a few reforms related to women, children and the disabled, along with legislation to promote transparency and combat corruption. Recently, groups working in the political, civil, social, economic and intellectual fields have begun forming alliances and activist networks, which could lead to greater civil society influence on human rights concerns in the future. ■

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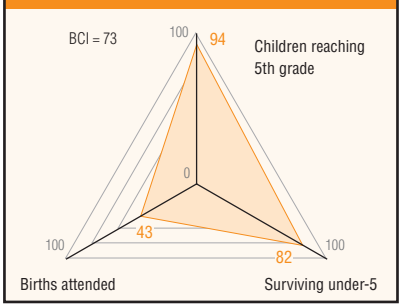
ZAMBIA

Sixty years in abject poverty

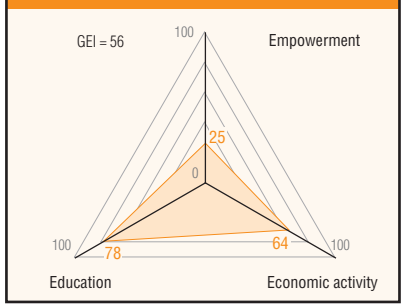
Sixty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this country has become a classical example of how the rights it enumerated can remain a pipe-dream to most people. The "benefits" of opening its markets have gone to Western countries exclusively. Both the Zambian State and the international community have been guilty of "crimes against humanity", including the world's lowest life expectancy for people under 40, high rates of morbidity and maternal mortality, increasing levels of illiteracy, gender-based violence and extreme levels of poverty.

Women for Change
Michelo Hansungule

Basic Capabilities Index (BCI)



Gender Equity Index (GEI)



Most African countries conceive, develop and implement their national policies and programmes on areas like governance, human rights and rule of law with the policies and expectations of G-8 countries in mind. Thus it was not a surprise that Oxfam's review of the Gleneagles G-8 Summit held in Scotland in 2005, reported that "on 31 March 2006, the Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa announced that from that day on basic health care would be free to everyone."[1] However, President Mwanawasa's statement was utterly insensitive and blatantly false. To this day Zambia has absolutely no free medical care. True, senior government leaders and favoured colleagues do get free care, but not in Zambia. Save for the founding President Kenneth Kaunda who goes to the local University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka whenever he is in need of medical attention, senior government leaders, some members of opposition, as well as their families, frequent the best medical facilities outside Zambia especially in South Africa at state expense. None of the foreign medical services at the disposal of these leaders and their families are available to the poor, the majority of whom are women. Though the Constitution forbids discrimination, Government, through its policy on access to medical care, in fact encourages if not perpetrates blatant discrimination against the poor and the weak sections of society. Discriminatory access to foreign medical care is just one example of policies that easily collide with constitutional precepts whose aim is to protect the basic dignity of all Zambians.

Therefore, contrary to the claims attributed to late President Mwanawasa, in fact not only access to health care but guaranteeing life itself for the majority of the population in Zambia is an impossible proposition. Due to the deep levels of poverty, life in Zambia especially among women, children and other vulnerable sections of the population is far from rosy. The social face of Zambia looks like a war zone. In spite of the so-called zero digit inflation rate, which authorities claim to be the result of their successful policies in attracting foreign investment, the social picture is still deeply disheartening. Though the country is not at war, it has one of the highest rates of maternal and other forms of mortalities anywhere in the world. Along with Zimbabwe, a country in economic and political turmoil, it shares the dubious distinction of having the lowest life expectancy rate in the world for citizens aged 40 and below. An estimated 80% or more Zambians live below the poverty line.

This has been compounded by acutely high incidence of HIV/AIDS especially among the productive and economically active population groups. Zambia has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the region. Government policies on HIV/AIDS especially on mother to child transmission have not yet started to turn the tide against the scourge. This speaks volumes of government inability to develop policies and initiate aggressive action plans that would confront the deadly virus. Besides HIV/AIDS, malaria continues to ravage havoc among Zambia's poor. In fact, the largest number of mortalities are still the result of this ancient disease long declared over in other parts of the world. All this is against guarantees on the right to life, no ontly enshrined in the country's Constitution but also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nevertheless, instead of channelling its attention towards saving the lives of the majority of people, the Government recently announced hefty pay rises for the already highly paid head of state and senior government officials sending the clearest message that it remained insensitive to the plight of the poor and vulnerable in society.

Declarations and pipe-dreams

Zambia's leaders have adopted several declarations, resolutions and decisions both at the regional and global levels with the intention to arrest the spiral of poverty. These, however, have largely remained pipe-dreams. Local institutions meant to implement these dreams – like the University Teaching Hospital (UTH), previously one of the country's flagship medical facilities – are in a state of virtual collapse. Doctors, nurses and health workers from UTH and other State and mission institutions throughout the country have marched in the streets on countless occasions to protest poor conditions and grossly inadequate facilities at their institutions. Education, especially in rural areas, has remained unprovided. Each year, scores of young people are thrown out of the school system due to lack of places. Misgovernance together with scarce resources translate themselves into failed health and school systems. True, Zambia has been admited for participation in the much acclaimed Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which should have relieved pressure for basic resources, but the country has not yet started to enjoy the benefits of this and of other 'rich man's' solutions from Washington.

Ironically, it is at the same time that the late President was declaring free health care that his government was fighting advocates of the poor who were campaigning for a broad-based and inclusive constitution that in the text would guarantee basic human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights – including the right to health care. The Government has been opposed towards enshrining socio-economic rights in the basic document and making those rights justiciable. The clearest way in which the Government demonstrated its opposition to these rights is by denying participation of free civic bodies in the constitution-making process. Although the Government is running a constitutional review process, a broad range of civil society groups and organizations are excluded, including independent organizations such as Women for Change, opposition

1 Oxfam (2006). "The view from the summit – Gleneagles G-8 one year on". Oxfam Briefing Note, 9 June. Available at: <www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/bn060609_g8_oneyr>.

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groups and faith-based and student organizations. This, of course, spells doom for the poor who have no representation in constitution-making.

Economic instruments: raping the poor

Rather than promoting the rights of poor people, the main thrust of the country's budget is to promote foreign investment. Government's main preoccupation in budgeting is to promote mining development by foreign nationals in order to increase the country's foreign exchange position. Similarly, international efforts through such agreements as the World Trade Organization (WTO)[2] aim principally to encapsulate benefits for foreigners. As a result, 'negotiated' aid conditions with the IMF and the World Bank[3] worsen the already pathetic situation. A programme designed for citizen economic empowerment has been introduced and is part of this year's budget but it is not adequately funded. Year in and year out, the budgeting process[4] has failed to honour the minimum human rights commitments that Zambia has voluntarily assumed through its own Constitution and by signing international covenants and conventions. Achievement of human rights standards are not the basis for budgeting. Similarly, most economic policies and agreements are formulated with the aim to open up markets to Western products and goods for the exclusive benefit of Western countries, institutions and interests, rather than address the situation of the poor.

Zambia is an excellent example of a typically poor country which is presented by those with interests in it as a "success story".[5] Just like obedient primary school pupils, the country's leadership "listens" attentively and uncritically accepts whatever is taught by liberal schools in Washington and other Western capitals. After Frederick Chiluba, the country's second president, took office in 1991, Zambia privatized virtually anything in sight, as dictated to it by the IMF and the World Bank. No one bothered to think through the implications of this to the social sector. Unemployment soared while education became impossible. Globalization,[6] the latest catchphrase in liberal societies, is a carefully crafted smokescreen for Western economic models and therefore Western values, ideologies and conditions. Concealed by enticing rhetoric, its purpose is to facilitate the wholesale rape of the poor and total alienation and dispossession of their natural wealth. The negative impact of globalization on social, economic, cultural and environmental rights, and therefore on dignity, has been devastating. African societies, economies and cultures have been battered left, right and centre, due to this globalization mania and forced to replace traditional values such as cooperation with selfish individualism and made to believe that this was being civilized. For every US dollar grudgingly advanced to 'aid' poor people, in fact their children, women and other vulnerable Zambians will sacrifice their bare lives and forever struggle to repay wealthy Western societies and families, at skyrocketing interest rates.

Hardest for women

Women, already a vulnerable group, have been hardest hit by the skewed global economic politics and policies than their menfolk. Though they are *de facto* heads of households, policies do not favour them. Zambian women in particular make up the overwhelming majority of the unemployed, the illiterate, uneducated and voiceless non-participating segments of society. Women suffer most from ill-planned privatization schemes that pushed the few among them in employment out of the grudging labour market. This worsened the already pathetic situation of women, already destituted of independent resources. The majority of women are engaged in agriculture where they work the land of their husbands, fathers, brothers, etc., gratuitously or for employers who pay them pittances. Meanwhile, the agricultural sector, formerly the mainstay of livelihood, especially in rural areas, has collapsed since the Government bowed to the will of the mighty Western policies, and suddenly stopped subsidizing it. In the years that followed, poverty rates soared. This year, again at the behest of Western institutions, the Government has just declared that it will remove subsidies for fertilizer and maize seeds. This is a death sentence to the majority of poor people at the behest of its own government. Without this basic lifeline, agriculture which saved lives will be out of reach to the millions.

As a result of the international financial and trade architecture and the trends towards liberalization and deregulation, many non-agricultural jobs have also disappeared. To cite one example, scores of women employed in the quasi-state Agri-Flora industry in Lusaka became destitute when it suddenly closed down.[7] The State had discontinued its support to a very sensitive industry without providing alternatives. This was particularly devastating in the many households where the spouse simultaneously lost his income as well due to the high rate of dismissals, retrenchments and forced early retirements – a common occurrence. When Zambia Airways, one of the country's largest state employers, went bankrupt, hundreds of thousands of employees lost their jobs, without any social support system to fall back on.

Unprotected rights

More than 80% of Zambians are simply too poor to value their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Most would readily agree with Jeremy Bentham, who centuries ago claimed that natural rights are "simple nonsense" and the idea that natural rights are imprescriptible "rhetorical nonsense – upon stilts".[8] Similarly, they are bound to concur with the equally cynical view by Alasdair MacIntyre, that 'there are no such rights and belief in them is one with belief in witches and in unicorns.'[9]

The Constitution has a splendid bill of rights that guarantees all of the standard civil and political rights, including the rights to life, equality, prohibition of torture, and non-discrimination, as well as a series of political freedoms, including freedom to associate, peacefully assemble, demonstrate and express opinions without hindrance. It also lays out rights to property, equal protection of law, fair trial, etc. However these rights have no practical meaning to the millions whose lives are dogged by squalor and despair.

We have already said that the Constitution does not offer guarantees to economic, social and cultural rights that would decidedly be the most relevant to the country's poor. Although such rights form an integral part of African Union and United Nations treaties and covenants that the State has ratified, these international agreements have no standing in the country's judicial bodies and therefore cannot be presented to judicial officers as means of protection. Despite these omissions, the State has established a plethora of institutions and organizations allegedly dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights, some of the most important being:

- Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD)[10]
- Human Rights Commission (HRC)
- Anti-Corruption Commission; and (ACC)
- Gender in Development Division (GiDD)
- Office of the Investigator-General (OIG).

Unfortunately, most of them are timorous and exist merely by name. The ACC and OIG try to discharge what little mandate they have but with difficulty. State support is lacking to enable them operate efficiently. As a result, violations of human rights are still the norm. Women in particular have to contend with traditional and modern social, cultural and economic norms and institutions that discriminate against them. None of the above institutions have proven to be relevant to ordinary people in situations of human rights violations, especially women.

Conclusion

In Zambia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a long way from bearing fruit. Similarly, constitutional guarantees are yet to ensure the much-needed protection to the poor. Sixty years of the Universal Declaration and in Zambia's case, forty-four years of the Declaration under 'freedom' has only produced more poor people. ■

2 World Trade Organization. "Zambia and the WTO". Available at: <www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/zambia_e.htm>.

3 Manbiot, G. "To keep them destitute and starving. The World Bank practices allow the rich to steal from the poor", *The Guardian*, 12 April 2000.

4 Africa Fiscal Transparency. Zambia, <www.internationalbudget.org/resources/ZAMBIA.pdf/>.

5 See Zambia Privatisation Agency: <www.zpa.org.zm>.

6 Globalisation Guide, <wwwglobalisationguide.org>.

7 "African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?", Pambazuka News No. 353. 13 March 2008. Available at: <www.pambazuka.org/en/issue/353>.

8 Quoted in Jones, P. (1994) *Rights. Issues in Political Theory,* London: Macmillan, p. 90.

9 *Ibid.*

10 In practice, this author was told by several civil societies that there was no Ministry of Gender and Development as such. What was there instead was the Minister of Gender but without a ministry. Civil societies explained they were not asking for a ministry but for stronger commitment on the part of Government to promote gender and rights. What most of them were calling for was for Government to establish a body like a gender commission to seriously begin to promote and protect women's rights.

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APPENDIX

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

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Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

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SOCIAL WATCH REPORT 2008

"It is therefore critical that all countries have a say in the process to change the international financial architecture. No equitable and sustainable solutions to transform the current system will come out of gatherings that are rapidly-prepared and exclude many developing countries as well as civil society (. . .) Only an inclusive international conference convened by the UN to review the international financial and monetary architecture, its institutions and its governance, can be comprehensive in scope, capable of tackling the full array of issues and institutions and transparent in its procedures. In the transition from the current system – which has fostered instability and inequity – towards a just, sustainable and accountable one, which yields benefits for the majority of the world's people (. . .) human rights must be the starting point and not some distant goal in the future, and a rights-based approach to development (with gender equality, decent work and human rights at its core) must be the main guiding principle."

Social Watch Report 2008

"Capital flight, tax evasion, fraudulent intra-firm trading and the very governance of the international financial institutions (. . .) form part of a package, an architecture that badly needs to be redesigned."

Social Watch Report 2006

"As a result of their attempts to 'beat the market,' many prominent CEOs ended up in jail in 2002, while families that trusted them lost their retirement savings. In order for the same unrestricted and unregulated market operators not to beat the poor, both governments and corporations have to be more accountable to citizens everywhere."

Social Watch Report 2003

"The almost total freedom given to international investors and speculators has wreaked financial and now economic and social chaos. The time has now come to regulate these big players."

Social Watch Report 2000

ISSN: 0797-9231

Social Watch is an international network of citizens' organizations struggling to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realization of human rights. We are committed to social, economic and gender justice, and we emphasize the right of all people not to be poor.

Social Watch holds governments, the UN system and international organizations accountable for the fulfilment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty.

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