

**SOCIAL WATCH IS AN
INTERNATIONAL NGO WATCHDOG
NETWORK MONITORING POVERTY
ERADICATION AND GENDER
EQUALITY**

Social Watch >>

[Social Watch E-Newsletter](#)

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SW EVENTS CALENDAR

March 2009

- **16-22 March: 5th World Water Forum**, Istanbul, Turkey
- **25-27 March: Peoples Assembly for Development Alternatives** (Counter-summit to the IADB Assembly of Governors), Medellin, Colombia
- **28 March: Worldwide Day of Action ahead of the G-20 Summit**, London and around the world.

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT



Save the billionaires first!

Dear friends of Social Watch,

A South American radio personality was commenting on the impact of the crisis on the world's billionaires. The number of individuals with personal wealth of over one billion dollars has dropped to 793 from 1,125 a year earlier. Mr. Bill Gates lost 18 billion dollars, but still tops the Forbes list because

Mr. Warren Buffet and Mr. Carlos Slim lost 25 billion each. A listener calls the radio and with a mix of Schadenfreude and sarcasm comments how happy he is that, not having money in the bank nor properties, he has not lost anything.

He was wrong.

According to the Basel-based Bank of International Settlements, an institution known as "the central bank of central bankers", "although emerging markets generally had little direct exposure to the distressed asset problem plaguing major industrial economies and managed to weather the most acute phase of the financial crisis in late 2008 relatively well, they were much less immune to the deepening recession in the advanced industrial world. Plunging exports and GDP growth bore clear evidence of the severity and synchronicity of the global economic downturn, which was reflected in declining asset prices, particularly in emerging Europe". Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund adds an even gloomier view: "After hitting first the industrial countries and then emerging markets, a third wave of the global financial crisis is now hitting the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries, and hitting them hard."

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SPOTLIGHT ON..... SW National Coalition

Spotlight On.... National Social Watch Coalition of India

Next month in India, the

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL WATCH NEWS

The Inter-American Development Bank: 50 Years of Financing Inequality and Unsustainability

EYE ON NEW RESOURCES

IPS Gender Wire brings a women's perspective to the news

To commemorate International

“world’s largest democracy” will begin a process of national Parliamentary elections for the first time since 2004, in a critical moment in which issues related to security and to the economy are weighing heavily on voters’ minds. Taking this context into account, this month’s “Spotlight On...” column will focus on the Social Watch India coalition, whose work to promote transparency and accountability in politics will be crucial during this election period.

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Civil society organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean are planning a counter-Assembly to visualize the human and environmental costs of the policies of the Inter-American Development Bank that have led to the extraction of non-renewable natural resources, the privatization of public services, and the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects.

[<< more](#)

New European Commission Project Promises to Strengthen the Global Social Watch Network

In crucial times, “Making anti-poverty and gender policies accountable to citizens”, the new project involving the European Commission (EC), Oxfam Novib and Social Watch, aims at further invigorating the reach of the network.

[<< more](#)

Coalition-building to Promote Social Development in Italy, Czech Republic and Poland

The first year of the European Commission funded project “Promoting Social Development: Building Capacities of Social Watch Coalitions” came to a close in February, with positive results for the Czech, Italian, and Polish Social Watch coalitions that are participating in this three-year initiative. In addition, the project contemplates several regional-level activities, the most important being the production of the first European Social Watch Report.

[<< more](#)

Women’s Day, the Inter-Press Service (IPS) recently launched the *Gender Wire Newsletter*, a unique source of global news focused on how women are being affected by political changes, economic crisis, climate change, armed conflicts and other frontline issues. This newsletter aims to address the global gender reporting imbalance, reflected in the fact that only 22% of the voices that you read and hear in the media today are that of women. To subscribe to the [newsletter](#).

London G-20 meeting mobilizes civil society in the streets and on-line

On April 2, leaders of twenty of the world’s most politically and economically influential nations, plus other invitees, will meet in London to plan joint actions to overcome the current global financial crisis. Organizers of the G-20 summit state that this meeting will be used not just to discuss measures to stimulate economic recovery but also to coordinate efforts to ensure that the brunt of the crisis is not taken by the world’s poor or the environment. [Official website](#).

To pressure the G-20 summit-goers to comply with this promise, British civil society is planning a massive mobilization on March 28 in London. As this date has also been adopted as a “day of action” by the World Social Forum, decentralized protest actions are expected to take place around the world. For more information, [check out](#).

G20 Voice, an initiative of Oxfam UK, aims to influence the governments, private sector representatives, and international institutions that will be present at the London summit via the blogosphere, by inviting 50 influential and knowledgeable bloggers to report first-hand on the meeting and its outcomes. To find out more, [go to](#).

New Rights and Democracy report documents the social impacts of foreign investments

In February 2009, the Montreal-based NGO Rights and Democracy released the report *Human Rights and Bilateral Investment Treaties: Mapping the Role of Human Rights Law within Investor-State Arbitration*, which details how secretive decisions taken by dispute resolution

tribunals linked to investment protection treaties are negatively affecting human rights in the developing world. This report is the third in a series of studies focused on foreign direct investment and human rights produced by the Canadian organization. For the complete text of the report, click [here](#).
