

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

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SW EVENTS CALENDAR

January 2009

- **27 January – 1 February:**
[World Social Forum](#), Belem do Para, Brazil

February 2009

- **16-20 February: Meeting of Social Watch Coordinating Committee and EC Project Management Committee**, Lima, Peru

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT



Freedom from Fear and Want

Dear friends of Social Watch,

The Social Watch Report 2008 was launched in the European Parliament in Brussels last January 7. The meeting, which

focused on human rights as the key to find a way out of the present global financial and economic crisis, was attended by members of the European Parliament, officers of the European Commission and journalists. The meeting was convened by the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Luisa Morgantini, yet she could only salute briefly the participants and had to leave to attend an urgent meeting on the situation in the Gaza Strip. "I hope you understand," she said in her greeting. And everybody nodded.

I argued in Brussels that human rights should be the basis for a socially responsible "stimulus package" that rescues the poor and not just the bankers. And they should also be the pillars around which peace is to be achieved in the Middle East. Nowhere in the Charter of the United Nations or in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an exception to be found that excludes the Palestinians in Gaza from enjoying all human rights and the "freedom from fear and want" that those documents ensure for us all.

On January 8, in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, journalist Lasantha Wickramathunga was shot dead in the street by unknown assailants. In an editorial he had just published in the *Sunday Leader*, he had criticized his government for attempting a military solution to the conflict that divides the country, instead of seeking a political settlement: "To (try to solve the conflict) by violating the rights of Tamil citizens, bombing and shooting them mercilessly, is not only wrong but shames the Sinhalese (...) What is more, a military occupation will require the Tamil people of those regions to live eternally as second-class citizens, deprived of all self respect. Do not imagine that you can placate them by showering "development" and "reconstruction" on them in the post-war era. The wounds of war will scar them forever, and you will also have an even more bitter and hateful Diaspora to contend with. A problem amenable to a political solution will thus become a festering wound that will yield strife for all eternity. If I seem angry and frustrated, it is only because most of my countrymen - and all of the government - cannot see this writing so plainly on the wall."

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SPOTLIGHT ON..... SW National Coalition

Spotlight On.... SOCIAL WATCH BRAZIL

For the second installment of our "Spotlight On..." column, which highlights the innovative work of organizations that make up Social Watch coalitions around the globe, this month we will put a focus on the Social Watch coalition in the host country of this year's World Social Forum, which will take place on the shores of the Amazon River in the city of Belem do Para, Brazil.

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GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL WATCH NEWS

The Doha Conference on Financing for Development: Missed Opportunities at a Decisive Moment

The Doha International Conference on Financing for Development was a unique opportunity to strengthen the commitments of States, intergovernmental agencies and private actors to eradicate poverty and end gender discrimination through the adequate use of development aid. However, it was a "missed opportunity" and concrete actions have been postponed, despite the fact that the needs of poor and disadvantaged people in developing countries cannot be postponed.

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Launch of the Social Watch 2008 Report: Human Rights and Development in Focus

The 2008 Report has been launched internationally in Doha, followed by numerous activities organized by Social Watch national coalitions. The impact of these events might help insure that national governments and international institutions do not leave rights behind while trying to cope with the multiple crises affecting the entire world and especially its poorest and most vulnerable inhabitants.

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EYE ON NEW RESOURCES

Poznan Climate Change Conference

From December 1-12, 2008, more than 12,000 representatives of governments, intergovernmental agencies, civil society and the private sector met in Poznan, Poland to assess the international response to climate change and discuss the mechanisms available to stem this environmental and social threat, as part of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP14). For more information on the discussions and outcomes of this Conference, see the official [UN website](#).

For an NGO perspective on the results of the Conference, see the article by Oscar Reyes of the Transnational Institute, *Poznan Climate Talks: Fiddling While the Earth Burns*.

For an analysis of some private sector initiatives being implemented to reduce the climate change impacts of corporations, see *Corporate Governance and Climate Change: Consumer and Technology Companies*, by Ceres.

International Trade Union Confederation Annual Survey on Trade Union Rights

Around the world, workers are systematically harassed, fired and sometimes even assassinated for exercising their fundamental human right of creating or joining a trade union, despite the fact that this right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Labor Organization Conventions. On November 20, 2008, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) released its *Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights Violations*, documenting the state of the right to organize in 138 countries. To access the full text of the Annual Survey, see: <http://survey08.ituc-csi.org/>

New Oxfam report on arms transfers and compliance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

According to a new paper by Oxfam International, irresponsible and excessive arms transfers

which drain national resources and fuel conflict are hindering many developing countries' chances of complying with the MDGs by the year 2015. **Full report** (pdf format)
