

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

February 2010

- **22-24 February:** Social Watch Pan-Asia Capacity Building Workshop, New Delhi, India, for more information email: info@socialwatchindia.net

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT



Promises make no history

by Roberto Bissio
Coordinator, Social Watch International Secretariat

According to the World Bank, in January 2010 there were 1.5 billion people living in extreme poverty. Thus, the goal of reducing poverty and hunger to half by 2015 — the first of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — will be impossible. Furthermore, the lack of significant progress on trade, debt, aid and technology transfer (goal 8) prevents the creation of an adequate environment to achieve the objectives 1 to 6. In this context, the UN report "Rethinking Poverty", published in January, is an important contribution to the discussions toward the MDG Summit that

will be held in New York in September 2010. Social Watch will be participating in that event, and its national groups are already writing about their own experiences.

In the year **2000**, the heads of State and government of the world promised in the *Millennium Declaration* that "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." The first of the MDGs, extracted from that declaration promises, precisely, to reduce poverty and hunger to half by 2015.

* In September **2008**, the *Accra Action Agenda* on aid efficiency, approved at ministerial, states that "however, 1.4 billion people — most of them women and girls — still live in extreme poverty ..."

* In January **2010**, the World Bank, announced that "an estimated 64 million more people may be living in extreme poverty by the end of 2010 due to the crisis. "

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SPOTLIGHT ON..... SW National Coalition

Spotlight On.... Social Watch El Salvador

In this edition of Spotlight On... we will travel to Central America, where the national Social Watch coalition in El Salvador has

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL WATCH NEWS

The Time Has Come for a Global Financial Transactions Tax

After ceding to pressure from NGOs around the world, the International Monetary Fund

EYE ON NEW RESOURCES

First UN publication on the state of the world's indigenous peoples reveals alarming statistics

Indigenous peoples all over the world continue to suffer from

succeeded in monitoring economic, social and gender rights in the country from diverse perspectives.

El Salvador, a small Central American country with almost 6 million inhabitants, confronts many political and economic challenges, such as overpopulation, a weak industrial base, and the consequences of a 12 year long civil war which ended just two decades ago. One year ago, for the first time in the country's history, a center-left government led by journalist Mauricio Funes came to power, thus inheriting the obligation to promote the development of the country, and in particular fulfil the development commitments made in the context of the UN system, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Social Watch El Salvador, a diverse group of NGOs with presence in the entire country, has inherited the commitment to monitor the government's compliance with these obligations, a task that it has carried out since 1995, when it became a founding member of the Social Watch (SW) global network

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opened up its process of investigating the possible impacts of a global Financial Transactions Tax (FTT). NGOs working on finance and development issues are currently preparing written commentaries and will be participating in face-to-face meetings with Fund officials to advocate for the implementation of the tax. The possibility of turning the vision of Keynes and Tobin into concrete financial policy is now more palpable than ever. Civil society must keep up the pressure.

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BROKENHAGEN

The outcome of the Copenhagen event that drew the participation of more people than any seen in previous UN summits indeed broke the hearts of millions. People around the world expected their leaders to help avert climate catastrophe, this is, coming out with nothing less than strong, bold, and legally-binding agreement to stabilize the global climate system. But the Copenhagen climate conference (UNFCCC COP 15) might be remembered more as a rare summit of failure than the US President Barak Obama's claim of a 'step forward'. A rare gathering of 192 heads of states, and for what?

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Celebrations and Discussions Mark 10 Years of the World Social Forum

In January 2010 – almost ten years after the first World Social Forum (WSF) – over 35,000 social activists met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to debate topics as diverse as the conference on climate change held in Copenhagen in 2009, the resurgence of US militarism in Latin America, and the growing criminalization of social protest. Moreover, the future of the WSF, and the relationship among the Forum, NGOs and progressive governments were analyzed. The seminar was a kick-off for a series of decentralized forums that will be held this year in over 40 different places around the world, in preparation for the 2011 World Social Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

disproportionally high rates of poverty, health problems, crime and human rights abuses. In the United States, a Native American is 600 times more likely to contract tuberculosis and 62 per cent more likely to commit suicide than the general population. In Australia, an indigenous child can expect to die 20 years earlier than his non-native compatriot. In parts of Ecuador, indigenous people have a 30 times greater risk of throat cancer than the national average. And worldwide, more than 50 per cent of indigenous adults suffer from Type 2 diabetes – a number predicted to rise. These are just a few of the startling statistics in the United Nations' first publication on the State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, a thorough assessment of how indigenous peoples are faring in areas such as health, poverty, education and human rights.

The publication's statistics illustrate the gravity of the situation in both developed and developing countries. Poor nutrition, limited access to care, lack of resources crucial to maintaining health and well-being and contamination of natural resources are all contributing factors to the terrible state of indigenous health worldwide.

According to the report: Indigenous peoples' life expectancy is up to 20 years lower than their non-indigenous counterparts.

The full report is [available](#)

Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life

Awarded since 1994 by WWSF Women's World Summit Foundation - an international, non-profit, humanitarian NGO, serving the implementation of women's and children's rights and the UN development agenda - the Prize (\$ 1000 per laureate and \$ 3000 for specific African women's organisations), honors women and women's groups around the world exhibiting exceptional creativity, courage and commitment for the improvement of the quality of life in rural communities. 354 prizes have been awarded so far. The Prize aims to draw international attention to laureates' contributions to sustainable development, household food security and peace, thus generating recognition and support for their projects. While

These decentralized forums as well as the 2011 Dakar WSF, will count with the key participation of Social Watch members.

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rural women are vital in providing examples of sound practice in their communities, they still do not have full access to tools needed for development, such as education, credit, land rights and participation in decision making. By highlighting and awarding creative development models, innovations and experiences enhancing the quality of rural life, WWSF participates in addressing the eradication of rural poverty, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said about the prize "... It is with great pleasure that I welcome this excellent initiative to award in Geneva the Prize for women's creativity in rural life and celebrate World Rural Women's Day".

Nominees should be women and women's groups currently active in rural life whose efforts have not yet been acknowledged by other awards. Nomination materials should arrive no later than 31 March.

For more information about the prize and how to nominate [visit](#)

THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION: A SYNTHESIS STUDY INCORPORATING EVIDENCE FROM COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

This new report, by the UNDP Regional Centre for Asia and Pacific, looks into the lessons learned from the past economic crises, the impact of the current crisis and policy responses in 14 countries in Asia Pacific. The analysis takes into consideration the rising threat of climate change and the recent experience of natural disasters in the region.

This study, by Ajay Chhibber, Jayati Ghosh and Thangavel Palanivel, summarizes the impacts of the crisis and policy responses to the crisis over the past one year, has shown that initially Asia-Pacific was affected severely from the crisis. Trade and financial flows collapsed in almost all countries. Output contracted more severely in many Asian economies than even those nations at the epicenter of the crisis. But starting from the mid-2009, the region is recovering fast. Since the rest of global economy is expected to recover slowly, unlike the Asian crisis in late 1990s, this time Asia cannot rely on an export-led

recovery. In this regard, by drawing from a diverse range of settings within the region, the study offers compelling insights into the importance of making growth more inclusive and balanced as well as reasons for a new development paradigm needed for both recovery from the crisis and making the 21st Century as the Asian Century. The key findings and policy recommendations of the study serve as a useful source of information and ideas to policymakers in prioritizing and mitigating measures to address the impact of the crisis, and a stimulus for discussion, innovation and regional cooperation as countries strive to achieve the MDGs and build a brighter future for all.

The report is **available**