

Review

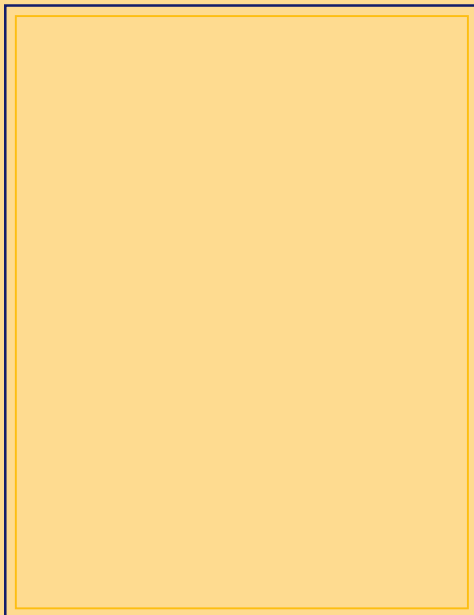
THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE

WINTER



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Thinking locally, acting globally

*Why Canadians need to be concerned
about international health care*

► BY CHANTAL BLOUIN

Beyond the questions linked to the impact of trade agreements on our health care system, the study on health and globalization released in late November by the Romanow Commission raises a number of foreign policy issues. One of the controversial questions is the need to increase the resources devoted to global health. The idea of increasing budgets to fight AIDS or malaria in developing countries is not always easy to sell, particularly when competing with the need to increase budgets for the health care system in Canada.

And while some Canadians may be surprised to hear of the Romanow Commission's interest in globalization and health, the issue strongly links to the stability of our national health care system. If as citizens of the world we are concerned not only about our own well-being, but also about reducing poverty globally, then this report is doubly important.

Our health care system is not isolated from the rest of the world. The health of Canadians is linked to the health of other nations in several ways. Indeed, globalization has deepened health interdependence.

As commerce grows, migration flows increase, international travel is more frequent and global environmental challenges are more pressing, the health of Canadians is increasingly affected by the health of others. For example, tuberculosis (TB) drug resistance is spreading to all countries. Only 50 years after the introduction of the first anti-TB drugs, some multiple drug-resistant TB strains are completely resistant to antibiotics. The speed of air travel increases the risks of importing drug-resistant TB.

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Health as a human right is established in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by Canada in 1976. These commitments, if to be respected, need to be translated into measures which allow the fulfillment of this right. Right now, the lack of financial resources is the main obstacle to its fulfillment.

According to Health Canada, ten per cent of tuberculosis cases in Canada are resistant to at least one drug and one per cent are classified as multiple drug resistant TB.

Citizens of countries around the world – both developed and developing – have often pointed to Canada’s “experiment” with social medicine begun in Saskatchewan in the 30s and 40s and consolidated across the country in the ‘60s as a fine example of creating a more egalitarian society. It is a fact that in this country the disparity between the rich and the poor was dramatically lessened when everyone began to have access to a public health care system. And it is not overstating the case to note that some regions went from developing to developed because residents no longer had to mortgage their futures or those of their children, in order to pay off a debt to the local hospital or the doctor.

Internationally the same tough conditions – or worse – prevail. Those lucky enough to have a few assets can see them disappear, along with any hopes for a better future, before their eyes. The poorest of the poor do not even have the luxury of harbouring false hope – without access to health care, they die.

The Canadian government has made international commitments recognizing that everyone has a right to health, no matter their income or origins. Health as a human right is established in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by Canada in 1976. These commitments, if to be respected, need to be translated into measures which allow the fulfillment of this right. Right now, the lack of financial resources is the main obstacle to its fulfillment. The AIDS crisis in Africa cannot be confronted without massive investments in global health. As Stephen Lewis, the UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and former Canadian ambassador to the UN recently declared: it is not the lack of knowledge or technical capacity which prevents us from facing the pandemic, it is the lack of money - money to

buy drugs, money to run education programs.

This year, the World Health Organization published a well-documented report by Jeffrey Sachs showing how good health is not only an outcome of development in a country, but a primary condition to its development.

Access to health care is a key factor in reducing poverty and improving economic growth. Indeed, public health care in Canada removed the threat of impoverishment due to illness, but it also improved general health, e.g. reduced infant mortality by improving access to health practitioners for both pregnant women and children. That in turn impacted on the economy.

How can a country develop when 20 per cent of its adult population is infected with the AIDS virus? In his WHO report, Professor Sachs proposes an action plan which would offer the citizens of the poorest countries in the world a set of basic services (ex: vaccines) which would cost US\$34 per person per year. Again, to implement such a plan, the resources of most developing countries are not enough. Donors need to increase their investments from the current US\$7 billion to US\$27 billion in 2007 and \$38 billion in 2015.

Beyond financial commitments, Canada needs to strengthen its international role of championing a national health care system founded on the principles of universality and public interest – principles which have served us well. Working to ensure that trade agreements are not obstacles to the creation and expansion of such national policies, or providing more active support to the major international human rights bodies (UN Commission on Human Rights) are other ways to better reflect Canadian values in our foreign policy when it comes to global health.

For now, the response of donor countries to financial calls to action has been somewhat mitigated. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria created last year has accumulated \$2.1 billion so far; \$7 billion a year is the target. Canada has pledged \$US100 million over five years. Each year, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) devotes six per cent of its budget to health programming, i.e. \$164 million. A substantial and steady increase of these budgets would be a first important step toward respecting our international commitment to health as a human right and toward a long-term investment in a global health care system which works both within and beyond our borders. **R**

CHANTAL BLOUIN IS RESEARCHER AT THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE. SHE, ALONG WITH NSI PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER JOHN FOSTER, WERE AMONG THE AUTHORS OF A REPORT ON CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND HEALTH FOR THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN CANADA, LED BY ROY ROMANOW.

Liberalization is running out of steam

► MESSAGE FROM NSI PRESIDENT, ROY CULPEPER

During the last quarter-century, income inequality has increased within most countries of the world. The number of countries in which income is distributed very unequally has increased from 29 in 1980 to 46 by the late 1990s. The trend is occurring in both the industrial countries and the developing countries, however, growing polarization between rich and poor households is particularly pronounced in developing countries, the former Soviet bloc, and China. The richest 20 per cent typically enjoy more than half of national income, a share that is rising, while the poorest 20 per cent receive 5 per cent or less. Meanwhile, the share of the middle class is declining.

What accounts for these trends? Much of the evidence points to the impact of economic liberalization – policies that are meant to facilitate globalization and spread the benefits to all. Instead, the benefits tend to be skewed in favour of those who are already rich.

Recently, international development research has overturned much conventional wisdom on the relationships between globalization, economic growth and inequality. Take the link between economic growth and inequality. In the 1950s, Simon Kuznets, a pioneer of the theory of economic growth, maintained that inequality in poor countries would inevitably widen with economic growth. He reasoned that rich merchants and capitalists would lead their countries into industrialization and prosperity, leaving an impoverished peasantry behind in the process.

Other pioneers of postwar growth theory, like the eminent Caribbean economist W. Arthur Lewis, argued that the agrarian poor would throng to the growing cities to find jobs in factories and in the service sector. For some time, their urban incomes would be only

slightly better than the subsistence wages they left behind in the countryside. Eventually, however, as the industrial sector grew, it would run out of recruits from the rural sector, and industrial workers' wages would rise, reducing the income gap with the rich. As a country's economic growth continued, promoting it into the ranks of the developed countries, inequality would fall. In other words, the conventional wisdom accepted a trade-off in the earlier phase of development between "equity" and "efficiency". Widening inequality was thought to be an unavoidable price poor countries would pay over several decades, but the payoff would eventually come with greater prosperity which would be more evenly shared among all citizens.

Unfortunately for Kuznets and Lewis, their accounts no longer square with the historical experience of some noteworthy developing countries. In particular, Asian countries such as Japan and Korea that made a rapid transition to industrialization in the 20th century were characterized by relatively low income inequality. Countries with higher inequality, by contrast, suffered significantly slower economic growth. This has led a younger generation of economists in the 1990s to revisit the relationship between economic growth and inequality. Contrary to the assertions of Kuznets, they conclude that high inequality actually undermines economic growth. Put differently, lower levels of income inequality lead to better growth performance; equity and efficiency are friends rather than enemies.

These economists argue that the countries with the best performance promote broad-based economic growth, in which the poor share the benefits. On this view, the poor can be "the solution rather than the

(continued on page 4) ►

-Review-

Editorial Team:

LOIS ROSS, NICOLE PORTEOUS

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Contact us at 55 Murray Street, Suite 200 – Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3

Tel: (613)241-3535; Fax: (613)241-7435; Email: nsi@nsi-ins.ca; www.nsi-ins.ca

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problem". If the poor are struggling on a daily basis to survive, they will allocate their meager resources accordingly. Their children will typically be regarded as extra hands to supplement family income (hence, producing more children that can be put to work makes sense).

However, if daily survival is not at issue, poor families will have fewer babies, and will not make their children work, preferring to send them to school. In other words, if they are not constantly looking for their next meal, the poor will have more scope to invest in their families and their futures.

This line of thought has also led to greater regard for the rural sector, which is still home to most of the world's poor. Asian countries experiencing rapid growth protected and nurtured their farmers and rural communities, through a range of policies, including land reform, the provision of public health services and education, infrastructure support, and agrarian institutions (extension services, research) that helped increase farm productivity and incomes. Instead of viewing the rural sector as hopelessly backward, and at best as a source of cheap labour for urban industry, these countries saw agricultural development as a vital route out of mass poverty and as perfectly complementary to industrial development.

It has been recognized for over a decade that if poverty is to be eradicated, the poor must have access to health services and schooling. There must also be a safety net (nonexistent in most developing countries) for those who fall into poverty through adverse circumstances. But is this enough? More recently the need to redistribute other assets, including land, to the poor has also been acknowledged by development agencies such as the World Bank. For decades land reform has been kept off the agenda since it was – and largely remains – too politically controversial. Yet, much of the success of "East Asian tigers" such as South Korea and Taiwan is attributed to large-scale land reform carried out in the 1950s in favour of smallholders.

Recent research also challenges Kuznets' prediction that rich countries will experience declining inequality. Indeed, a growing number of industrial countries have faced increasing inequality since the 1970s (led by the United States and the United Kingdom).

The rise of inequality in the last two decades has coincided with economic globalization. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by increasing emphasis on policies of liberalization meant to facilitate the process of global economic integration through international trade and investment. Mainstream economic theory, in fact, predicts that inequality in richer countries would increase with globalization, as wages are kept low with increasing competition from Third World countries, while the returns to capital escalate with global oppor-

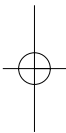
tunities for investment. Mainstream theory thus seems to provide a good fit with the distributional trends in industrial countries.

However, mainstream theory also predicts that, in *poor* countries, inequalities will fall as wages rise with widening opportunities in international markets. This does not appear to be happening – since inequalities appear to be rising in most countries, rich or poor. The most plausible explanation relates to vastly uneven capabilities in the face of a sudden opening to foreign trade and investment. A small, already rich, minority is well-positioned to seize on new market opportunities, particularly in the financial sector. But for the vast majority, some workers lose their jobs in older industries, while employment in new export industries does not and will not materialize for a host of reasons. For example, much ballyhoo has been made recently by the rich countries, including Canada, over giving unrestricted market access for the poorest countries. Yet, for example, Mozambique, Mali and most of sub-Saharan Africa are not in a position to start exporting garments or textiles or any other manufactured goods to Canada, without first establishing those industries and the infrastructure to support their production and exports. That requires, perhaps, a few decades of investment and institutional development.

The challenge posed by universally widening inequalities is hotly debated. Nonetheless, at a minimum, it can be said that the data confront the proponents of market liberalization policies with some awkward facts. Moreover, globalization is far from being an expressway out of poverty to widely-held prosperity, as its proponents would have us believe. At best, it may be likened to a slow crossing of a stormy ocean, full of dangers and uncertainties, both as to the voyage and the destination.

More fundamentally, redistribution is coming back onto the policy agenda, via higher social expenditures, social safety nets, land redistribution and investing in poor countries' agricultural development. Such policies will require considerable resources, and point to more taxes and greater intervention into the market economy. The doctrines favoured by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan two decades ago, which laid the foundation for the liberalization and globalization era, pointed in the opposite direction. But those doctrines are running out of steam, and the world is looking for policies that actually work. **R**

(This commentary is based on "Approaches to Globalization and Inequality within the International System," a paper prepared in August 2002 for a project of the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development on Improving Knowledge on Social Development in International Organizations. It is available on the web site at www.nsi-ins.ca)



Talisman's out...Now what?

The day after in southern Sudan

► BY LEE SEYMOUR

Calgary-based Talisman Energy's controversial investment in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operation Company (GNPOC) in war-torn Sudan was the subject of much publicity in recent years, little of it positive.

The company's critics argued that oil exacerbated conflict in Sudan, a charge substantiated in numerous independent reports. In particular, oil development has resulted in the violent displacement of tens of thousands of civilians inhabiting the oilfields and suspected of supporting the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

The process continues to this day, as I witnessed first-hand last September after traveling to Sudan to research the links between oil and conflict. My investigations led me to the fringes of the oilfields developed by Talisman and its partners. There, the scene is one of perpetual insecurity and heartbreaking deprivation for the region's traditional pastoralists. While traveling in south Sudan, I had occasion to ask a chief who he considered responsible for the plight of his people. He replied that they had three enemies: "the Arab", the name southern Sudanese use for Muslim northerners and the government in Khartoum, "China", and "Canada". It was the first time that the Canadian flag on my backpack was a source of shame. The tragedy of the situation was epitomized in the fact that, while all of these people recognized that oil was the cause of their suffering, few could even tell me what oil is or what it is used for.

Their principal advocate, and in turn Talisman's most vocal critic, is a diverse coalition of church, labour, human rights, development, and anti-slavery organizations. Their case against Talisman was based on the argument that the company's investment in Sudan was simply wrong. As Talisman's presence rendered it complicit in gross human rights violations, its departure would ultimately benefit the Sudanese people. With the sale of the company's controversial stake in Sudan to India's ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), their efforts were vindicated.

The success of this campaign is being heralded as a landmark moral victory. Exposing the tragedy in which Talisman is complicit forwards corporate social responsibility and sets a precedent for increased regulation in the future. But amid the celebration, we may be missing the broader picture. Some have argued that Talisman's departure leaves the average southern Sudanese no better off. I disagree. Instead, there is good reason to believe that it will actually deepen the links between oil and conflict, and thereby, worsen the plight of those unfortunate enough to live on top of Sudanese oil.

The reason is found in the inherent differences between Talisman, its partners in Sudan, and the company that has purchased its stake. Talisman is a publicly traded western corporation motivated by delivering shareholder value. However, its two principal partners, China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPC) and Malaysia's Petronas, both state-owned, have different motives (Sudapent, the Sudanese energy parastatal, is

the fourth partner with a five per cent share). CNPC and Petronas are, in effect, extensions of the military-industrial complexes of their home states with strategic interests beyond the corporate bottom-line. While trampling on human rights in the name of profit remains a contested practice, trampling on human rights in the name of national interest is well established.

Oil is central to the economic modernization of both China and Malaysia. For both, reducing dependence on oil imports is an urgent security priority. In order to protect their investments in Sudan, they have provided the Khartoum government with political, military, economic and financial assistance. China is Sudan's main arms patron and provides it with diplomatic cover, not least on the UN Security Council. Crucially, both countries are key creditors of the cash-strapped, debt-laden government of Sudan.

What then of OVL, the overseas arm of upstream India's giant state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp. that purchased Talisman's share in Sudan for C\$1.2 billion? The signs are not good. Describing its new presence in Sudan in terms of national security, company director Atul Chandra argued "The Sudan deal is a great leap forward in terms of national oil security."

In fact, state-owned firms from India, China and Malaysia are joining a growing number of technically proficient firms from the developing world that are becoming global players in the oil industry. An important component of their growth strategy has been to invest in places where sanctions prohibit western investment, such as Libya and Iran. Indeed, CNPC, Petronas and ONGC Videsh benefit from Sudan's deplorable human rights records insofar as this leads to decreased competition from western companies.

These state-owned enterprises do not raise capital exclusively on international markets and are protected by governments that suppress critical voices in civil society. In short, they are well insulated from the forms of social advocacy so successful against Talisman.

The above argument should not be read as justifying Talisman's presence in Sudan. I sympathize with the broad objectives of the company's critics, who underscore how little Talisman had to show for its policy of constructive engagement with the government of Sudan. But with the sale of Talisman's share, a company that its critics ensured had an interest in attempting to moderate the government of Sudan's policies has left. What remains are companies that actively support the government of Sudan and its war against southerners, with all its attendant human rights abuses. The moral calculus is thus vastly more complex, and our celebration over Talisman's departure utterly misplaced. **R**

LEE J.M. SEYMOUR IS A PH.D. CANDIDATE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT NORTH-WESTERN UNIVERSITY IN EVANSTON, ILLINOIS, AND A RESEARCH ASSOCIATE WITH THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE IN OTTAWA. HE TRAVELED TO SUDAN AND KENYA LAST SEPTEMBER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SUDAN'S CONFLICT.



View from the South

Zambia — Anatomy of a poor country in crisis

► BY GORDON MAIR

Geographically, Zambia is about the same size as Alberta, with a total population of 9.8 million, as compared to Alberta's population of some two million. However, this may be where meaningful comparisons end, because, unlike Alberta, or any other Canadian province for that matter, Zambia is 'poor' in the truest sense of the word. Oh, admittedly Alberta has had its share of recent economic problems – in fact, fairly serious problems by Canadian standards. However, 'poor' in Zambian terms is not an expression that could ever be applied to Alberta. To compare the two regions, Alberta and Zambia are about as far apart economically as they are alphabetically. Zambia is currently ranked 143 out of 162 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index, an index measuring average achievement in developing countries and, while Zambia is quite peaceful, it's interesting to note that all 19 countries appearing below Zambia on the list are currently involved in, or have recently been involved in, some sort of civil strife. However, such a low ranking is not hard to understand when you review the laundry list of problems facing this country, any one of which could bring a small developing country to its knees.

Zambia is confronting so many crises that it's difficult to know where to begin. Foremost has to be the food crisis. Many parts of the country are currently confronting famine conditions which have been brought about by summer crop failures, which in turn were brought about by the spring drought, which in turn was brought about by *El Niño*, a phenomenon which many experts now say is likely to be a recurring factor for years to come. The long-term forecast for agriculture in this country is, to say the least, worrisome. Other countries which have encountered similar agricultural crises have turned to long-term economic diversification in order to solve their problems, but it will be a frosty Friday in Zambia before Microsoft agrees to locate a microchip factory in Ndola or Livingstone.

No less devastating to this country is the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a scourge which currently infects some 20 per cent of the Zambian population, or a much higher percentage if you consider that part of the population which is of child-bearing age. If you ask the local people, they would be quick to add that malaria in Zambia is just as deadly. While Canada is coming to grips with its first confirmed deaths from the West Nile Virus, Zambia is coming to grips with up to two million reported cases of malaria each year, with a case fatality ratio of up to five per cent, (you do the math!). Since January, I have been to the funerals of four people with whom I worked. And these are not casual acquaintances, but people I saw often and who were part of my everyday life – like the young mechanic who was a mainstay at the CARE garage and the young woman two offices away in Human Resources. I'm trying to remember if I attended four funerals for co-workers in all of the 20 years that I worked in the Canadian government.

A third major crisis facing this country is the plight of its basic industry. Copper mining is so important to northern Zambia that the province in which the mines are located is called the Copperbelt. Zambia's economy was dealt a serious blow earlier this year when the mining giant Anglo American pulled out of the Konkola Copper Mines – the country's largest investment project – citing high costs of production and low copper prices. Directly and indirectly, this economic setback is expected to cost the Copperbelt up to 100,000 jobs – this in a country where the unemployment rate is already sky high, and where over 90 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line.

Finally, the external debt of Zambia is overwhelming and it will clearly be a major hindrance to development for the foreseeable future. From US\$6.3 billion at the end of 2000, the debt stock rose to US\$7.3 billion as at the end of 2001 due to continued borrowing and delayed debt relief implementation. Debt service payments for 2001 have amounted to US \$116.5 million. If these funds had been spent on the social sector, the positive impact would have been enormous. From reading the literature, the general opinion here with respect to the HIPC initiative in Zambia appears to be, "too little, too late!"

And how do I fit in all this? Well, as one of CARE International's two Assistant Country Directors, I'm part of a team of international professionals who have been posted here by CARE Canada to confront the effects of this litany of problems. I'm just finishing up the first year of a two-year contract with CARE and the past twelve months have been challenging to say the least. As well as being heavily involved in the current food crisis, the mission is also involved in a series of other ongoing initiatives which address such issues as HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment, the health of orphans and vulnerable children, sexual and gender-based violence, maintenance of refugee camps (for Angolan and Congolese refugees), urban renewal, rural development, as well as micro-finance projects which provide assistance to small businesses. Zambia is a difficult posting. It's not for the faint of heart and, sometimes, I often find myself longing for the quiet time that I used to spend on the Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa at noon hours. However, when all is said and done, nothing could be more rewarding than to see the smiles on the faces of the people who are being helped by CARE's programs. Living and working here in Zambia is as different from what I left behind as night is from day, but in spite of everything, I've asked CARE to be allowed to continue here in Zambia for an additional two years. As they say, if you're not part of the solution...Well, you know the rest. **R**

GORDON MAIR WAS THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE FOR THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE FROM NOVEMBER 1999 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2001. SINCE THEN HE HAS BEEN IN THE FIELD, WORKING WITH CARE IN ZAMBIA AS ASSISTANT COUNTRY DIRECTOR.

Goals for a new millennium

Charting civil society's course

► BY JOHN FOSTER

The new millennium may already be feeling a bit old for some, particularly as the list of long-term challenges – environmental ruin, poverty, violence – continues to lengthen.

In a burst of enthusiasm, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan convinced political leaders to celebrate the year 2000 by signing a Millennium Declaration and within it a series of goals to which all 189 UN member states are pledged. By 2015 they will reduce by half the proportion of people suffering from hunger and living on less than a dollar a day, they will halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, they will ensure environmental sustainability.

Authorities like the World Bank have estimated that a minimum of an additional \$50 billion (US) annually is necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. NGO experts who've looked at the problem put the figure close to double that amount.

As this fall's UN General Assembly opened, Kofi Annan alerted delegates to the fact that even with the additional commitments in ODA made at Monterrey,

the world community was already falling far short of what was needed to accomplish the Goals.

In an attempt to both identify and encourage initiatives by civil society organizations to contribute to fulfilling the Millennium Declaration and its Goals, the World Federation of United Nations Association initiated a project to elicit examples as well as opinions of civil society organizations around the world. The North-South Institute was a prime partner in this effort along with the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics.

A survey based on four key goal areas (poverty alleviation, AIDS, conflict prevention and UN renewal) was circulated electronically to more than 5,000 CSOs around the world. The results (quite limited in number if not in scope of response) were analyzed and summarized. The NSI's John Foster developed and implemented the inquiry. Then, together with Pera Wells of WFUNA, authored a popular report on the results: *"We the peoples...A Call to Action for the UN Millennium Declaration"*.
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"We the peoples..." like the survey on which it is based is published in English, French and Spanish. It was launched at the annual NGO conference – attended by more than 2000 people – sponsored by the UN Department of Public Information in New York in September, 2002. It has been sent by WFUNA to every head of state and to the UNAs in each country, in an attempt to raise the visibility of civil society responses to the Millennium Declaration and to remind governments of the obligations to which they committed themselves in 2000.


The responses which inform "We the peoples..." were extremely diverse. Organizations are engaged in a multitude of practical efforts to meet the Goals, from education on sustainable agriculture to AIDS prevention education and care.

Virtually half the CSOs who responded to our survey argue that the Millennium Declaration and Goals do not go far enough. As one commented: "Who is going to tell 50 per cent of the poor that they are not going to reach even a dollar a day?" There is also a significant regional difference regarding whether the Goals will be accomplished or not, with the Asian groups being most positive, and those in Latin America and the North convinced, almost two to one, that the Goals will not be fully realized.

Many CSOs – among them, the Social Watch

network – are interested in monitoring what, how and to what extent the governments are meeting commitments. A number are also involved in examining policies of the South and North to determine whether these encourage or obstruct achievement of the Goals. As one Tunisian NGO stated: "We should have ways to 'punish' governments with policies that oppose the Millennium Development Goals."

"We the peoples..." continues to make waves, through the UN system, on the internet and at various conferences. The engagement of civil society with the MDGs was the centrepiece of a luncheon for 30 General Assembly delegates in mid-November. A coalition of NGOs is pursuing issues of policy dialogue with the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO and the General Assembly, at "high-level" meetings in April and October, 2003. The UN has established a series of task groups to pursue progress on each goal, and the Secretary-General has appointed former Dutch Development Minister Evelyn Herfkens, to take a leadership role in a world campaign for the Goals.

The NSI will continue to collaborate with WFUNA in doing an annual assessment, not only to monitor and document what CSOs are doing, but to encourage action for the Goals and beyond them. 

JOHN FOSTER IS THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE'S PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY.

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Engendering trade: A case study of labour mobility agreements

► BY HEATHER GIBB

Introducing a gender equality perspective to international trade policy presents many challenges, including widespread perceptions among trade officials that trade liberalization is about economic growth, while “gender” has to do with domestic social policy, such as social safety nets, and is therefore outside the “trade” bailiwick. The introduction of labour mobility provisions in international trade agreements, however, begins the trade official’s journey across the artificial boundary separating economic from social policy and external from domestic policy.

A team of researchers at The North-South Institute is taking a close look at Canadian commitments under labour mobility provisions associated with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). With funding from Status of Women Canada’s Policy Research Fund, the team is developing a gender analysis framework to apply to a study of the content and potential impacts of these agreements on Canadian workers. The study is linked to a broader program of work at the Institute on trade, labour and migration.

The movement of business and professional service providers across borders immediately brings “trade” into the realm of domestic issues related to immigration, labour market development, and accreditation.


The movement of people may be thought of as a third “liberalization” that is associated with globalization. While institutional arrangements have been developed to address issues related to liberalization of trade and financial flows, political sensitivities associated with movement of people across borders have constrained negotiations on comparable agreements governing the movement of people, except for a very small group of highly-skilled business professionals. However, this issue can be expected to take on increasing significance. Within the WTO, negotiations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) will increasingly focus on barriers to the mobility of service providers. Several developing countries want concessions under Mode 4 to be extended from the present concentration on skilled professional and business services, to include more semi-skilled and less skilled worker categories. The issue is also being addressed within the FTAA and other sub-regional trade agreements that Canada is negotiating.

Mexico has indicated a strong interest in further expanding the number and type of its service workers allowed to work temporarily in Canada and the US, whether under the NAFTA services provisions or some other framework, such as Canada’s program for seasonal agricultural workers. Another project in the Institute’s trade, migration and labour program is examining Canada’s Migrant Agricultural Workers Program as a model of best practices in cross-border trade in temporary labour services.

In addition, like many developed countries facing labour shortages in key sectors, the Canadian government is considering ways to attract foreign workers to Canada to fill skills gaps. While the NSI study will not focus on bilateral arrangements regulating temporary movement of labour into Canada, it will inquire into the relationship between commitments on labour mobility grounded in trade agreements and those achieved through more flexible measures that can respond to changing domestic labour market conditions.

A gender analysis of arrangements affecting the cross-border movement of people to provide services is important, since in Canada and elsewhere, women form the majority of employees in services. The project will apply a gender analysis framework to two case studies: nurses and women business owners. Among questions the framework addresses are whether professional categories included in trade-related labour mobility agreements include sectors and professions where women are substantially represented in the Canadian labour market; whether there are gender considerations in the implementation of existing agreements; and whether women’s business organizations or professional associations have been well represented in formal and informal domestic consultations on labour mobility issues.

Researchers Chantal Blouin, Heather Gibb, Maire McAdams (intern) and Ann Weston are currently conducting interviews with key government officials in the departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Industry Canada, Customs and Immigration Canada, and Human Resources Development Canada. Representatives will be asked about their experiences in the consultation processes involved in developing Canadian policy and commitments, as well as their views about the actual implementation of the labour mobility agreements.

The preliminary project results will be shared at a workshop with key informants and members of the project advisory committee in January 2003. A final report will be available in April. 

HEATHER GIBB IS A SENIOR RESEARCHER WITH THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE AND THE PROJECT COORDINATOR OF THIS RESEARCH ON LABOUR MOBILITY. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, HEATHER CAN BE CONTACTED AT hgibb@nsi-ins.ca

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Through Indigenous Eyes: Toward Appropriate Decision-making Processes regarding Mining On or Near Ancestral Lands. Final Synthesis Report, Phase 1

by Viviane Weitzner

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ISBN 1-896770-54-1 \$20

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Final Document —Colombia: Possibilities and Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples with regard to Consultations and Agreements within the Mining Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean: Thematic Exploration.

by Gladys Jimeno

This report highlights the complex issues facing Colombia's Indigenous peoples affected by mining and other activities on or near their ancestral lands. Based on participatory research undertaken by the Institute of Regional Studies of the University of Antioquia, the report focuses on the experiences of consultation and participation in decision-making of the Wayu People in the La Guajira area, the Koggi.

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by Marcus Colchester, Jean La Rose and Kid James (March 2002)

This document explores the issues at the crossroads of mining and Amerindian peoples in Guyana. It is based on participatory research undertaken by the Amerindian Peoples Association, a national Indigenous organization. The findings include the weakness of Guyanese governmental institutions dealing with mining; the negative social and environmental impacts of small-scale mining on Amerindians, the divide and conquer tactics Amerindians face when dealing with medium and large-scale companies.

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Meaningful Consultation and Participation in the Mining Sector? A Review of the Consultation and Participation of Indigenous Peoples within the International Mining Sector by Gail Whiteman and Katy Mamen (March 2002)

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by Paul J. Nelson (April 2002)

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Civil Society Voices and the International Monetary Fund by Jan Aart Scholte (May 2002)

This is a report arising from NSI's *Civil Society Voices and the Multilateral Organizations* project. It examines the relations of the International Monetary Fund with civil society organizations.

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This edition will be available in the new year.

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Report of a conference organized by the NSI which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from April 30-May 2, 2002. The conference gave voice to leading African experts on issues related to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Participants discussed financing for development, aid reform in Africa, aid coordination and donor reform and other poverty reduction strategies in light of the UN Millennium Development Goals. This volume will be available in both French and English.

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By Annette Aurelie Desmarais

In this document from NSI's project, the author brings a history and knowledge of the global campesino movement to her examination of the relations between the WTO and small farmers.

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THE PROJECT PIPELINE

In addition to the work described in other sections of the *Review*, the Institute has launched a number of new projects in recent months. These include:

Migrant workers and globalization

This research project analyzes the benefits for migrant workers operating in a globalized economy. Entitled *Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program as a Model of Best Practices in Migrant Workers Participation in the Benefits of Economic Globalization*, the project will study the temporary labour migration from Mexico to Canada and from the Caribbean to Canada. It will identify the areas where the program can build better management and employment practices to address the areas where workers' best interests have not been fully considered.

Contact: R.G. Robinson at rrobinson@nsi-ins.ca

International development studies in Canada

This project of the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) and the NSI, is entitled *International Development Studies in Canada: 'A White Paper'*. It will involve a review of the theoretical state of international development studies in Canada; a review of the institutional context for the study of international development in Canada; and a set of recommendations to enhance the study of

international development in Canada. The principal output of this project will be a 'White Paper', to challenge the status quo and invite broad participation where the need for change is indicated.

Contact: Ann Weston at aweston@nsi-ins.ca

Trade agreements, labour mobility and gender equality

NSI is beginning a new research project entitled *Engendering Labour Mobility Provisions in Trade Agreements: A Canadian Case Study* on trade policy in the services sector. It will focus on provisions in trade agreements such as the North-American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Both agreements deal with labour mobility, especially the mobility of service providers. The project, funded by Status of Women Canada, will examine how these commitments interact with Canadian gender equality policies in particular, and with labour market policies more generally.

Contacts: Heather Gibb at hgibb@nsi-ins.ca; Ann Weston at aweston@nsi-ins.ca; Chantal Blouin at acblouin@nsi-ins.ca

NSI PEOPLE

NSI Board of Directors

We are pleased to welcome the following new Board members as of May 2002:

- Farokh Afshar, University of Guelph
- George Davies, Acres Management Consulting
- Lloyd LeVan Hall, Chartered Accountant
- Philip Johnson, Pinnacle Reefs Ltd.
- John Stackhouse, The Globe and Mail
- Nicolas Toutoungi, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec

(For a complete list of the Board, please visit the NSI web site.)

Staff change

Jean Daudelin, Principal Researcher, Conflict and Human Security left the Institute to join the Faculty of Carleton University as Assistant Professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. 