

Global Social Policy Digest 13.3

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Global Social Policies: Redistribution, Regulation and Rights

REDISTRIBUTION

Plans and debates on taxation and development finance more broadly have taken place in various global fora; particularly at the UN (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>). While we still have to await the first meeting of the *Inter-Governmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing*¹ (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>) (28-30 August 2013), its provisional agenda includes international tax cooperation and tax systems. In preparation is also a high-level side event of the “Leading Group of Countries” (who have pioneered the Airline Ticket Tax which helps fund UNITAID) on 24 September 2013, in the margins of the opening of the 68th UN General Assembly. Critics argue that the Tobin taxes “double-sided nature” could mean that pension funds could see transaction costs rise by around 1,500%. Carlo Cottarelli, Head of Fiscal Affairs of the IMF, argued that EU countries should have instigated a levy on Bank Profit or on the value added of the financial sector, and not used a financial transaction tax (FTT) on trading.

Another issue is how to use the proceeds of the FTT – originally the idea had been to use the Tobin tax for development, but then, as Jomo K.S. emphasises, it now appears as a way to supplement national budgets. It is against this background that three Development Ministers (from France, Belgium, Germany) wrote an article in the Belgian and Spanish Press calling for part of the annual 35 billion Euro proceeds of the FTT to be spent on development (<http://www.leadinggroup.org>). Related is an ODI project on global tax regulation which suggests that there is a need to go beyond development finance and to focus on specific global policy changes.

Meanwhile, the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report shows that in 2012 Humanitarian Assistance provided from donor countries fell by 8% with the OECD DAC countries seeing a fall of 11% in giving. In terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA), there is concern that donors are balking at allowing countries from the global south to lead on development. Despite promises to let developing countries choose their own priorities, many

¹ The Rio Plus 20 Conference recognized the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to give strong support to developing countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development. They agreed to establish this intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, to assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy. The committee was established on 21 June 2013 with the adoption of General Assembly decision 67/559 which defines the membership of the committee.

donors have pulled back on “country ownership.” This is visible in the budget support figures published annually by the OECD with a breakdown by provider, which can be used as a proxy for commitment to country ownership. According to Ukan and Bond, global budget support fell steeply, to only \$1.3bn last year from \$4.4bn in 2010. Even Denmark, a champion of budget support, has provided less cash.

This development happens, while the MDG Report 2013 was published, and the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development,” providing a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty. Related issues were discussed at the UN DESA Forum for Dialogue on the post-2015 development framework and Disability in New York.

An ODI report on “Localising aid: a whole of society approach” is more concerned with how aid gets delivered to the whole country rather than raised or passed through global initiatives of budget support. Into this mix about how to finance post-2015 development comes a contribution on Development Impact Bonds (DIBs) from the Centre for Global Development, commented on by Duncan Green’s blog.

There were also several contributions on Aid for Trade. Aid for Trade at a Glance 2013: Connecting to Value Chains says that the emergence of value chains strengthens the rationale for trade-related assistance and should reinvigorate the aid-for-trade debate. Pascal Lamy has argued: “We cannot afford to lose the momentum on Aid for Trade” and in a joint statement, 27 governments and organizations at the Fourth Aid for Trade Global Review on 8 July 2013 underlined the importance of providing technical assistance to trade facilitation programmes of developing countries. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the WTO, on 8 July 2013, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building for African countries.

REGULATION

If international taxation is considered an appropriate way to fight inequality and poverty, how to make it work, is of course, strongly connected to issues of regulation; and global activities have been both about the proper functioning of national tax systems, as about the global coordination and facilitation of such systems. Among the conclusions from the G8 Summit Leaders Communiqué is a focus on taxes:

We will act to restore confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of our international tax rules and practices, and to ensure that each country is able to collect taxes owing and that developing countries are also able to secure the benefits of progress made on this agenda.

(section 23)

Important guidance comes from the OECD on base erosion and profit shifting, summarised in the BEPS action plan that describes how governments, individual tax payers and companies are being harmed by base erosion and profit shifting. Related ideas were also presented to G20 finance ministers. Furthermore, the OECD opened public debate about its Model Tax Convention, more concretely the tax treaty treatment of termination payments.

However, some are calling for states not to sign OECD model tax treaties, and Richard Murphy refers to BEPS and development countries as “a pretty sorry tale.” Meanwhile, the OECD’s Tax Inspectors without Borders Initiative was approved (see also GSP Digest 12.3). And at the UN, related discussion happened at an ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

Regarding the post-2015 development agenda and the role and potential contribution of business, the Global Compact submitted a report outlining how to engage business towards sustainable development goals, and making recommendations on ways that governments can advance inclusive and sustainable markets. On a related topic, the Human Rights Council held a panel discussion on the role of the UN in Advancing the Business and Rights agenda. At that event, Navi Pillar, UN Commissioner for Human Rights, said

the business of trading had sustained billions of lives around the world since the beginning of time and it was a mistake to demonize globalization. It was true however that globalization had created dissonance due to competing interests so business activities had to be checked in order to avoid human rights violations.

Governments were obliged to protect employees through effective legislation, yet they failed to regulate the human rights impact of business to ensure access to justice for victims. The UN had a role to play in integrating the business and human rights agenda into its work. It could incorporate the Guiding Principles into its post-2015 framework as well as into its strategies for partnering with business.

Meanwhile, the B20, an informal network of business associations, announced the creation of a Collective Action Hub to fight corruption.

At the launch of the OECD's International Migration Outlook , OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said

Governments must do everything they can to improve immigrants' job prospects ... Tackling high and long-term unemployment now is essential. Continuing to help immigrants integrate will also ensure they can play their part in driving growth as the global economy recovers

Furthermore, at a panel discussion as special event to the UN GA, labour mobility and the protection of migrants' rights were addressed.

RIGHTS

Though the regulatory debates dominated the discussion there was a bit of a focus on issues of individual rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights held a meeting “Rights in Crisis: An expert meeting on rights-based approaches to financial regulation, macroeconomic policies and economic recovery.” This meeting recognized that financial regulation certainly plays a role in the provision of human rights and that a fair and equitable economic system must ensure protection of individual human rights.

In May, a group of UN human rights experts highlighted the need to address systematic injustice in the post-2015 development goals. They argued that the post-2015 agenda must include three key factors: eliminating inequality, providing social protection floors, a double accountability mechanism which would hold countries accountable at both national and international levels.

Inequality itself often triggers social problems that further marginalize groups that are left behind and neglected, while unequal access to wealth allows runaway

resource use by the wealthy, leading to environmental degradation and climate change, whose impacts fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable.

Bringing a focus on migrant rights, the 18th Session of the Committee on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was 15-26 April in Geneva. Meanwhile, the sixth meeting of States parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) was held on in May in New York.

The World Bank's performance in respecting human rights in its operations is discussed in the Human Rights Watch report "Abuse-Free Development. How the World Bank Should Safeguard Against Human Rights Violations."

Global Social Governance

On 17-18 June 2013, the G8 summit took place in Northern Ireland (UK). Its Leaders Communiqué expresses continued concern about economic uncertainties and on-going crisis, and names as its key priority the promotion of growth and employment with a particular focus on youth and the long-term unemployed; as well as further plans for breaking down trade barriers and making the tax systems fairer (related to the OECD activities reported in Regulation, and previous digests). Among suggested actions is:

Structural reforms are key to improving sustainable growth and long-term living standards, enhancing competitiveness, providing well-functioning credit channels for investment ... and strengthening confidence. Urgent and specific measures are needed to create quality jobs, particularly for the young and the long-term unemployed. We are all committed to make the necessary reforms in our own economies to support stronger financial systems, healthy labour markets, jobs and growth, and bolster world trade.

Furthermore, the WTO is supported in its

central role ... in setting the rules that underpin global trade, in bringing down the barriers to trade that currently inhibit global growth, in resisting and rolling back protectionism and in ensuring proper rules enforcement for a level playing field in world trade. We support the continued provision of an effective

protectionism monitoring mechanism and measures to further strengthen the peer review process in the WTO. We welcome the new Director-General and pledge our support for efforts to build a strong agenda that maintains the centrality of the WTO. ...

Alex Coham describes the tax discussions at the G8 as “the end of the beginning of tackling financial secrecy” while Action Aid hints at the risk that G8 tax deals look like a “self-serving club,” and that the voices of developing countries have to be taken into account as well.

However, certain developing countries, namely emerging economies, have achieved historic shifts and a global economic transformation which ensure that their voices are no longer being ignored. The IMF has noted that, “this year will be the first in which emerging markets account for more than half of world GDP on the basis of purchasing power.” In addition, emerging economies continue to amplify their role and leave their imprint on global financial architecture. Recently, former World Bank president James Wolfensohn noted that the BRICS have “a very serious claim on leadership” of institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and other global institutions. Latin American countries, with Brazil at the helm, have already pointed to disagreements with the way the IMF is handling the Greek bailout. Guido Mantega, Brazil’s finance minister, has become an outspoken critic of the IMF and has voiced the need for developing countries to have greater representation on the board. Similarly, Brazil has given its new role as a global economic power called on the IMF to change the way it calculates debt.

The G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (www.g20.org) meeting in Moscow also addressed the role of the IMF, and concluded “completing the on-going reforms of IMF governance is indispensable for enhancing its credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness”. Meanwhile, the IMF itself is enhancing its data openness and accountability. A discussion within the IMF reflects the need for the IMF to be more present in dialogue on international tax issues.

More interestingly, the first ever G20 Finance and Labour Ministers’ Meeting was held in Moscow on 19 July, with a focus on the coordination of finance, labour and employment policies in promoting growth and job creation. Resulting was a Joint G20 Finance and Labour Ministers’ Communiqué, saying that:

We strongly support current efforts to find the right balance between the labour demand and labour supply, while ensuring adequate social protection through a comprehensive and coherent policy package. ... Implementing labour market and social investment policies that support aggregate demand and reduce inequality, such as broad-based increased in productivity, targeted social protection, appropriately set minimum wages with respect to national wage-setting systems, national collective bargaining arrangements, and other policies to reinforce the links between productivity, wages, and employment; ... We recognize the importance of establishing nationally determined social protection floors, and of modernising the social protection systems to raise their coverage, effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, and sustainability. Our social protection policies should incentivise work for those who are able, supporting them to find and stay in employment.

Also as part of the process of preparing the G20 Summits, particularly facing the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (see also Social Protection), ILO Director-General Guy Ryder and OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría called on G20 labour ministers,

to reinforce cooperation with a view to enhancing the design and scale of their employment, labour market and social protection policies in order to achieve higher levels of productive and rewarding employment and to contribute to a strengthening of the world economy.

And states:

The Russian Presidency has rightly placed growth and jobs high on the agenda of the G20. The G20 will be assessed by public opinion around the world on its capacity to deliver and the growth and jobs agenda. This calls for a combination of policies to lift aggregate demand in those countries where it is weak and to enhance business investment and entrepreneurship development more generally. Of particular importance are measures to raise investment, particularly in infrastructure, improve and continue access of small enterprises to bank credit; expand the coverage of social protection; sustain the income of low-paid workers through appropriately-set minimum wages and in-work benefits; promote the role

of collective bargaining in setting wages in line with productivity growth; and lift the employment prospects of young women and men.

A report on G20-B20 engagement effectiveness also was released.

Meanwhile, the UN GA adopted two resolutions by consensus - the first outlining the format and organizational aspects of a High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, as mandated by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) last year, and the second reaffirming the role of the United Nations in global economic governance.

Whether or not all of this matters, though, has become subject of the so-called “GZero” debate. While Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, is rather oriented towards more effective global (social) governance when demanding “a new Bretton Woods”:

international monetary and financial relations should be governed by rules similar to those currently governing the use of trade policy measures in the WTO ... Financial supervision should therefore be applied at both ends of capital movements. Already, the IMF has recently changed its position on the use of capital controls under certain circumstances. However, a multilateral arrangement (such as the “Tobin Tax”) would probably be more effective. ... It is clear that truly preventing future financial crisis will require an overhaul of the current system tantamount to a new Bretton Woods. Any such system must, of course, give greater voice to developing nations than they have so far enjoyed in the international financial institutions.

Finally, the OECD has a new Director at the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs – Stefano Scarpetta; and the ILO appointed Isabel Ortiz to head the Social Protection Department.

International Actors and Social Policy

HEALTH

While, as mapped by the Kaiser Foundation, the donor landscape in global health is complex, global health funding continues to stagnate or even decline which speaks to a more general impression that global attention has somewhat shifted away from health (see digest 13.2), and reflects a general downturn in ODA (see Redistribution) as well as health spending (according to OECD Health Data 2013).

It is doubtful that the new UN framework will make a difference that seeks to give 15 million people with HIV/AIDS access to antiretroviral treatment by 2015. But Jomo K.S.'s reflections on international development finance highlight some health related development in terms of institutions and projects in the field of health (such as Product RED, Debt2Health) that have a potential to serve as positive examples.

In international governmental organisations, the focus was more on health workers than on how to finance global health or issues of taxation. In May, the 66th World Health Assembly took place in Geneva. World Bank President Jim Yong Kim called for universal access to quality, affordable health services. A resolution was adopted on the importance of educating health workers to realise universal health coverage. A related contribution comes from the Bretton Woods Project, entitled “A healthy step forward? World Bank outlines vision for healthcare.”

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Developments within the world of global social protection policy have been slower and less transparent in the period under review following the earlier rush of global policy making that established the ILO's Social Protection Floors (SPF) Recommendation, the World Bank's new Social Protection and Labour Strategy, the new Social Protection Inter Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) and the joint World Bank-UNICEF work on Social Protection Systems (see GSP Digest 13.1 and 13.2; For background see here).

Within the ILO the new Director-General Guy Ryder appears to have given the SPF high priority and has renamed the old Social Security Department (SOCSEC) (previously headed by Michael Cichon who masterminded the SPF) the Social Protection Department

(SOCPRO). The twin track approach to social protection is expressed on its website (<http://www.ilo.org/secsoc/about-us/>) thus:

The work of the ILO on the extension of social protection is based on the two-dimensional strategy (which) aims at the rapid implementation of national social protection floors (horizontal dimension)....in line with the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the progressive achievement of higher levels of protection (vertical dimension) within comprehensive social security systems guided by the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)

Within SOCPRO are five sections/areas of work one of which is Policy Development and Applied Research dealing with pensions, social health protection and the social protection floor (this is in effect the policy section of the defunct Social Security Department). The new Director of this Department is (from 1 October 2013) Isabel Ortiz who was an active campaigner for the SPF when at UNICEF. We look forward to her influence on the future of social protection, not only as an ILO policy but in terms of policy synergy between the ILO, Bank, UNICEF and other agencies.

There is no mention on the web pages of SOCPRO of the UN-Social Protection Floor Initiative meetings of which have not been convened since January 2012. The newly created SPIAC-B is not directly mentioned either but can be found via the continuing GESS web site. No meeting of SPIAC-B has been convened since February 2013 (GSP Digest 13.2), although one is scheduled for October in Brussels. The ILO's SOCPRO Policy and Applied Research Department have been active in trying to get agreement between the ILO, OECD, World Bank etc to a common set of data on social protection and social security.

As reported earlier (GSP Digest 13.1 and 13.2) the secretariat of SPIAC-B moved to the ILO New York Office who have revised their website and included within it a full record of SPIAC-B related activities (bit.ly/182bZOv). Among recent events was the second seminar of the three-module Seminar Series on Advancing Social Protection Floors, organized jointly by the UNITAR New York Office and ILO which concentrated on financing social protection and included sessions on Fiscal Space and Social Protection Financing, a presentation and discussion of the Global Fund for Social Protection Initiative as well as some consideration on social protection financing from the perspective of the International Monetary Fund. The last

in the series will happen on 28 August and will discuss tackling inequalities via SPFs and advancing SPFs through the multi-lateral system.

The SPIAC-B pages of the ILO New York Office web site have links to the <http://www.socialprotectionfloor-gateway.org/> (established by UNICEF as a help to the UNSPF-I when Isabel Ortiz was at UNICEF, but this page is not updated). The New York ILO SPIAC-B pages also link to the <http://www.socialprotection.org/> (the G20 Social Protection Pages set up in 2012 while the ILO was driving the SPF through the G20), but these are fitfully updated by (and certainly show no imprint of recent G20 interest. The only way to understand this demise of social protection floor related web sites is to read *Global Social Policy in the Making: The Foundations of the Social Protection Floor* published by Policy Press in July.

In fact, despite not appearing on the 2011-G20 initiated social protection web site, the Joint G20 2013 Finance and Labour Ministers' Communiqué continues to acknowledge the importance of social protection floors. Paragraph 9 asserts that

We recognize the importance of establishing nationally determined social protection floors, and of modernizing the social protection systems to raise their coverage, effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, and sustainability. Our social protection policies should incentivise work for those who are able, supporting them to find and stay in employment.

This form of words is also to be found in the outcome of the prior meeting of the Labour Ministers. In preparation for the Meeting of G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Moscow, 18–19 July 2013 the ILO and OECD jointly prepared: *Addressing employment, labour market and social protection challenges in G20 countries: Key measures since 2010*. Also from the ILO is “Governments, employers” and workers’ organizations must take action to ensure decent job opportunities and social protection for growing and ageing populations, concludes the International Labour Conference Committee on Employment and Social Protection in the New Demographic Context.

Meanwhile the World Bank has advanced further its ideas concerning SPARC; a suggested framework for assessing social protection systems first muted in February (See GSP Digest 13.2). A meeting in June in Washington focused upon that. The Bank proposed

the cooperation with and participation of everybody but under the overall leadership and secretariat of the World Bank. Is this a challenge to the ILO-Bank Chairing of the SPIAC-B? One issue will surely be the role of the SPF Recommendation 202 and its guiding principles in any assessment of the adequacy of social protection programmes and systems. Certainly the struggle over terms to be used to describe elements of social protection systems continues with the Bank publishing recently, without a reference to SPFs its *Closing the Gap: The State of Social Safety Nets 2013*.

An important upcoming issue is the prominence to be given to social protection systems and social protection floors in the Post 2015 UN Development Agenda increasingly focused upon sustainable development goals. The Report of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda: “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development,” has nothing to say about either social protection systems or social protection floors. There is the Bank’s “Social protection, poverty and the post-2015 agenda” report, The ILO explicitly calls for job creation and social protection to be included in the list of Development Goals which will be drawn up by the United Nations after the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals passes in 2015. . UN human rights experts have called for the post-2015 development agenda to be urgently refocused on equality, social protection and accountability (See Rights section).

Worth noting from the OECD is an OECD/EC report “A good life in old age?” and the fact that the work of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi commission on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress is to be continued by a high level expert group.

EDUCATION

The lack of financial support for education at global levels has become an important issue given the long term links between education and development. According to the 9th UNESCO GMR policy paper, progress in reducing the number of children out of school has come to a virtual standstill just as international aid to basic education falls for the first time since 2002. This was also one of the main warnings that were given in the context of the “Learning for All” ministerial roundtable, which was organized in the context of the last World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings. The fact that education, as a sector, was absent from the communiqué of the last G-8 meeting is something that has also raised important concerns among the international education community.

In such a negative juncture in the education for development field, the Global Campaign for Education and its members consider that “being the foundation of all developmental sectors, education must be elevated to the highest priority by the global community”. In fact, a new multimedia tool elaborated by the Global Partnership for Education reflects about the value of education for multi-dimensional development. Education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future and is critical to reducing poverty and inequality. Among other things, it shows that over the past 4 decades, the global increase in women's education has prevented more than 4 million child deaths.

The EU organised a high level conference on Education and Development in Brussels “to mobilise political commitment and leadership, to make improved learning a reality for all children and to move from challenges to opportunities” (see the agenda , the concept note and the background document of the event). The transcript of the Closing Speech delivered by Commissioner Piebalgs at the High Level Event is available as well (see the finalised Report of the EU High Level Event on Education and Development for the main conclusions). Meanwhile, UNESCO and the Permanent Mission of Denmark organized the high-level discussion “Moving from access to learning in the Post-2015 dialogue: Why indicators matter and how we can use them well.” You can watch the event by visiting the UN WEB TV. In July 2012, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed former United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown to be the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, to help galvanize support for Mr. Ban’s Global Education First Initiative. You can read an interview to Mr. Brown in relation to this recent appointment here.

On May 30, the first report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 development agenda was released. The report, which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030 and deliver on the promise of sustainable development, can be downloaded in the different UN languages from here. Different reactions to the treatment that education has received in the context of the Panel can be read in Norrag news and in the Education International blog, Education in Crisis.

World Bank president, Jim Yong Kim has put global education on his priority list, however major ideological differences are emerging between education coalitions about whether this should be delivered through a private or public model. The Bretton Woods project reflect on the contradictions this may generate in the following article.

FOOD

While food prices continue to drop, as the Food Price Watch in July 2013 reported, prices are still high and the development connected to high uncertainties. Also in FAO's "The State of Food and Agriculture" report, some progress is marked, however, as FAO head Graziano da Silva said at the launch event there was still "a long way ahead". Furthermore, FAO reported a historic high in cereal production.

The G8 Leaders Communiqué reaffirms the

commitment to respond with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food and nutrition security, and note that we have met our financial pledges made at L'Aquila in 2009 and will work to complete disbursements. We reaffirm our commitment to the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition and welcome progress since its launch in 2012.

(section 45-55)

Linking to the tax debate, "Enough Food for Everyone" states:

Today's G8 tax deal is a step in the right direction, but it also leaves major unfinished business. Although the G8 has set out the right ambition on information exchange, poor countries battling hunger can't afford to wait to be included. It's progress that more tax authorities will know who owns phantom firms so they can crackdown on them, but a summit focussed on transparency can't justify keeping this information secret.

Responding to the continued urgency of the food crisis, the World Bank announced it would nearly triple direct financing for maternal and early childhood nutrition programs in developing countries in 2013-14 to \$600 million. In a self-evaluation, the World Bank recommends for its own activities:

First, ensure that country-driven food crisis response programs are sufficiently resourced with administrative budgets. Second, develop quality assurance procedures for food crisis response programs that mitigate the potential adverse effects of speedy preparation and implementation. Third, assist countries to better target the people most vulnerable to a food price crisis [...] with appropriate nutrition interventions in their mitigation programs. Fourth, work with client countries and development partners to identify practical mechanisms (including

indicators) for monitoring nutritional and welfare outcomes and impacts of food crises and mitigation programs, and work with them to implement those mechanisms and to report the results.

HABITAT, LAND, HOUSING

To some extent related to the issues around food are also discussions around habitat, land and housing. The G8 Leaders Communiqué states

Weak land governance and property rights systems can lead to opaque land deals, which facilitate corruption and undercut responsible actors seeking access to land for productive investment. [...] We welcome global activities to improve land tenure governance, including through access to information and participation of citizens in decision making. [...] We will support greater transparency in land transactions including at early stages, and increased capacity to develop good land governance systems in developing countries.

(section 43-44)

The World Bank in its “Securing Africa’s Land for Shared Prosperity” argues that “poor land governance – the manner in which rights are defined and administered – may be the root of the problem”, and a related blog discusses these issues further.