

## Civil Society Engagement eNewsletter - April 2005

This is the April 2005 edition of the World Bank Civil Society Engagement eNewsletter which is a regular electronic newsletter sent to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) worldwide. It is produced by the Civil Society Team of the World Bank (WB) in collaboration with other WB units. This newsletter highlights some of the many policies, programs, and initiatives of the WB which may involve or be of interest to CSOs.

THERE ARE 9 ITEMS IN THIS ISSUE:

1. [JOIN: PRSP 2005 Review E-Discussion](#)
2. [World Bank President Appeals to Rich Countries to Help Educate Millions of Children Out-Of-School Worldwide](#)
3. [Statement By World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn On His Appointment As Special Envoy For Gaza Disengagement](#)
4. [World Bank Unveils New Global Plan to Fight Malaria](#)
5. News from the World Bank's Regional Departments

### Africa

- World Bank and IMF Support US\$3.9 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Zambia
- World Bank and IMF Support US\$1.4 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Rwanda
- European Commission and World Bank Agree to Intensify Partnership to Support Africa

### East Asia and Pacific (EAP)

- East Asia Set to Grow By 6 percent in 2005: Global Imbalances, Dollar Accumulations will Challenge Policy Makers

### Europe and Central Asia (ECA)

- New Quarterly Economic Report for New EU Member States of Central Europe and Baltics

### Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

- World Bank And IMF Support US\$1 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Honduras
- WB New Report on Caribbean Countries Development

### Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

- Lebanon Development Marketplace Innovation Day
- Middle East and North Africa Economic Developments and Prospects 2005

### South Asia Region (SAR)

- World Bank Supports Health, Nutrition and Population in Bangladesh

### 6. New Publications from the World Bank

- New WB Report Reports Strong Growth in Developing Countries, Warns About the Future
- New Report Calls For Urgent Action To Cut Global Poverty and Win Better Development Results For Poor Countries
- World Development Indicators (WDI) 2005 Report
- Bank Issues New Study on Economic Growth in the 1990s
- Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support
- OED Review of World Bank Assistance for Financial Sector Reform
- Country Assistance Evaluation Retrospective: OED Self-Evaluation
- Voice for the World's Poor: Selected Speeches and Writings of World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn, 1995-2005

### 7. New Websites / Web Resources

- Revised and Updated Website of Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics

### 8. Upcoming and Ongoing Global Events/Discussions

- II Technical Forum on Involuntary Resettlement in Latin America and the Caribbean, May 25-27, 2005,

Bogota, Colombia

## 9. [Recent Global Events/Discussions](#)

- World Bank - Civil Society Global Policy Forum Concludes
- Trade Union Representatives Meeting, April 19, 2005, Washington, DC
- World Bank Spring Meetings 2005: Dialogues for CSOs
- Religious NGOs and the International Aid System: Exploring Religious NGO Roles, Relations & Impact in Development, An International Research Conference, April 7-9, 2005, Oslo, Norway

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1. [JOIN: PRSP 2005 Review E-Discussion](#) - The e-discussion on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach is being organized as the WB and IMF are undertaking a 2005 PRS Review of implementation experience, incorporating the recent independent reviews by the Bank's OED and the Fund's IEO, as well as numerous other studies and reports that discuss the PRS and related issues. The open forum format invites views on any aspect of the PRS approach, including: (i) strengthening the medium-term orientation of the PRS approach; (ii) utilizing the PRS as a mutual accountability framework between countries and donors; (iii) sustaining meaningful participation; (iv) enhancing linkages between the PRS, medium-term expenditure frameworks and budgets; and (v) tailoring the approach to conflict-affected and fragile states. Inputs based upon specific country experiences are particularly welcome. To start off this dialogue, the WB and IMF teams build upon the discussions that took place at the recent WB-CSO Global Policy Forum. Several concepts were repeatedly raised in many of the sessions: country ownership, accountability, and meaningful participation. Please visit the forum and share your views at: <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/PRSP2005/>.

2. [World Bank President Appeals to Rich Countries to Help Educate Millions of Children Out-Of-School Worldwide](#) - On April 17 WB president appealed to rich countries to honor their overdue promises to help educate more than a hundred million children out-of-school in the world's poorest countries. Wolfensohn said girls in particular could greatly benefit from education, and yet millions of them continued to languish outside the school system. According to Wolfensohn, the chances of getting every boy and girl into school by 2015 are more promising than for some time. However, what was especially frustrating, Wolfensohn said, was that the development community could do so much more to help poor countries educate their children by 2015 if world leaders were to make good on their public pledges. These were agreements made by donors that they would finance credible education expansion plans of developing countries seriously committed to achieving universal primary education by 2015. Wolfensohn said it was essential that the additional education aid that donor countries had long promised be provided in a coordinated and predictable manner to avoid "kids being in school one year and then being thrown out the next." While poor countries themselves must make a firm commitment to education and develop credible education plans, he said, rich countries had to do more to help reach this goal. [More information](#). Education Fast Track Initiative Press Briefing held on April 17, 2005 with James Wolfensohn, Xavier Darcos, Hilde Johnson, Carin Jamtin, Suma Chakrabarti, and Rasheda Chowdhury - [transcript](#).

[top](#)

3. [Statement By World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn On His Appointment As Special Envoy For Gaza Disengagement](#) - On April 14, WB president was appointed by the Quartet Principals (US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan) as Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. Following the appointment, he made the following statement: "I am deeply honored to have been appointed by the Quartet as Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. I believe that there is no more important issue for global peace than an equitable and secure solution to this problem. I look forward to assisting the Israelis and the Palestinians as they strive to reach and implement a peaceful solution that restores hope and confidence to the people of the region." The Special Envoy's mission is to promote coordination and cooperation between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on implementation of Israel's disengagement initiative from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank. The Special Envoy will assume his duties effective June 1 for a mission lasting no longer than December 31, 2005. [More information](#).

4. [World Bank Unveils New Global Plan to Fight Malaria](#) - The WB on April 24 marked Africa Malaria Day with the launch of a new global approach to help developing countries make faster progress in their fight against malaria. Malaria still kills more than a million people each year, mostly children under the age of five, causes millions more to become sick, and blunts economic growth in the most affected countries. The WB says that judging from initial demand from countries for more help in fighting malaria, its working assumption is that a total commitment of US\$500 million to US\$1.0 billion is feasible over the next five years, including co-financing that the Bank anticipates from partners. WB will mobilize financial and technical resources itself, as well as from the development community and private sector, to expand access to prevention (including integrated vector management) and treatment, and to improve the underlying systems for sustainability. These efforts will increase the availability of insecticide-treated bed nets, anti-malarial drugs, and other commodities; support countries to lower taxes and tariffs on such items; improve and maintain long-term malaria control by governments and civil society groups; and build public-private partnerships for program design, management and evaluation. In doing so, the WB will deploy its comparative advantages in cross-sectoral work, policy analysis, medium- to long-term financing, convening power and program implementation to help countries achieve impact. Please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/malaria> for more information

on the initiative.

[top](#)

## 5. News from the World Bank's Regional Departments

### Africa

- **World Bank and IMF Support US\$3.9 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Zambia** - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WB's International Development Association (IDA) have agreed that Zambia has taken the necessary steps to reach its completion point under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. Zambia is the 17th country to reach its completion point under the enhanced framework of the HIPC Debt Initiative. Debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Debt Initiative from all of Zambia's creditors will surpass US\$3.9 billion over time (or US\$2.5 billion in net present value (NPV) terms as of the end of 1999). IDA will provide debt service relief under the enhanced HIPC Debt Initiative amounting to US\$885.2 million to be delivered from 2001 through 2020. The IMF will provide debt relief of SDR 468.8 million (equivalent to US\$602 million) in NPV terms on payments falling due to the IMF during 2001-08. The remaining bilateral and multilateral creditors are also expected to provide their share of relief required under the enhanced HIPC Initiative. Zambia qualified under the export criterion and the debt relief was calculated to bring the NPV of debt-to-export ratio down to the HIPC threshold of 150 percent at the decision point. Debt relief, together with bilateral assistance beyond HIPC relief, is estimated to have lowered Zambia's debt-to-export ratio to 174 percent in 2003 and 140 percent in 2004. This ratio is projected to decline steadily thereafter. To learn more about WB's work in Zambia, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/zm>.
- **World Bank and IMF Support US\$1.4 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Rwanda** - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) have agreed that Rwanda has taken the necessary steps to reach the completion point under the enhanced Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). Total debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Initiative from all of Rwanda's creditors is estimated at US\$1.4 billion in nominal terms. This assistance is equivalent to a reduction in net present value (NPV) terms of US\$452.4 million agreed at the decision point, plus a topping-up of the assistance in an amount equivalent to US\$243.1 million in NPV terms, approved at the completion point. In the first ten years after the Completion Point, Rwanda would save approximately US\$48 million annually in debt service costs. The additional assistance under the topping-up framework has been approved by the Boards of the World Bank's IDA and the IMF, as Rwanda's debt prospects had deteriorated. This was primarily due to exogenous factors leading to fundamental changes in the country's economic circumstances, since the Decision Point. The largely unexpected decline in Rwanda's export prices and a fall in international interest rates were the factors that contributed most to the increase in the NPV of debt-to-exports ratio, which at end-2003 stood substantially above the 150 percent target set out under the enhanced HIPC framework. More on the WB's work in Rwanda can be found at: <http://www.worldbank.org/rw>.
- **European Commission and World Bank Agree to Intensify Partnership to Support Africa** - The European Commission and the WB agreed on April 18 to an intensified partnership to support Africa's push to accelerate economic growth and make faster progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission and WB said they will work more closely to support African countries' development priorities, particularly in the critical areas of infrastructure, trade and regional integration. Representatives from the two institutions also stressed that improved governance and strengthened capacity were crucial to successful outcomes in each of these areas. The European Commission and WB are the two largest sources of development aid to sub-Saharan Africa. The potential benefits to Africa of strengthened coordination and collaboration in EC and Bank development support are considerable. [More information](#).

[top](#)

### East Asia and Pacific (EAP)

- **East Asia Set to Grow By 6 percent in 2005: Global Imbalances, Dollar Accumulations will Challenge Policy Makers** - Emerging economies are projected to grow by 6 percent this year, as policy makers face the delicate challenge of responding to a reduced pace of global trade expansion -- especially in electronics -- slowing growth in China, higher oil prices, and large dollar inflows to the region, according to the latest East Asia and Pacific Regional Update, the World Bank's twice-yearly look at the region's economies. The full report and data tables are available on-line at the Bank's East Asia Region website: <http://www.worldbank.org/eapupdate>.

[top](#)

### Europe and Central Asia (ECA)

- [New Quarterly Economic Report for New EU Member States of Central Europe and Baltics](#) - According to the WB's EU8 Quarterly Economic Report, which covers the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia, real GDP growth accelerated in almost all EU8 countries in 2004 because of stronger domestic demand, including foreign direct investment, and exports. However, growth has slowed from late 2004 in several countries and most are likely to see somewhat weaker output dynamics in 2005 reflecting slower growth in Western Europe, real currency appreciation, cessation of one-time effects related to EU accession, and heightened political uncertainty in the run-up to elections in several countries. Also worrisome is the fact that stronger output growth so far has not been associated with higher employment and alleviation of high unemployment rates in some countries (notably Poland and Slovakia). According to the authors of the Report there is a strong and significantly negative relationship between the tax wedge and employment in EU8 countries. [The report.](#)

[top](#)

#### Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

- [World Bank And IMF Support US\\$1 Billion In Debt Service Relief For Honduras](#) - The WB's International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have announced on April 5 that Honduras has taken the necessary steps to reach its completion point under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. Honduras is the 16th country to reach its completion point under the enhanced framework of the HIPC Debt Initiative, joining Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. Debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Debt Initiative from all of Honduras' creditors will surpass US\$1 billion over time (or US\$556 million in net present value (NPV) terms as of the end of 1999). IDA will provide debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Debt Initiative amounting to US\$98 million in NPV terms (approximately US\$118.9 million in debt service relief) to be delivered from 2000 through 2012. The IMF will provide debt relief of SDR 22.66 million (equivalent to US\$30.3 million) in NPV terms on payments falling due to the IMF during 2001-07. The remaining bilateral and multilateral creditors are also expected to provide their share of relief required under the enhanced HIPC Initiative. Debt relief, together with bilateral assistance beyond HIPC relief, is estimated to have reduced Honduras' debt-to-export ratio to 92.5 percent and its debt-to-government revenue ratio to 188 percent in 2003. Those levels are 58 percentage points and 62 percentage points, respectively, below the HIPC thresholds. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/hn>.
- [WB New Report on Caribbean Countries Development](#) - The Caribbean region is at a development crossroads and its member nations must take significant and concrete steps to improve productivity and competitiveness and face up to more global competition if they are to accelerate or even maintain past growth, says a new WB report: *A Time to Choose: Caribbean Development in the 21st Century*. By taking such steps, they will reposition themselves strategically as an emerging trading bloc for goods and services; without such action, they risk growing economic marginalization and erosion of many of the social gains of the last three decades. According to the 15 country report, the region needs to move beyond decades of reliance on traditional markets and trade preferences to swiftly adapt and diversify into new sources of growth, exploiting its natural advantages of location, environment, political stability and democratic traditions. The report, which draws upon extensive consultations with governments, private sector and civil society, recommends that countries work together to negotiate an orderly dismantling of preferences in return for increased technical and financial support, arguing that trade preferences, combined with subsidies, have yielded less than optimal results for the Caribbean nations. The report and related materials are available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/lac>.

[top](#)

#### Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

- [Lebanon Development Marketplace Innovation Day](#) - In a very festive atmosphere Lebanon celebrated the Development Marketplace Innovation Day "United for a Better Environment," organized by the WB in partnership with UNDP. Innovation Day at the Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure center marked the end of a five-month contest, entitled Harvesting Youth and Community Ideas for a Better Environment. In all, 87 proposals were submitted by NGOs and youth groups, ranging in subject from recycling household and industrial waste, to the creation of reserves for medicinal plants, organic crops, and indigenous bird species. Seven projects were selected by a small jury to share a total prize of US\$130,000. The WB provided US\$100,000 and the UNDP contributed US\$30,000. In addition to the finalists, 43 NGOs active in environment-related fields set up colorful displays further enlivening the event. The event offered CSOs, youth groups and clubs, and private entrepreneurs a chance to trade and showcase ideas that address the environmental protection and promotion. To read more, please visit the website of the WB office in Lebanon: <http://www.worldbank.org/ln>.
- [Middle East and North Africa Economic Developments and Prospects 2005](#) - The MENA region is

experiencing an economic boom driven largely by soaring oil revenues, but this growth remains insufficient for addressing the region's daunting development challenge of creating jobs, according to the WB report released on April 17. The first in a series of annual reports that monitor major economic developments in the region, the report says that close to 100 million new jobs will be needed over the next 20 years to absorb new entrants into the labor force and today's unemployed workers. Over the last two years, economic growth averaged 5.6 percent in MENA, up from the 3.6 percent growth over the 1990s. This exceptional growth was steered by external factors—escalation in oil prices and a subsequent rise in oil production—which significantly boosted government consumption and investment. Moreover, this growth was concentrated in oil-producing countries that account for most of the regional growth acceleration. The report points out however that in per capita terms, the growth upturn in MENA continues to lag behind most other regions of the world. [The report.](#)

[top](#)

## South Asia Region (SAR)

- [World Bank Supports Health, Nutrition and Population in Bangladesh](#) - The WB on April 28 approved a US\$300 million credit to assist the Government of Bangladesh improve access to and the quality of its healthcare system. The Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Program intends to assist Bangladesh with the implementation of its Strategic Investment Plan (2003-2010) by supporting the government's social development goals as outlined in the draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). It will also assist in attaining the MDGs on health, nutrition, and population (HNP). The project has three components: (a) to accelerate achievement of health-related MDGs and PRSP strategies and of population policy objectives; (b) focus on the development of strategies and policies for emerging HNP sector challenges; and (c) address major policy reforms in the health sector to increase management and stewardship capacity, diversification of service provision, and stimulation of demand for HNP services in Bangladesh. To learn more about the project, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/bd>.

[top](#)

## 6. New Publications from the World Bank

- [New WB Report Reports Strong Growth in Developing Countries, Warns About the Future](#) - The WB's annual Global Development Finance 2005 says global economic growth reached 3.8 percent in 2004, with developing countries recording their fastest growth in more than a decade. It notes that much of the momentum came from more rapid growth in the United States and China, along with a pickup in Latin America and Japan and a modest recovery in the European Union. However the report says the global growth momentum has peaked. It warns developing countries may need to make adjustments because of the risks posed by ballooning global imbalances – particularly the United States current account deficit. The report predicts that global growth will slow down to 3.1 percent in 2005, as a result of increases in US interest rates, fiscal tightening, and the effects of the 25 percent real effective appreciation of the Euro. [The report.](#)
- [New Report Calls For Urgent Action To Cut Global Poverty and Win Better Development Results For Poor Countries](#) - Bold and urgent action is needed to reduce extreme poverty and improve people's economic and social prospects in developing countries in keeping with a set of key development targets, called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), says the 2005 Global Monitoring Report released on April 12 by the WB and IMF. The report is part of a five-year stocktaking effort to monitor progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It was discussed by finance ministers, central bankers, and development ministers in Washington at the spring meetings of the WB and IMF. It will also serve as an important input into the upcoming G8 heads of state meeting to be held in the UK in July and the UN Summit on the MDGs in September. To read the report and learn more about the global monitoring initiative, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/globalmonitoring>.
- [World Development Indicators \(WDI\) 2005 Report](#) - New WB report urges faster progress in reducing child deaths, primary school enrollments, particularly among girls. It notes that five years after the Millennium Declaration, many countries have made progress towards achieving the MDGs, but many more lag behind. Faster progress is needed in reducing maternal and child deaths, boosting primary school enrolments, and removing obstacles to greater number of girls going to school, according to the report. The WDI reports that only 33 countries are on track to reach the 2015 goal of reducing child mortality by two-thirds from its 1990 level. Almost 11 million children in developing countries die before the age of five, most from causes that are readily preventable in rich countries. Figures gathered by the Bank suggest that four regions—East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa—have made substantial progress toward the target of reducing child mortality by two-thirds. The most difficult challenge is faced by Sub-Saharan Africa. To read the report, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2005/>.
- [Bank Issues New Study on Economic Growth in the 1990s](#) - The WB on April 18 released a new study that analyzes economic growth in the 1990s and the development lessons that can be drawn from the reforms

undertaken during this period. Economic Growth in the 1990s: Learning from a Decade of Reform reviews the growth impact of the main policy and institutional reforms introduced in the 1990s, presents a broad perspective on the events, country experiences, academic research and controversies of the decade, and reflects on how this affects WB thinking about economic growth. The report draws on and is part of a trilogy (the other two publications: Development Challenges in the 1990s: Leading Policy Makers speak from Experience; and At the Frontlines of Development: Reflections from the World Bank) that reflects a larger effort to understand the development experience of the 1990s, an extraordinarily eventful decade. Among the key findings of the study are that economic growth is central to poverty reduction, uniform policy packages do not translate consistently into growth across countries and country-specific strategies addressing the binding constraints to growth are most likely to be successful. The report can be reviewed at: <http://www1.worldbank.org/prem/lessons1990s/index.htm>.

- **Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support** - The WB supports a wide range of capacity building interventions through both its country lending and nonlending programs and dedicated corporate and Regional entities. Between 1995 and 2004, the WB provided some \$9 billion in lending and close to \$900 million in grants and administrative budget to support public sector capacity building in Africa. This evaluation assesses Bank support for public sector capacity building in Africa over these past 10 years. It is based on six country studies, assessments of country strategies and operations across the Region, and review of the work of the World Bank Institute, the Institutional Development Fund, and the Bank-supported African Capacity Building Foundation. The report is available at: [http://www.worldbank.org/oed/africa\\_capacity\\_building/](http://www.worldbank.org/oed/africa_capacity_building/).
- **OED Review of World Bank Assistance for Financial Sector Reform** - This review of WB assistance for financial sector reforms finds that the objectives of WB assistance generally followed good practice in terms of reducing government ownership of financial intermediaries, improving prudential regulation to be consistent with international norms, and strengthening banking supervision to adhere more closely to international principles. The review also finds, however, that consistency within a country – for example, advocating the privatization of banks while simultaneously supporting the expansion of government ownership of banks – should be improved, as could the coherence of the WB's approach to financial sector reforms across countries – for example, advocating rapid privatization in one transition country while recommending a slow, gradual approach to privatization in another transition country. The review can be viewed at: [http://www.worldbank.org/oed/financial\\_sector/](http://www.worldbank.org/oed/financial_sector/).
- **Country Assistance Evaluation Retrospective: OED Self-Evaluation** - The report is a self-evaluation of the Operations Evaluation Department's (OED) Country Assistance Evaluations (CAEs). CAEs examine WB performance in a particular country, usually over the past four to five years, and report on its conformity with the relevant Bank Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) and on the overall effectiveness of the specific CAS. The retrospective addresses the question—What Have We Learned?—by compiling lessons relevant for developing country assistance strategies from the most recent batch of CAEs. Second, it assesses revisions to the CAE process, methodology, and presentation to answer the question—How Can the CAE Instrument Be Improved? To read the evaluation, please go to: [http://www.worldbank.org/oed/cae\\_retrospective/](http://www.worldbank.org/oed/cae_retrospective/).
- **Voice for the World's Poor: Selected Speeches and Writings of World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn, 1995-2005** - The book brings together the most important and inspiring speeches and writings by James Wolfensohn during his time as WB president. Spanning all ten years of his presidency (1995-2005), the book presents his most stimulating and thought-provoking ideas on critical global issues including poverty, debt relief, corruption, HIV/AIDS, climate change, human rights, and globalization. Wolfensohn addresses and examines key global events and issues, from Bosnia's reconstruction, the Asian financial crisis, and the rise of the antiglobalization movement to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the aftermath of the Iraq war, and the outpouring of help for the victims of the tsunami of December, 2004. [Purchase the report](#).

[top](#)

## 7. New Websites / Web Resources

- **Revised and Updated Website of Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics** - The purpose of this newly revamped website is to make available the wide range of information about activities the WB is involved with, including publications, speeches, operational activities, and other resources. The Development Dialogue on Ethics and Values is a unit within the Human Development Network Vice-Presidency of the WB. It is primarily responsible for engaging with faith institutions around development issues and working with other institutions and leaders who are addressing the complex ethical issues around globalization. The WB's engagement with the religious community involves three key areas: (a) building bridges - stronger, bolder partnerships; (b) exploring a more "comprehensive," "holistic," and "integrated" vision of development; and (c) transforming dialogue into practice and action. The site also directs the reader to various among the many faith-based news and information sources. Please visit the website at: <http://www.worldbank.org/developmentdialogue/>.

[top](#)

## 8. Upcoming and Ongoing Global Events/Discussions

- II Technical Forum on Involuntary Resettlement in Latin America and the Caribbean, May 25-27, 2005, Bogota, Colombia - The WB and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will jointly host the three-day forum, which is a follow-up to the 2002 Technical Forum in Salvador Bahia, Brazil. The event will bring together representatives from governments, academia, NGOs, private firms and WB and IDB task team members, to share specific resettlement experiences and identify innovative practices, methodologies, and tools that could be used to improve the design and implementation of resettlement operations in the region. The topics to be analyzed during the Forum are the result of multiple consultations with resettlement practitioners throughout the region. [More information](#).

[top](#)

## 9. Recent Global Events/Discussions

- [World Bank - Civil Society Global Policy Forum Concludes](#) - The Forum, part of the WB's ongoing efforts to engage civil society at the global level, was held in Washington, DC on April 20 – 22, 2005. The Forum was a broad, multi-stakeholder event with representatives from civil society, governments, Parliaments, donor agencies, and the private sector. The objective of the Forum was to promote substantive and thoughtful policy dialogue on Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and other issues; to analyze World Bank - civil society engagement at the global level over the past years and discuss new standards and mechanisms to improve it; and to foster a greater level of understanding between the WB and civil society organizations. It provided an opportunity for its participants to have an in depth discussion around PRSs and a wide ranging discussion about WB - civil society engagement, dialogue and operational collaboration. The Forum was organized by an informal Planning Group made up of World Bank staff and CSO representatives from developed and developing countries, which contributed to the definition of Forum objectives, agenda, themes, participants, methodology, and reporting. Civil society members of the Planning Committee organized a preparatory meeting of civil society participants on April 20. As part of this preparation process for the Forum, over a dozen civil society networks organized in the Joint Facilitation Committee (JFC), produced an independent Paper on their analysis and recommendations for improving World Bank policy and project engagement with civil society. The final paper: "Call for Participatory Decision Making" was drafted by two independent researchers and presented during the Forum. The WB presented its paper: "Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and CSOs" produced by the WB's Civil Society Team. A summary report from the Forum will be prepared and discussed with members of the Planning Group. It will be released within a couple of weeks after the Forum. More information about the Forum can be found at: <http://www.worldbank.org/civilsociety/csforum2005>.
- [Trade Union Representatives Meeting, April 19, 2005, Washington, DC](#) - The WB engages with trade unions in numerous ways: consultations with union members who are stakeholders in Bank projects; national consultation with unions as members of civil society; international policy dialogue on economic and social issues; research on the economic effects of collective bargaining, and training programs for both Bank staff and trade unions. On April 19, 2005, twelve trade union representatives coming from: Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, DR Congo, and Togo, participated in a technical meeting on PRSP jointly organized by IMF and WB. During the discussions, the unionists shared with the WB, IMF and ILO their experiences and views of the PRSP review exercise, with a particular focus on the "partnership" element of the process. The union representatives pointed out that the participation of workers in their countries has improved, however, there is still a number of small problems such as poor quality of the consultation process. The need for capacity building among union representatives, and formalizing the consultation process were particularly emphasized by the participants. [More information](#) about the WB dialogue with the unions.
- [World Bank Spring Meetings 2005: Dialogues for CSOs](#) - Each spring, the joint Bank-IMF Development Committee and the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee hold meetings to discuss progress on the work of the Bank and Fund. As in previous years, the World Bank and IMF civil society teams organized a number of dialogues for interested representatives of civil society who come to Washington around the time of the Meetings. The dialogues were organized on Friday, April 15, and Monday-Wednesday, April 18-20, 2005. The topics discussed included: Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA); transparency in extractive industries; constraints and macroeconomics of the HIV/AIDS initiatives; dialogue on health financing; upcoming WB World Development Report; the role of the IMF in the low income countries and its conditionality. More information and summaries of the dialogues can be found [here](#).
- [Religious NGOs and the International Aid System: Exploring Religious NGO Roles, Relations & Impact in Development, An International Research Conference, April 7-9, 2005, Oslo, Norway](#) - The conference was organized by the NGO and Civil Society Research Network and the Comparative Research Program on NGOs. The primary goal of the event was to contribute to greater understanding of the roles of religious NGOs, which are often underspecified, under-researched and generally neglected by mainstream NGOs and civil society research - by stimulating research interest on this topic. WB was represented at the Forum by the head of the WB's Faith and Development Initiative, who spoke to the issue of religious faith and development and rethinking the development debate. To learn more about the event, please visit: <http://www.svf.uib.no/sfu/ngo/conference2005/index.htm>.