



Geneva Social Observatory Activity Report

Second Quarter
July 2008

Mission

The Geneva Social Observatory (GSO) was established in Geneva, Switzerland in 2004 as a non-profit association. The aim of the GSO is to provide a neutral setting for dialogue on pressing social issues, such as HIV/AIDS and social responsibility, diabetes and social responsibility, and corporate social responsibility and trade. In order to have substantive discussions on these issues, the GSO believes that multiple points of view should be consulted, which is why representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, academia, governments and international intergovernmental organizations are invited to take part in the GSO meetings and events.

Activity Report

This activities report is developed on a quarterly basis and sent to Friends of the GSO, who support the Observatory through donations, sponsorship of specific projects, in-kind support, and/or participation in GSO events.

Dear Friends of GSO,

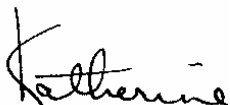
I am pleased to begin this quarter's activity report by announcing that the Geneva Social Observatory has been granted special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The decision, taken during the July meeting of ECOSOC in New York, means that GSO representatives will be able to gain access to and participate in UN meetings in Geneva, New York, Vienna and in the regional offices.

This Quarterly Report also brings you news of developments in Phase Two of the GSO Diabetes and Social Responsibility Program. We have been busy this time following up the multistakeholder workshop to develop a workplace strategy on diabetes and wellness that took place in Geneva on 18 and 19 March 2008. The Program's Planning Committee has been meeting regularly to organize a "Forum to Adopt and Implement a Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness" in Geneva on 25 September 2008. The Forum is part of the next stage, which involves distributing the draft strategy for further feedback and formal adoption by the GSO - and eventually implementing it in Phase Three. More information is given in this Report and can also be found on the GSO website, www.gsogeneva.ch. Our thanks are due to Eli Lilly, Merck, Pfizer and sanofi aventis for their generous support of Phase Two of the Diabetes Program and we thank Accor Services and BD as well as Merck, Eli Lilly and Pfizer for their sponsorship of Phase One.

Interest in global social responsibility issues continues at the GSO following events at the World Trade Organization during the Doha Round of negotiations. As reported to the GSO Annual General Assembly in May a special taskforce is working on the promotion of new approaches to labour standards and trade in 2008 and 2009.

We encourage you to continue and to expand your support for GSO as we build our current projects and initiate new and more initiatives in coming years. For more information on how to contribute, please visit the "Support GSO" page on our website at www.gsgogeneva.ch or write to me at contact@gsogeneva.ch.

Thank you,



Katherine Hagen
Executive Director, Geneva Social Observatory

Diabetes and Social Responsibility

Program Update

Following the multisectoral Workshop that took place on 18 and 19 March 2008 to develop a Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness the GSO Planning Committee has been busy taking the draft strategy forward.

The Planning Committee of the GSO Diabetes Project have met regularly from April through July 2008 to take the ideas resulting from the workshop forward and to provide additional input on further editing and validation of the strategy. As a result the 'Forum to Adopt and Implement a Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness' will be convened in Geneva on 25 September 2008. Representatives from disease-specific interest groups, companies, other health professions and organizations, governments and UN agencies and academics and research institutes have been invited.

The programme for the Forum will consist of case studies and presentations with a focus on how a workplace strategy on diabetes and wellness can complement existing workplace wellness programmes, an examination of the risks and benefits of adopting a strategy and mobilizing stakeholders for action to adopt and implement a workplace strategy. It is planned that the Forum will conclude with the formal adoption of the workplace strategy document by participants with an outline of approaches to implement it.

Following the Forum, it is planned that the GSO Workplace Strategy on Wellness and Diabetes will be published for distribution to interested parties. Where feasible, the GSO will promote the strategy with specific groups, including employers and their associations, trade unions, NGOs and community groups. Country-specific surveillance and benchmarking, as well as integration of a diabetes component in targeted wellness programmes are the areas for proposal development. Also, the GSO has gathered together a rich menu of materials on diabetes in the workplace and will seek to edit them to facilitate further publication for broader dissemination.

Documents related to the September Forum and to the March 2008 Workshop can be found on the GSO website, www.gsogeneva.ch. If you are interested in obtaining further information about or in participating in the Forum scheduled for 25 September 2008 please send us a request by email at contact@gsogeneva.ch.

New Project Work

Trade and Labour Standards

The GSO would like to follow-up on the exploratory dialogue on trade and labour standards that was organized with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in February 2007. A special task force has been formed to look at these possibilities. All are welcome to contribute ideas and get involved in the process.

One of the ideas that has been put forward regarding trade and labour standards is to review the plethora of regional free trade agreements that have been made over the past two decades, in order to document the extent to which labour standards have been addressed in these agreements, and the effect that labour-related provisions have had on conditions of work and trade flows. For many agreements, such as the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Dominican Republic/Caribbean Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) and other FTA's, there is ample information available and sufficient historical trade and labour data that would allow for an empirical analysis of a variety of trade and labour issues.

We will also be monitoring the discussions at the WTO Policy Forum on "Trading into the Future" on 24 to 25 September. We note that the programme shows a renewed interest in CSR and investment issues, while recent WTO publications reflect a growing emphasis on the social ramifications of trade expansion. These will be factored into the deliberations of our special task force.

Other areas

The GSO continues to look at a variety of possibilities for interesting projects to begin in the Fall of 2008 and into 2009. In addition to trade and labour, research areas under consideration include unique and complementary analyses of climate change issues; a look at issues dealing with the global food crisis and growing water shortages; and evaluation of opportunities to promote public-private partnerships to help realize the Millennium Development Goals.



For more information about GSO projects and how to participate, or to contribute either financially and/or in-kind, please write to contact@gsogeneva.ch or call the GSO secretariat at +41 22 734 9601.



Contact us:

37/39 rue de Vermont
Case postale 22
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 734 9601
Fax: +41 22 734 9602
E-mail: contact@gsogeneva.ch