



# Geneva Social Observatory Activity Report

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Third Quarter  
October 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.

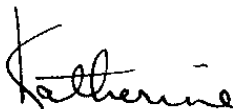
## Dear Friends of GSO,

This quarter's activity report starts with the announcement that the Geneva Social Observatory has moved offices. We are now situated at 220 route de Ferney, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland. Our telephone number, fax number, email addresses and website remain the same and can be found on the back cover of this report.

Other moves have also been in the works during this last quarter, most notably the conclusion of Phase Two of the GSO Diabetes and Social Responsibility Programme with the Forum to Adopt and Implement a Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness in Geneva on 25 September 2008. The Workplace Strategy adopted at the Forum is now available on our website at [www.gsogeneva.ch](http://www.gsogeneva.ch) along with other documents from the Forum. The next step is to adapt and implement the Strategy in different contexts. Our thanks are due to the International Labour Organization for hosting the Forum, to Eli Lilly, Merck, Pfizer and sanofi aventis for their generous support of Phase Two of the Diabetes Programme and we thank Accor Services and BD as well as Merck, Eli Lilly and Pfizer for their sponsorship of Phase One. We do need more support as we enter Phase Three and as the Programme takes us in new directions. We are of course developing new projects too and we would like to take this opportunity to invite you to contribute to the work of GSO. A minimum contribution of SFr 50 is suggested though more would be greatly appreciated.

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](http://www.gsgogeneva.ch) or write to me at [contact@gsogeneva.ch](mailto:contact@gsogeneva.ch).

Thank you,



Katherine Hagen  
Executive Director, Geneva Social Observatory

## Diabetes and Social Responsibility

### Programme Update

The Forum to Adopt and Implement a Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness was convened at the International Labour Organization 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 took part.

The programme for the Forum consisted of case studies and presentations with a focus on how a workplace strategy on diabetes and wellness complements 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. The Forum concluded with the formal adoption of the workplace strategy document by participants with an outline of approaches to implement it. The GSO website carries a full [report](#) of the Forum along with [photographs](#), [presentations](#) and [supporting documents](#).

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](http://www.gsogeneva.ch). If you are interested in obtaining further information about GSO's Diabetes and Social Responsibility Programme or about the Forum that took place on September 2008 please send us a request by email at [contact@gsogeneva.ch](mailto: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.

The GSO took part in the discussions at the World Trade Organization's Public Forum on "Trading into the Future" on 24 to 25 September. The programme showed 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](mailto:contact@gsogeneva.ch) or call the GSO secretariat at +41 22 734 9601.



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