Coming out of the 53rd Session of the Commission for Social Development

Georgina Kelly, Feb 2015

Prior to the commencement of the 53rd Commission for Social Development (CSocD), the Civil Society Forum took place on Tuesday, 3 February in order to prepare participants for CSocD and allow a space for Civil Society to review and critique the Commission's work during the last cycle. The focus of the forum was *Civil Society Perspectives: Re-Centering Social Development in a Sustainable World* and the main questions that arose from the forum were 'how can we hold governments accountable?' and 'do stake holders have an interest in maintaining the status quo?'

The Commission took place over two weeks from 4-13 February with the priority theme *"Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world"*. Commission member states were quick to point out that since Copenhagen extreme poverty has been reduced although most findings from the commission show that not nearly enough has been done. Copenhagen set the agenda for sustainable development; social progress; and well being, and whilst that rhetoric is now entrenched, the implementation is still poor. The conclusions of a progress report found that social and economic policies need to work in tandem in order to see progress, however, during the commission there was more emphasis and importance placed on economics rather than social development.

During the Commission there was much reference to the Post-2015 Agenda and it was acknowledged that we're much more conscious today than twenty years ago of the universality of challenges and the need for a multifaceted and universal approach. Youth will be an integral part of the transition to sustainable development and the Post-2015 Agenda and the role that youth will play was an important theme of discussion. The Commission Chair and other panel speakers highlighted the importance of Civil Society in providing a space for change and holding decision makers accountable and ensuring that the Civil Society contribution is integrated into the whole process.