

Commission for Social Development

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) works on a broad spectrum of topics pertaining to social development:

- eradication of poverty,
- productive employment,
- social integration,
- ageing,
- crime prevention,
- disability,
- drug control,
- family,
- indigenous people,
- youth and
- cooperatives.¹

Since the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in 1995, the CSocD has been playing a central role in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.² At the WSSD, 117 heads of state or government convened at Copenhagen because they considered the world at a crossroads regarding (social) development. They identified challenges that were, in part, brought along by advancing globalization such as the “expansion of unspeakable poverty”³, unemployment and social disintegration that led to “isolation, marginalization and violence”⁴ and that “are an offence to human dignity”⁵.^{6,7} Thus, the participants of the WSSD committed to “launch a global drive for social progress and development”⁸ with, among others, the following goals:

- to create an environment that enables people to achieve social development,
- to eradicate absolute poverty,
- to support full employment,
- to promote social integration and
- to strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.⁹

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action also include remarkably detailed steps to achieve these objectives (all in all, the document spans nearly 90 pages).

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/development/>, accessed on November 11, 2011.

² <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment.aspx>, accessed on November 11, 2011.

³ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, clause 13 (accessible online: <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartA.aspx>).

⁴ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, clause 16 (accessible online: <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartA.aspx>).

⁵ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, clause 23 (accessible online: <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartA.aspx>).

⁶ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995.aspx>, accessed November 12, 2011.

⁷ cf. social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartA.aspx, accessed November 12, 2011.

⁸ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, clause 29 (accessible online: <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartC.aspx>).

⁹ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/Home/WSSD1995/AgreementsWSSD1995/CDOSDPartC.aspx>, accessed on November 12, 2011.

In the same year, the ECOSOC passed resolution 1995/60 in which it decided that the CSocD shall review the follow-up and implementation of the results of the WSSD in order to “ensure an integrated approach to social development”¹⁰. This resolution was elaborated at the special session of the CSocD in May 1996, where a multi-year agenda was decided upon.¹¹ It is also worth noting that the results of the WSSD and their implementation were reviewed and reaffirmed in 2000 by the 24th special session of the General Assembly.¹²

The CSocD meets annually in New York (usually in February).¹³ Since 2005, it has been operating under a “two-year review and policy cycle”¹⁴, drafting resolutions on the follow-up and implementation on one of the key topics of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action in each two-year cycle (full employment, social integration and – in 2011 and 2012 – poverty eradication).^{15,16} In order to supply expertise on each topic regarding social development, the CSocD invites experts to participate in panel discussions.¹⁷ It then recommends the ECOSOC to adopt its draft resolutions.

Since 1996, the CSocD has a membership of 46 states, to be elected by the ECOSOC amongst all UN members.^{18,19}

One last note on the history of the CSocD: It was founded in 1946 by virtue of ECOSOC resolution 10 (II) as the “Social Commission”. After its role had already been reappraised in 1961, the ECOSOC decided in 1966 to rename it to “Commission for Social Development” in order to better reflect its mandate.²⁰

¹⁰ E/1995/60 (accessible online: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N96/148/51/IMG/N9614851.pdf?OpenElement>; pg. 65 of the file).

¹¹ cf. „Commission for Social Development Report on the special session (21-31 May 1996)”, pg. 5; accessible online: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N96/157/05/PDF/N9615705.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹² cf. Report of the Secretary-General on the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, accessible online: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/629/80/PDF/N0062980.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹³ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment.aspx>, accessed on November 13, 2011.

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2010/resolutions/ecosoc2010-10.pdf>, accessed on November 13, 2011.

¹⁵ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2009.aspx>, accessed on November 13, 2011.

¹⁶ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2012.aspx>, accessed on November 13, 2011.

¹⁷ cf. resolution E/1995/60, operative clause 3(c); accessible online: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N96/148/51/IMG/N9614851.pdf?OpenElement>, pg. 65 of the file.

¹⁸ cf. „Commission for Social Development Report on the special session (21-31 May 1996)”, pg. 5; accessible online: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N96/157/05/PDF/N9615705.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹ cf. <http://esango.un.org/paperless/Web?page=static&content=functional#social>, accessed on November 12, 2011.

²⁰ cf. <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Mandate.aspx>, accessed on November 12, 2011.