

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with June-July 2015 Articles

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The U.N.’s highly ambitious post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be finalised shortly, has come under fire even before it could get off the ground. A global network of civil society organisations (CSOs), under the banner United Nations Major Groups (UNMG), has warned that the agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), “lacks urgency, a clear implementation strategy and accountability.” Savio Carvalho of Amnesty International (AI), which is part of the UNMG, told IPS the post-2015 agenda has become an aspirational text sans clear independent mechanisms for people to hold governments to account for implementation and follow-up. “Under the garb of national ownership, realities and capacities, member states can get away doing absolutely nothing. We would like them to ensure national priorities are set in conformity with human rights principles and standards so that we are not in the same place in 2030,” he added. >> *Pages 2-3-4*

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On July 24, 67 student essay winners from 42 different countries convened at the United Nations General Assembly to present their essays at the Many Languages, One World Global Youth Forum. The students were selected as winners of the Many Languages, One World International Essay Contest among a pool of over 1,250 participants. >> *Page 5*

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An exhibition on modern-day slavery at the International Slavery Museum in this northern English town is just one example of a museum choosing to focus on human rights, and being “upfront” about it. “Social justice just doesn’t happen by itself; it’s about activism and people willing to take risks,” says Dr David Fleming, director of [National Museums Liverpool](#), which includes the city’s International Slavery Museum ([ISM](#)). The institution looks at aspects of both historical and contemporary slavery, while being an “international hub for resources on human rights issues”. It is a member of the Liverpool-based Social Justice Alliance for Museums (SJAM), formed in 2013 and now comprising more than 80 museums worldwide, and it coordinated the founding of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums ([FIHRM](#)) in 2010. >> *Pages 6-7-8-9*

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Contrary to a widespread view, fostering global citizenship is not an abstract concept. It is rooted in the belief and actions of all sections of the society that, irrespective of creed and colour human beings, belong to one vast family. Civil society reflecting the aspirations and concerns of the common woman and man plays an important role.

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UN's Post-2015 Development Agenda Under Fire

By Thalif Deen



*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (second from left) with Irish Minister and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in Dublin.
Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider*

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - The U.N.'s highly ambitious post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be finalised shortly, has come under fire even before it could get off the ground.

A global network of civil society organisations (CSOs), under the banner United Nations Major Groups (UNMG), has warned that the agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), “lacks urgency, a clear implementation strategy and accountability.”

Savio Carvalho of Amnesty International (AI), which is part of the UNMG, told IPS the post-2015 agenda has become an aspirational text sans clear independent mechanisms for people to hold governments to account for implementation and follow-up.

“Under the garb of national ownership, realities and capacities, member states can get away doing absolutely nothing. We would like them to ensure national priorities are set in conformity with human rights principles and standards so that we are not in the same place in 2030,” he added.

The 17 SDGs, which are to be approved by over 150 political leaders at a U.N. summit meeting in September, cover a wide range of socio-economic issues, including poverty, hunger, gender equality, sustainable development, full employment, quality education, global governance, human rights, climate change and sustainable energy for all.

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All 17 goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger worldwide, are expected to be met by the year 2030.

The proposed follow-up and review, as spelled out, lacks a strong accountability mechanism, “with several references to national sovereignty, circumstances and priorities which risk undermining the universal commitment to deliver on the SDGs,” says UNMG.

“We are wondering how committed member states will be able to ensure genuine public participation, in particular of the most marginalised in each society, in decisions that will have an impact on their lives.”

This applies also to questions related to financing (budget allocations) in the actual implementation of the agenda, says a statement titled “Don’t break Your Promise Before Making it”.

“We are keen to ensure that people are able to hold governments to account to these commitments so that these goals are delivered and work for everyone,” says UNMG, which includes a number of coalitions and networks who will be monitoring the post-2015 process.

These groups include CSOs representing women, children and youth, human rights, trade unions and workers, local authorities, volunteers and persons with disabilities.

Asked about the composition of the UNMG, Jaimie Grant, who represents the secretariat for Persons with Disabilities, told IPS that UNMG is the official channel for the public to engage with the United Nations on matters of sustainable development.

“Across all these groups, stakeholders and networks, we share some very broad positions, but there are many thousands of organisations feeding in to it, in various capacities, with various positions and priorities,” he explained.

Adding strength to the chorus of voices from the opposition, the Women’s Major Groups, representing over 600 women’s groups from more than 100 countries, have also faulted the development agenda, criticising its shortcomings.

Shannon Kowalski, director of Advocacy and Policy at the International Women’s Health Coalition, told IPS the SDGs could be a major milestone for women and girls.

They have much to gain: better economic opportunities, sexual and reproductive health care and information and protection of reproductive rights, access to education, and lives free from violence, she noted.

“But in order to make this vision a reality, we have to ensure gender equality is at the heart of our efforts, recognising that it is a prerequisite for sustainable development,” she added.

The coalition includes Women in Europe for a Common Future, Equidad de Genero (Mexico), Global Forest Coalition, Women Environmental Programme, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, WEDO (Women’s Environment and Development) and the Forum of Women’s NGOs (Kyrgyzstan).

Kowalski also expressed disappointment over the outcome of the recently concluded conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Addis Ababa.

“We hoped for a progressive and fair financing agreement that addressed the root causes of global economic inequality and its impact on women’s and girls’ lives. But that’s not what we got,” she said.

“We expected strong commitments on financing for gender equality and recognition of the value of women’s unpaid care work. We expected governments to address the systemic drivers of inequalities within and between countries, to establish fair tax policies, to stop illicit financial flows, and to address injustices in international trade structures that disadvantage the poorest countries.”

“We were disappointed that there were no new commitments to increase public financing in order to achieve the SDGs,” Kowalski declared.

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Carvalho of Amnesty International said, “It will be impossible to achieve truly transformative sustainable development and to leave no one behind without conducting regular, transparent, holistic and participatory reviews of progress and setbacks at all levels.”

“The agenda acknowledges the need for international financial institutions (IFIs) to respect domestic policy, but does not go far enough to ensure that their activities do not contribute to any human rights violations.”

“I think we need to strengthen the argument for the agenda to be universal – when all countries have to deliver on their commitments and obligations.”

These, he said, include Official Development Assistance (ODA) and tax justice.

Meanwhile, in a statement released to IPS, Beyond 2015, described as a global civil society campaign pushing for a strong successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), said “for the SDGs to have a real impact on people’s lives everywhere, people themselves must participate in implementing the goals and reviewing progress, and be active agents in decisions affecting them.”

The Beyond 2015 Campaign said it welcomes the focus on inclusion and participation reflected in the current draft that is being negotiated at the United Nations, and “we count on governments to translate their commitments into action as soon as the SDGs are adopted.”

In implementing the SDGs, it is crucial that states honour their commitment to “leave no one behind”.

“This means tracking progress for all social and economic groups, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, drawing upon data from a wider range of sources, and regular scrutiny with the involvement of people themselves,” the statement added.

Additionally, an even higher level of participation and inclusion is needed, at all levels, when implementation starts.

“People must be aware of the new agenda and take ownership of the goals for real and sustainable changes to occur.”

The Beyond 2015 campaign also welcomed the commitment to an open and transparent follow-up framework for the SDGs, grounded in people’s participation at multiple levels.

“We believe the current draft could be improved by including specific time-bound commitments and endorsing civil society’s role in generating data to review commitments,” it said.

“We insist on the need for governments to translate the SDGs into national commitments as this is a crucial step for governments to be genuinely accountable to people everywhere.” (IPS | 29 July 2015)

まもなく国連で採択される予定の、野心的な「ポスト2015年開発アジェンダ」が、まだ始動する前から厳しい批判にさらされている。

「[国連メジャーグループ](#)」（UNMG）という名の下に集った市民団体のグローバルなネットワークが、17の「[持続可能な開発目標](#)」（SDGs）を含む開発アジェンダは「緊迫性や明確な実行戦略、説明責任に欠いている」と警告している。

UNMGの構成団体である[アムネスティ・インターナショナル](#)のサビオ・ガルバルホ氏は、IPSの取材に対して「ポスト2015年開発アジェンダは、履行とフォローアップに関して政府に責任を取らせる明白に独立したメカニズムに欠いたままの、単なる希望的な文章になってしまっています。」と語った。

「（このままでは）国家の所有、現実、能力といった名目の下に、各加盟国は全く何もせずに済ませることが可能です。（SDGsが期限を迎える）2030年になっても現状が変わらないということがないように、各国政府に対して、人権の原則と基準に従って国の優先順位を決めるよう求めている」とガルバルホ氏は付け加えた。

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Multilingualism Opens Doors to the World

By Nora Happel

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - On July 24, 67 student essay winners from 42 different countries convened at the United Nations General Assembly to present their essays at the Many Languages, One World Global Youth Forum.

The students were selected as winners of the Many Languages, One World International Essay Contest among a pool of over 1,250 participants.

Participating students were required to write a 2,000-word essay on a topic related to the post-2015 development agenda in any of the official U.N. languages, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish – the condition being that the language chosen was not the participant’s first language or primary language of instruction during pre-university study.



Many students submitted the essay in their third or fourth language, one participant even in his seventh language.

The idea behind the contest, organised by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) and ELS Educational Services, is to pay tribute to the impact and value of multilingualism and promote dialogue and debate with and among young people on the post-2015 development agenda.

“Multilingualism is a basic free condition for global citizenship because it enables citizens to understand the perspectives of other people in their languages as well as in their own. It is the only way to truly communicate with other people and reach a common understanding which is the basis for dialogue, debate, argumentation and reaching compromise,” Mark W. Harris, President and CEO of ELS Educational Services, said in his opening remarks.

Addressing the student winners of the contest, Hossein Maleki, Rapporteur of the U.N. General Assembly Committee on Information and First Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of Iran to the U.N., added: “As winners of this contest on multilingualism, you embody key values of the United Nations. Implicit in the concept of multilingualism is respect for the plurality of civilisations and the necessity of dialogue between them.”

“When we reach to people in a language that is not our own, the whole world opens up to us.”

For the presentation of their essays, the students were divided up into six groups, according to the U.N. language in which they submitted their essay.

Each language group covered a different topic related to the post-2015 development framework, ranging from education, health, sustainable economic growth, inclusiveness and justice to water management and sanitation as well as nutrition and food security.

Among the numerous ideas and recommendations put forth by the students, emphasis was placed on the increased use of technology as a tool to reach rural areas, the value of scholarships and academic contests to encourage student performance and achievement, the added-value of healthy and sustainable lifestyles, including fair and just working conditions and the way individual consumer decisions can ultimately make a difference. (IPS | 24 July 2015)

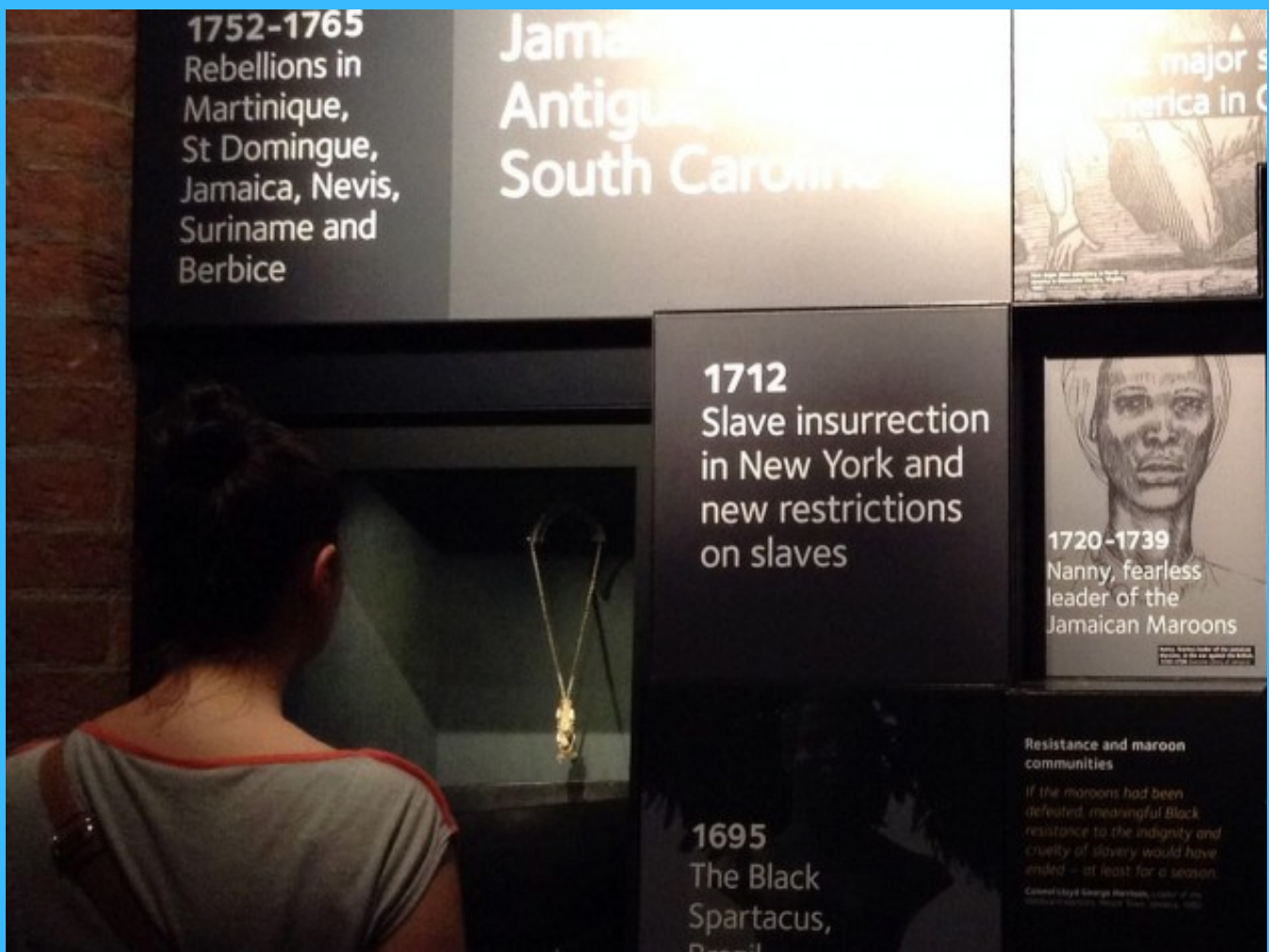
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Museums Taking Stand for Human Rights, Rejecting ‘Neutrality’

By A. D. McKenzie



A visitor looking at a panel at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England. Credit: A.D. McKenzie/IPS

LIVERPOOL, England (IPS) - An exhibition on modern-day slavery at the International Slavery Museum in this northern English town is just one example of a museum choosing to focus on human rights, and being “upfront” about it.

“Social justice just doesn’t happen by itself; it’s about activism and people willing to take risks,” says Dr David Fleming, director of [National Museums Liverpool](#), which includes the city’s International Slavery Museum ([ISM](#)).

The institution looks at aspects of both historical and contemporary slavery, while being an “international hub for resources on human rights issues”.

It is a member of the Liverpool-based Social Justice Alliance for Museums (SJAM), formed in 2013 and now comprising more than 80 museums worldwide, and it coordinated the founding of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums ([FIHRM](#)) in 2010.

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The aim of FIHRM is to encourage museums which “engage with sensitive and controversial human rights themes” to work together and share “new thinking and initiatives in a supportive environment”. Both organisations reflect the way that museums are changing, said Fleming.

“Museums are not dispassionate agents,” he told IPS. “They have a role in safeguarding memory. We have to look at the role of museums and see how they can transform lives.”

The International Slavery Museum’s current exhibition, titled “Broken Lives” and running until April 2016, focuses on the victims of global modern-day slavery – half of whom are said to be in India, and most of whom are Dalits, or people formerly known as “untouchables”.

The display “provides a window into the experiences of Dalits and others who are being exploited and abused through modern slavery in India”, say the curators.

“Dalits still experience marginalisation and prejudice, live in extreme poverty and are vulnerable to human trafficking and bonded labour,” they add.

Presented in partnership with the [Dalit Freedom Network](#), the exhibition uses photographs, film, personal testimony and other means to show “stories of hardship” that include sexual servitude and child bondage. It also profiles the activists working to mend “broken lives”.

The display occupies a temporary exposition space at the museum, which has a permanent section devoted to the atrocities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the legacy of racism.

Along with the [Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery](#) in the French city of Nantes and the recently opened [Mémorial ACTe](#) in Guadeloupe, the Liverpool museum is one of too few national institutions focused on raising awareness about slavery, observers say.

But it has provided a “vital source of inspiration” to permanent exhibitions on the slave trade in places such as Bordeaux, southwest France, according to the city’s mayor Alain Juppé. Here, the **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** hosts a comprehensive division called ‘Bordeaux, Trans-Atlantic Trading and Slavery’ – with detailed, unequivocal information.

These museums hope that they can play a role in global citizenship, educating the public and encouraging visitors to leave with a different mind-set – about respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, equality, and sustainability.

“We try to overtly encourage the public to get involved in the fight for human rights,” Fleming told IPS in an interview. “We’ve often said at the Slavery Museum that we want people to go away fired up with the desire to fight racism.

“You can’t dictate to people what they’re going to think or how they’re going to respond and react,” he continued. “But you can create an atmosphere, and the atmosphere at the Slavery Museum is clearly anti-racist. We hope people will leave thinking: I didn’t know all those terrible things had happened and I’m leaving converted.”

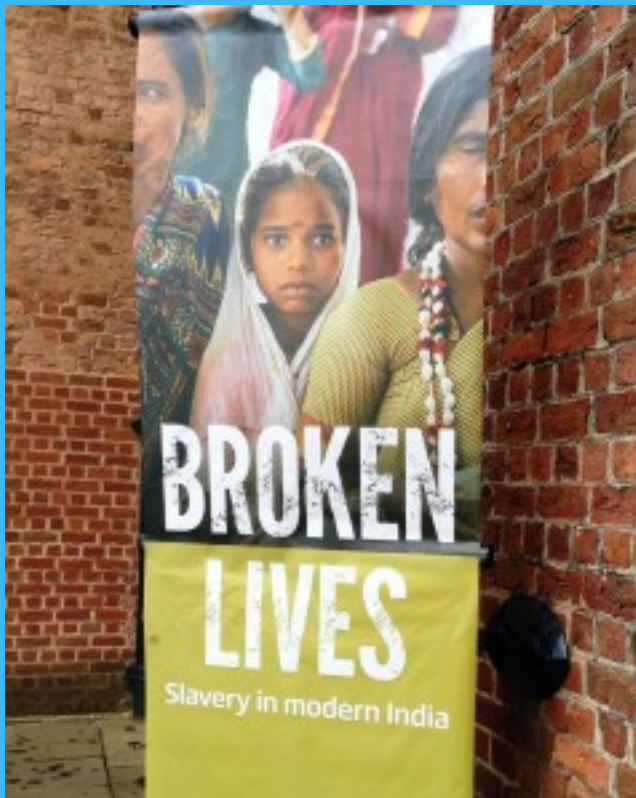
Despite Liverpool’s undeniable history as a major slaving port in the 18th century, not everyone will be affected in the same way, however. There have been swastikas painted on the walls of the museum in the past, as bigots reject the institution’s aims.

“Some people come full of knowledge and full of attitude already, and I don’t imagine that we affect these people. But we’re looking for people in the middle, who might not have thought about this,” Fleming said.

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He described a visit to the museum by a group of English schoolchildren who initially did not comprehend photographs depicting African youngsters whose hands had been cut off by colonialists.

When they were given explanations about the images, the schoolchildren “switched on to the idea that people can behave abominably, based on nothing but ethnicity,” he said.

Fleming visits social justice exhibitions around the world and gives information about the museum’s work, he said. As a keynote speaker, he recently delivered an address about the role of museums at a conference in Liverpool titled ‘Mobilising Memory: Creating African Atlantic Identities’.

The meeting – organised by the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR) and a new UK-based body called the Institute for Black Atlantic Research – took place at Liverpool Hope University at the end of June.

It began a few days after a white gunman killed nine people inside the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in the U.S. state of North Carolina.

The murders, among numerous incidents of brutality against African Americans over the past year, sparked a sense of urgency at the conference as well as heightened the discussion about activism – and especially the part that writers, artists and scholars play in preserving

and “activating” memory in the struggle for social justice and human rights.

“Artists, and by extension museums, have what some people have called a ‘burden of representation’, and they have to deal with that,” said James Smalls, a professor of art history and museum studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

“Many times, artists automatically are expected to speak on behalf of their ethnic group or community, and some have chosen to embrace that while others try to be exempt,” he added.

Claire Garcia, a professor at Colorado College, said that for a number of academics “there is no necessary link between scholarship and activism” in what are considered scholarly fields.

Such thinkers make the point that scholarship should be “theoretical” and “universal,” and not political or focused on “the specific plights of one group,” she said. However, this standpoint – “when it is disconnected from the embattled humanity” of some ethnic groups – can create further problems.

The concept of museums standing for “social justice” is controversial as well because the issue is seen differently in various parts of the world. The line between “objectifying and educating” also gives cause for debate.

Fleming said that National Museums Liverpool, for example, would not have put on the contentious show “Exhibit B” – which featured live Black performers in a “human zoo” installation; the work was apparently aimed at condemning racism and slavery but instead drew protests in London, Paris and other cities in 2014.

“Personally I loathe all that stuff, so my vote would be ‘no’ to anything similar,” Fleming told IPS. “And that’s not because it’s controversial and difficult but because it’s degrading and humiliating. There are all sorts of issues with it, and I’ve thought about that quite a lot.”

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He and other scholars say that they are deeply conscious of who is doing the “story-telling” of history, and this is an issue that also affects museums.

Several participants at the CAAR conference criticised certain displays at the International Slavery Museum, wondering about the intended audience, and who had selected the exhibits, for instance.

A section that showed famous individuals of African descent seemed superficial in its glossy presentation of people such as American talk-show host Oprah Winfrey and well-known athletes and entertainers.

Fleming said that museums often face disapproval for both going too far and not going “far enough”. But taking a disinterested stand does not seem to be the answer, because “the world is full of ‘faux-neutral’ museums”, he said.

The most relevant and interesting museums can be those that have a “moral compass”, but they need help as they can “do very little by themselves,” Fleming told IPS. The institutions that he directs often work with non-governmental organisations that bring their own expertise and point of view to the exhibitions, he explained.

Apart from slavery, individual museums around the world have focused on the Holocaust, on apartheid, on genocide in countries such as Cambodia, and on the atrocities committed during dictatorships in regions such as Latin America.

“Some countries don’t want museums to change,” said Fleming. “But in Liverpool, we’re not just there for tourism.” (IPS | 21 July 2015)

【リバプール（英国）IPS=A・D・マッケンジー】

このイングランド北部の都市にある「[国際奴隷制博物館](#)」の現代版奴隷制度の展示は、人権に光を当て、そのテーマを「全面に出す」ことを選択した博物館のひとつの例だ。

「社会正義はそれ自体では実現されません。それには積極行動主義（[アクティビズム](#)）と、リスクを取ることをいとわない民衆の存在が不可欠です。」と語るのは、国際奴隷制博物館（[ISM](#)）を運営している[国立リバプール博物館](#)の館長を務めるデイビッド・フレミング博士である。

この博物館は、過去および現代の奴隷制の様々な側面に焦点をあてると同時に、「人権問題に関する資料の国際拠点になることを目指している。

2013年に発足し、現在では世界全体で80以上の博物館が加盟している「[社会正義を求める博物館連合](#)」（[SJAM](#)）の会員であり、2010年には「[国際人権博物館連盟](#)」（[FIHRM](#)）の立ち上げでも中心的な役割を果たした。

FIHRMの目的は、「センシティブで対立含みの人権問題に関わっている」博物館同士の協力を促し、「好意的な環境で新たな思考と取組み」を共有することにある。フレミング氏はIPSの取材に対して、「いずれの組織も、博物館が変容していくあり様を反映しています。」「博物館は私情を挟まない主体というわけではありません。それは記憶を保護する役割を担っているのです。博物館の役割に目を向け、それがいかにして人生に変化をもたらせるかを見ていかねばなりません。」と語った。

国際奴隷制博物館で来年4月まで展示予定の「[壊された人生](#)」と題された特別展示は、現代世界の奴隷制の被害者について取り扱っている。その半分がインドにおり、大部分が「ダリット」、かつては「[不可触民](#)」として知られていた人々だとみられている。

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Civil Society has Vital Role to Play in Post-2015 Development Agenda

By Nora Happel

Contrary to a widespread view, fostering global citizenship is not an abstract concept. It is rooted in the belief and actions of all sections of the society that, irrespective of creed and colour human beings, belong to one vast family. Civil society reflecting the aspirations and concerns of the common woman and man plays an important role.



UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - “The action of the private sector can make or break the post-2015 development agenda,” Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said in his opening remarks at a side event hosted in the context of a high-level political forum at the U.N. on July 8.

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The event entitled “Involving civil society in the implementation of the post-2015 agenda” was organised by the European Economic and Social Committee, the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs.

It brought together EU and U.N. officials, civil society stakeholders and business as well as trade union representatives to discuss the impact of civil society in sustainable development policies and deliberate on measures to promote further active involvement of civil society.

As emphasised throughout the event, “organised civil society” has a key role to play in realising the post-2015 development agenda.

The term “organised civil society” refers to all the groups and organisations that are independent from government and in which citizens come together to work cooperatively to advance their common interests.

Panelists made clear that after having contributed to a large extent to the conceptualisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), scheduled to be adopted in September 2015, the further role of civil society is to engage in the implementation process and take part in review and monitoring procedures.

Vella also pointed to the impact businesses can make through concepts such as social responsibility and green economy in improving resource-efficiency, providing funding for infrastructure and protecting biodiversity.

According to him, customers too have an essential role to play by “making informed decisions about their lifestyle and the products that they choose”. These actions are complemented by trade unions’ and NGO’s advocacy for social protection, fair working conditions and sustainable development, while civil society in large has an important function in “holding us accountable”.

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Ibrahim Thiaw drew particular attention to the fact that in many parts of the world, governments are lacking expertise and knowledge to successfully implement the SDG’s. By providing advocacy, science and knowledge, civil society organisations could make an important difference.

“While civil society organisations have no policy-making authority and authority to make decisions at the national level, they have a very important role in providing science and advocating for integrating science in policy-making,” he said.

Presenting the findings of a recent survey on mechanisms of engagement with key stakeholders, CIVICUS U.N. representative Jeffery Huffines raised awareness about the need for member states and the U.N. to provide financial support for stakeholders from marginalized communities to participate in relevant meetings, continue to develop online video streaming to allow for remote participation, improve coordination between relevant stakeholders and reassess current mechanisms of engagement to make sure they are representative of all stakeholders and not dominated by large organisations from the global North.

At the ensuing debate session, scepticism was expressed about the willingness of businesses to forgo short-term profit “in order for the planet to be saved”. But panelists showed optimism that the business community is increasingly accepting and implementing sustainability as customers expect it and governments require it.

According to Norine Kennedy, Vice President for Environmental Affairs at the U.S. Council for International Business, more sustainable, less wasteful and more efficient economic activities will also prove more competitive. Responsible businesses will “not be a utopia but actually the world of the future,” she said. (IPS | 8 July 2015)

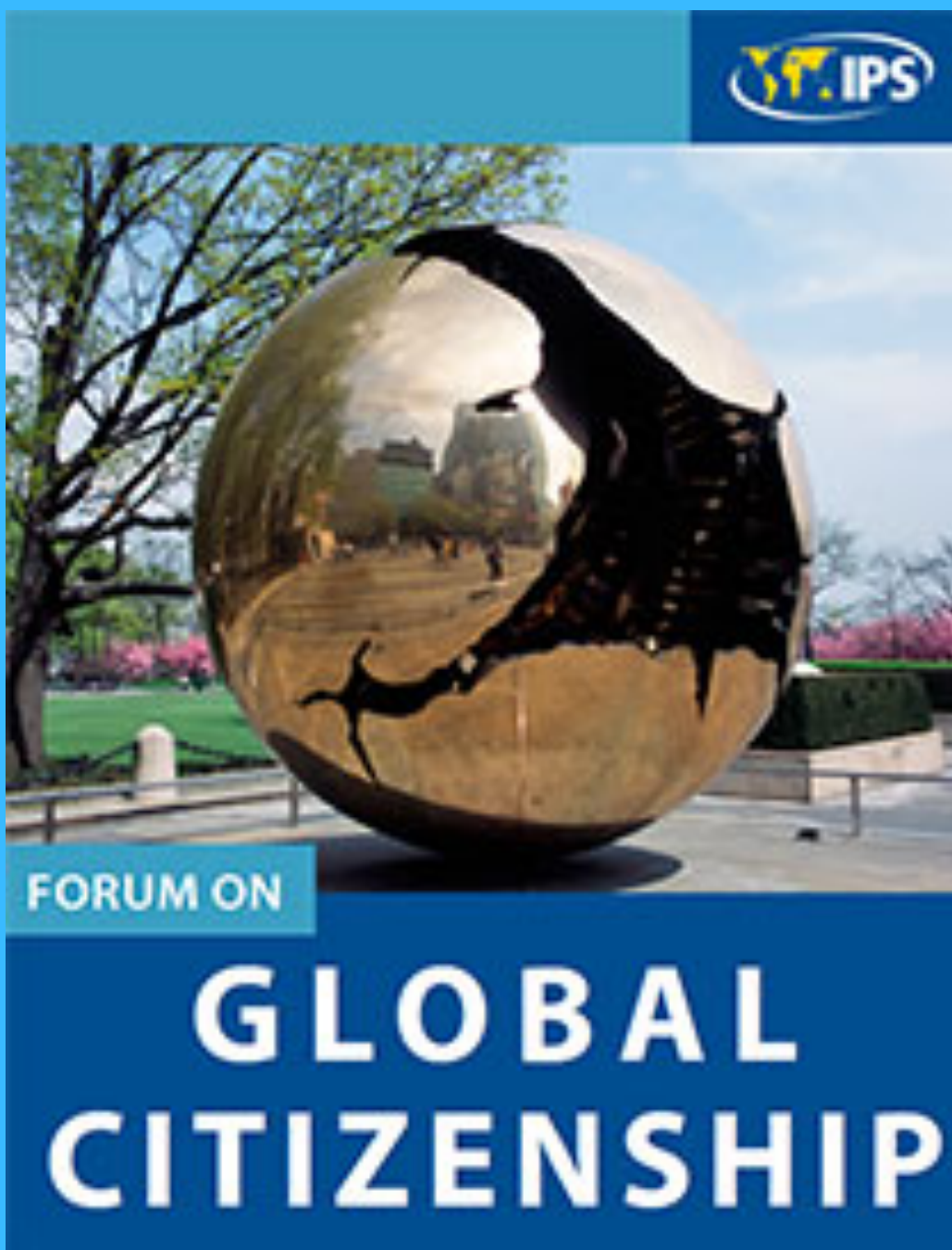
Photo on page 10: Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with June-July 2015 Articles

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