A world without poverty

A programme of the International Social Science Council hosted by the University of Bergen, Norway.

The fundamental mission of CROP is to work in collaboration with knowledge networks, institutions and scholars to build independent, alternative and critical knowledge and education on poverty, and to help shape policies for preventing and eradicating poverty.
FOREWORD

By Alberto Cimadamore and Thomas Pogge

The second semester of 2015 witnessed a revitalisation of our publication activities with new titles in our collection on poverty studies with Zed Books, London. A new editorial board is in place and the series has a new and modern design. This is combined with the traditional editorial approach aimed at producing and disseminating knowledge essential to the reduction, eradication and prevention of poverty worldwide. The revitalised CROP-Zed book series has already given birth to two new titles on global health and on water, both key topics within poverty research.

CROP has also contributed to two other publications focusing on sustainable urban development and produced as output from the World Social Science Fellows Programme seminars. These seminars were co-organised by the ISSC and CROP with local partners in Ecuador, Taiwan and most recently, in South Africa.

This semester, CROP signed a publishing contract with Ibidem Verlag, a German academic publishing house that specializes in scholarly literature. This new collaboration will allow CROP to sustain the level of publication that our increased activities currently demand. The books contracted with Ibidem will be complementary to the ones currently in production with Zed Books and be guided by the same editorial team and peer-review system, ensuring a high standard of academic excellence.

CROP’s increasing publication activity has been accompanied by a continuous focus on scientific events, most notably our participation in the World Social Science Forum in Durban, where CROP organised two conference panels and a meeting of its Scientific Committee. Our contributions to this global event exemplify the closer collaboration with our mother institution, the International Social Science Council (ISSC).

CROP has also continued its integration into the academic programme of the University of Bergen (UiB). In collaboration with an international team involved in multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, CROP will contribute a course on Water, Poverty and Sustainable Development to the 2016 Bergen Summer Research School. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be at the core of this PhD course.

As the most visible and ambitious international anti-poverty initiative, the SDGs will continue to be a key focus of CROP activities and publications. CROP has critically and constructively followed the MDG process, and we shall do the same with the SDGs, thus fulfilling our institutional vision and mission.

In conclusion, we would like warmly to welcome the newest member of our Scientific Committee, Jayati Ghosh. She is Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (India), and we are looking forward to working with her for many years to come.
CROP at the World Social Science Forum 2015

CROP organised two scientific panels at the World Social Science Forum 2015, held in Durban, South Africa from 13-16 September.

The third edition of the World Social Science Forum was organised by the International Social Science Council and co-hosted by HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council) and CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa). A broad range of topics was addressed under the theme “Transforming global relations for a just world” by social scientists from all over the world. The forum ended on a positive note, with a final declaration stating that “the participants would support measurable progress to overcome inequalities, including through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

As part of the official programme of the Forum, CROP organised two of the academic panels, both of them on Monday 14 September. The first panel had the title “Global Justice and Poverty in the Transformation of MDGs into SDGs” and was chaired by CROP’s Scientific Director Alberto D. Cimadamore. The other members of the panel were David Hulme (Professor at the University of Manchester), Gabriele Koehler (Senior Research Associate with UNRISD, Geneva), and Alberto Minujin (Professor at The New School, New York). The panel looked at the MDGs and the upcoming SDGs from various different angles. A critical assessment of the MDGs was made with the aim of contributing to the process leading up to the implementation of the SDGs. Particular emphasis was given to the role of decent work and social protection initiatives that have proven effective in reducing poverty in different parts of the world, as well as to the potential role of the SDGs on child poverty. The contemporary notion of global social justice was discussed in relation to the role of national and international institutions in the global campaign for poverty eradication.

The second panel had the title “Poverty, Social Justice and Policy in a Regional Comparative Perspective” and was chaired by Bob Deacon (Professor Emeritus at Sheffield University, UK). The other members of this panel were Jimi Adesina (Professor at the University of South Africa), Jayati Ghosh (Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) and Thomas Pogge (Professor at Yale University, US). This panel looked at comparative ways in which social justice is conceptualised and provided for in terms of social policies in different regions of the world. There were regional examples from both Asia and Africa, as well as the more overarching question of “Can human rights serve as the core of a globally sharable conception of social justice?” The papers addressing the issues raised in both sessions are currently being prepared for publication during 2016.

In addition to the two panels, CROP also used the opportunity to hold its annual Scientific Committee (SC) meeting during the stay in Durban. Six of the committee members joined the CROP Secretariat for this year’s meeting. Saturday 12 September was set aside for a full day where the SC reviewed the 2014 annual report and provided input to CROP’s activity plan for 2016-17.
Ronaldo Munck, Professor for Civic Engagement at Dublin City University, Ireland, visited the CROP Secretariat in Bergen on 15 October 2015 in order to hold a lecture on “Water, Poverty and Development Goals” at the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development. He discussed how the actual level of water access or provision to global majorities is contributing (or not) to poverty reduction, food security and development in the South. He also took a closer look at how this is addressed in the current debate concerning the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Following his lecture, he presented the CROP/Zed book *Water and Development – Good Governance after Neoliberalism*. Munck was a co-editor of this book and was joined in his presentation by fellow editor Honor Fagan of the National University of Ireland in a video message. Together, they introduced the cluster of Uganda-based PhD research projects that provided the content for this volume. The diversity of the projects is reflected in the wide range of topics found in the book. Chapters span from exploring the relation between water and gender to the technical design of water pumps. With this variety of topics, the book could be recommended as a handbook for individuals seeking to work in the water development field, as was remarked by the audience.

Else Øyen, founder of CROP, concluded the session by commenting on the publication and challenging its title. Her suggestion for an alternate title poignantly summed up the essential findings of the afternoon: *Water is Development.*

CROP Fellow Teresita Cruz-del Rosario from the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore was a visiting researcher at the CROP Secretariat in December 2015. Her stay was financed by the University of Bergen’s Strategic Programme for International Research and Education (SPIRE).

She spent her time in Bergen conducting research on the evolution of developmental states into welfare states, as well as studying the Nordic Welfare State. Del Rosario is one of the editors of a forthcoming publication resulting from the workshop “The democratic developmental state - Southern African and Nordic experiences”, which was co-organised by CROP in Cape Town in February 2015.

During her stay at CROP, Teresita gave a lecture on “Democratic Developmental States in Comparative Perspective” as part of the UiB Global seminar series at the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development. In her lecture, she looked at Asian countries with remarkable development records, such as Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea and explored how their success stories could be translated to other Asian countries, namely China, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Myanmar. She also mentioned more recent developments towards increasingly unequal societies in parts of the Asian Dragon countries. The lecture was followed by an active discussion.
Law and Climate

by Gudrun Sylte, Head of Communication, Bjerknes Centre

Can law be used to save climate? The Bjerknes Centre and UiB participated in a UNESCO event during the Climate Summit in Paris.

- States have a legal duty to avoid climate disaster, said Thomas Pogge, Professor at Yale University, when he and his international colleagues presented The Oslo Principles on Global Climate Obligations at the Climate Summit in Paris in December.

The Oslo Principles
For more information: http://bit.ly/1QFRIPt

A few years ago, the lawyer Jaap Spier and the philosopher and social scientist Thomas Pogge sat down to discuss how one could use existing international law, human rights and other supreme laws, in order to identify ways in which international legislation places specific demands on states to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.

- The starting point for this discussion was a general feeling of unease about how politicians are conducting policies that are leading us over the edge of a cliff. We need to find out what we can do from a legal perspective, said Thomas Pogge.

- The debate has centred on human rights, where there is general agreement that climate change is precisely about human rights, says Jaap Spier, Special Legal Advisor to the Dutch Supreme Court.

The result was the Oslo Principles on Global Climate Obligations, which sum up the legal obligations of states to prevent climate change.

- The stupidity of our time
Tore Furevik, Director of the Bjerknes Centre and Professor of Oceanography at UiB, likes the fact that international experts highlight human rights and international law in the climate debate: “What right does the rich part of the world have to create natural disasters that will principally affect the poor part of the world, those who have done little to contribute to the problems and are least able to adapt to the climate changes? And what right do the people of today have to start processes such as desertification and rising sea levels that will create great difficulties for tens of generations to come. History’s judgement of the stupidity of our time may be merciless, says Furevik.

Launch of new CROP book

The presentation of the Oslo Principles was followed by a book launch for the forthcoming CROP book: Poverty and the MDGs: A critical look forward, edited by Alberto D. Cimadamore (CROP), Gabriele Köhler (UNRISD) and Thomas Pogge (Yale University). The editors introduced the publication that aims to provide critique of the prevailing development agenda and signals the need to establish an independent, transparent methodology to measure results and create accountability. It also outlines a radical alternative approach to development, in which policy is informed by the knowledge and experience insights of those who live in poverty, face social exclusion and are already suffering the consequences of climate change.
UNICEF’s assessment is that the Millennium Development Goals project was a mixed success by failing to reach the most vulnerable children. The SDGs were drafted to outperform the MDGs and compensate for their failures. Can they?

The answer appears more equivocal than clear because the SDGs, though an improvement, repeat some oversights of the MDGs. A fundamental oversight was basing goals and targets on the implicit notion that children are a static and homogenous category with similar contexts, needs and outlooks. The ever-changing dynamics of children’s lives, however, disproves this notion as the following instances demonstrate: (i) Across developed and developing countries, malnutrition in the form of child obesity is becoming prevalent, but the SDGs focus only on malnutrition as child undernutrition; (ii) Children’s realities as expressed in the situation of street children and children in child-headed households differ from the ideal parented-childhood, which the SDGs imagine; (iii) Negative events including terrorism, economic austerity, interethnic conflicts and pandemics increase the tally of unaccompanied minors, orphans and displaced children daily. These children risk being neglected and require specialised attention.

Largely, the SDGs remain minimalist in setting thresholds and cautiously vague with wording. Particularly, retention of the $1.25/day standard for measuring extreme poverty is obsolete, in the realistic sense of decent living and given the practicalities of purchasing power anywhere. The use of imprecise adverbs: ‘significantly’, ‘substantially’ and ‘fully’ to define targets either contribute inappreciably to answer “to what extent”, or are more suitable for defining inputs than outcomes. Assessment by such standards is subjective, ambiguous and unreliable. Overall, some SDG targets still require direction, regarding ‘How, How much and When’ they should be achieved, and in cognizance that countries’ histories and contexts matter.

Echoing existing concerns about extreme inequality being the focal problem, rather than extreme poverty as the SDGs assert, I propose that inter-people inequality is a bigger issue than inter-country inequality. SDG 10 to “reduce inequality within and among countries” (emphasis mine) is fundamental to SDG 1 “to end poverty in all its forms everywhere”. Creating equal opportunities and access to them is necessary to bridge the gap, but strategic redistribution is even more potent. Nobel Laureate in Economics Joseph Stiglitz rightly classified inequality as a product of choice not chance. So discarding anti-poor notions of Pareto-optimality is crucial to the success of the SDGs. Redistribution and developmental welfare will boost a paradigm shift from battling symptoms to treating effects and eliminating causes of poverty.

Notwithstanding, the SDGs should be deemed an opportunity and a challenge; (i) an opportunity to redress MDG failures, and (ii) a challenge to exceed targets—of goals, time, quality and sustainability of outcomes. The SDGs are certainly a step forward—posterity will judge whether it is in the right direction.

This is an opinion piece on the SDGs and a general response to UNICEF’s June 2015 Progress for Children Report – “Beyond Averages: Learning from the MDGS”. 
From 1980 to 1995 economic growth was relatively slow in developing countries. It was not much higher than population growth, and the prospects for income-poverty reduction were thus limited. Poverty declines only when the poorest in the income distribution benefit from growth, and growth can only be stable and sustained when it is inclusive and generates industrial and modern service sector job growth.

These policy lessons are based on the success of Asian economies (e.g. China and India) in reducing income poverty (discussed in detail in Mehrotra’s recent book (2015). The lessons are especially relevant for Sub-Saharan economies and Latin America, as both suffered a worsening of poverty and inequality during the 1980s and 1990s (the lost decades).

1) Agricultural growth plays a key role in sustaining pro-poor growth. This is apparent from East Asian experience and has been reinforced by recent developments in China and India.

2) In order to make growth inclusive, non-agricultural employment must grow in labour-intensive sectors so that employment growth at least exceeds the number of new entrants to the labour force.

3) Washington Consensus rejected: In order to avoid neglecting distributional impacts, the initial level of inequality or poverty can be addressed by direct or indirect policy interventions.

4) Trade openness can be successfully accompanied by industrial policy; the resulting job growth reduces poverty. This is demonstrated by China’s use of its comparative advantage in the form of low wages and an educated, healthy workforce, to produce manufactured goods for world market export.

5) Instead of waiting for the impact of economic growth to ‘trickle down’ to the poor, policy-makers must recognize that there is a need for direct policy intervention as well as GDP growth. The need for social policy to build human capital must also be supplemented by the promotion of social insurance and social assistance.

6) Countries that want to continue to grow and expand their manufacturing sector must also expand vocational education and training (VET), so productivity grows.

7) Investment in social services, especially in building functional health systems and ensuring universal access and completion of secondary education for girls, remains an effective method of reducing the total fertility rate (TFR), which in turn has growth impacts.

8) The informal sector employs the largest number of poor people. However, effective social policy is dependent upon growing tax revenues. Hence, capturing a larger share of GDP through progressive taxation systems is important to secure effective and stable social assistance.

9) As a direct poverty reduction measure, public employment programmes can provide employment in the ‘lean season’ for surplus agricultural or urban labour.

10) Alternative non-agricultural sources of livelihood can be generated through micro-financing for individuals, but more by micro-credit self-help groups, especially in rural areas.

Further Reading:
Two CROP books have been published this year:

**Water and Development. Good Governance after Neoliberalism.**

*15 September 2015*

The book, edited by Ronaldo Munck, Narathius Asingwire, Honor Fagan and Consolata Kabonesa, was launched at the World Social Science Forum in Durban, South Africa in September 2015. It examines a range of issues, from governance to solar distillation, from gender to water pumps, using a range of research methods, from participant observation to GIS and SPSS data analysis. The result is essential reading both all seeking a robust and transformational approach to water and development.


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**Protecting the Health of the Poor. Social Movements in the South**

*15 December 2015*

The book, edited by Abraar Karan, Geeta Sodhi, emerged from a workshop of the same title which was organised by CROP, Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) and the University of Delhi in New Dehli, India in October 2011. Drawing on in-depth empirical research spanning Asia, Latin America and Africa, this collection offers an overview of the legal, political and social factors behind poor performance countries in the global south in enforcing the right for health.

See also: [http://www.zedbooks.co.uk/paperback/protecting-the-health-of-the-poor](http://www.zedbooks.co.uk/paperback/protecting-the-health-of-the-poor)

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Four CROP books in the International Studies in Poverty Research series are so far scheduled to be published in 2016:

**Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: A Critical Look Forward.**

*February 2016*

Edited by Alberto D. Cimadamore, Gabriele Kohler and Thomas Pogge, this book brings together leading experts to provide critique of the prevailing development agenda. Examining the MDG efforts and results, it exposes the measurements that have lead official sources to routinely underestimate the scale of world poverty and hunger.

**Sustainability and Development: The Challenge of Social Change**

*March 2016*

Edited by Alberto D. Cimadamore, Maurice Mittelmark, Gro Th. Lie and Fungisai Ottemöller, it links the disciplines of development studies and environmental/sustainability sciences. It argues for a new, transdisciplinary way of approaching these two highly inter-connected fields, acknowledging that the necessary connections have thus far been widely neglected.
Poverty Briefs: Autumn 2015

The following five poverty briefs were published in the period August-December 2015:

**WHY SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL POVERTY ANALYSIS MATTERS: A CASE STUDY OF NAMIBIA**
by Ojijo Odhiambo (UNDP Namibia)

Rapid economic growth and relatively high income per capita can hide a high incidence of poverty, inequalities in income distribution, and low standards of living within a country or region. Analysis of head count at the sub-national level provides policy and decision makers with the evidence on which to base long-term policy and programmatic decisions targeting specific geographic areas.

**THE END OF POVERTY: BLACK WOMEN’S ENTRY TO THE MIDDLE CLASS IN SOUTH AFRICA**
by Hilde Ibsen (Karlstad University, Sweden)

After 1994 the South African government implemented a flurry of strategies aimed at poverty reduction and gender equality. The government committed itself to creating a democratic state with the goal of integrating economic growth and social development. As a result many black women received new opportunities to exit poverty and enter the middle class.

**A SERENE LOOK AT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)**
by Jan Vandemoortele (Independent Researcher)

Vandemoortele examines the basic premise of the SDGs and their universal nature. He also looks into some technical aspects, such as the level of ambition, benchmarking and types of targets. The brief argues that any irrational exuberance about the SDGs would be misplaced; yet they might serve a useful purpose if selected targets were to be placed in the limelight.

**THE EXPLANATORY POWER OF THE WELFARE STATE DEVELOPMENT ON POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**
by Gibrán Cruz-Martínez (Autonomous University of Chile)

Cruz-Martínez examines the explanatory power and significance of welfare state development on single-dimension deprivation and income inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, before and after a control of demographic and cyclical factors. Rather than operationalise the welfare state only by its social spending dimension, Cruz-Martínez takes into account its multi-dimensional nature by considering coverage and outcomes as complementary dimensions.
Poverty assessments, for both adults and children, require better indicators. A continued reliance on narrow definitions and absolute, minimalist measures is no longer acceptable (as reflected by the new Sustainable Development Goals). Every major human rights convention and declaration states the rights of people to an adequate standard of living, as well as to protection from poverty and destitution. The consensual approach provides not only a means of assessing the prevalence of poverty, but also a means for societies to define the standards of living they expect.

In 2013 and 2014, CROP was one of the partners in ISSC’s World Social Science Fellows seminars. The books resulting from these seminars, both discussing sustainable urban development, were published in the second half of 2015. The first book, Untamed Urbanisms, edited by Adriana Allen, Mark Swilling and Andrea Lampis, is the result of the fellows’ workshop at the Andean University of Simon Bolivar in Quito, Ecuador, in March 2013. It raises new questions about sustainable urban development and aims to repoliticise the relationship between urban development, sustainability and justice, and to explore the tensions emerging under real circumstances, as well as their potential for transformative change. The book is available for free download: http://www.crop.org/EventsActivities/World-Social-Science-Fellows-publications.aspx

The second book, Dialogues of Sustainable Urbanisation: Social Science Research and Transitions to Urban Contexts, edited by Jenna Condie and Anna Cooper, emerged from a November 2014 seminar in Taipei, Taiwan. It discusses transitions to urban contexts from a social science perspective, focusing on sustainable urbanisation and the contribution of social science research to sustainable urban futures. With the workshop concluding that a single definition of sustainable urbanisation is not possible, the book embraces such uncertainty by welcoming dialogues, rather than a monologue, on the urbanisation processes taking place across the world. It discusses what to do about the places that are being built and the impacts of human activity on the environment, health and climate. This book is also available for free download: http://www.crop.org/EventsActivities/World-Social-Science-Fellows-publications.aspx

CROP welcomes submissions to the CROP Poverty Brief series, contact us for further details on how to submit proposals.

http://www.crop.org/Publications/BriefsSeries/default.aspx

New Editorial Team

Looking to the future, CROP has an ambitious publication schedule, both for its international book series and for its poverty briefs. A new editorial team has been appointed in order to be able to deal with the pre-publication tasks as efficiently as possible. This team comprises two editorial committees; one for the book series “International Studies in Poverty Research” and one for the CROP Poverty Briefs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN POVERTY RESEARCH - Editorial Committee:

Series editor  Thomas Pogge [Yale University]
Co-editors  Carlos Barba [Guadalajara University, MEXICO]
Sonja Bhalotra [University of Essex, UK]
Robyn Eversole [University of Tasmania, AUSTRALIA]
Honor Fagan [National University of Ireland]
Santosh Mehrotra [Jawaharlal Nehru University, INDIA]

POVERTY BRIEF SERIES - Editorial Committee:

Etienne Nel [University of Otago, NEW ZEALAND]
Enrique Delamonica [UNICEF, NIGERIA]
VIDEO PROJECT: “VISUALISING POVERTY RESEARCH”

The Visualising Poverty Research video project was launched by CROP in September 2014 and seeks to disseminate poverty research to a wider audience using video interviews published on CROP’s YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/CROPSecretariat). By December 2015, 30 interviews had been conducted with researchers from all over the world. These videos are available on YouTube, together with a general video presenting the project. After 15 months online, CROP YouTube channel has now produced the following statistics:

- A total number of 3,140 views – 2,010 of these in 2015
- It has been accessed from 84 different countries around the world, whereby Norway, US, UK, South Africa and Argentina account for about 60% of the visits.
- Ten interviews had more than 100 viewings each, while another ten videos had 50 or more viewings.

We are happy with the project results so far. We believe that this is an efficient way of disseminating knowledge with a potential to reach a wider audience than our written publications. We will continue to include interviews with more members of our network in the future and will endeavor to make the channel known to an increasing audience.

NEW SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEMBER

Indian Economist Jayati Ghosh was appointed as a new CROP Scientific Committee Member in November 2015. She replaces Juliana Martinez-Franzoni, who withdrew from her position in September 2015.

Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (India). In addition to this, she is currently Executive Secretary of the International Development Economics Associates and a Founding Trustee of the Economic Research Foundation in New Delhi. Prof. Ghosh’s research focuses on development, globalisation, international trade and finance, employment patterns in developing countries, macroeconomic policy and issues related to gender and development.

Jayati Ghosh was part of a CROP-organised panel on “Poverty, Social justice and Policy in a Regional Comparative Perspective” during the World Social Science Forum in Durban, South Africa in September 2015. CROP is confident that Ghosh’s expertise will be a valuable addition to the Scientific Committee.

ERASMUS+ STUDENT INTERNSHIP AT THE CROP SECRETARIAT

On 8 October 2015, the CROP secretariat welcomed their first Erasmus+ student intern. Antonia Ley, student of Social Sciences and English from the University of Augsburg, Germany will be staying in Norway until the end of February 2016. The CROP Secretariat offers Erasmus+ internships to students with a relevant background from participating European countries.

The aim of the internship is to provide students with an opportunity to gain international work experience in the field of research coordination as well as learn about poverty research.

So far, there has been a high interest in the position and CROP is confident to have many good candidates for the internship in the future.
CROP Fellows: Result of Call for Workshop Proposals

In March 2015 CROP issued a call for workshop proposals to its new CROP Fellows. The objective of the call was to increase interaction between our Fellows and the rest of the CROP network by offering support to organise an academic workshop in collaboration with CROP in 2016 or 2017.

The call resulted in several workshop applications and CROP is now following up concrete proposals from CROP Fellow Anete Ivo for an event at the Catholic University of Salvador in Salvador-Bahia (Brazil) and from CROP Fellow Hilary Silver for an event at Harvard University (US). These workshops are listed below among CROP events planned for 2016.

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CALENDAR

All dates are subject to confirmation

Selected CROP Events in 2016

23-25 May  WORKSHOP “Child Poverty and Social Protection in Western and Central Africa” co-organised with UNICEF WCARO (Western and Central Africa Regional Office), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Equity for Children, ABUJA, NIGERIA

13-25 June  PHD COURSE “Poverty, climate change and water in the context of SDGs” as part of the Bergen Summer Research School. BERGEN, NORWAY

23-25 September  WORKSHOP “Welfare States, Labor rights and Basic income in Latin America”, co-organised with Catholic University of Salvador, SALVADOR de BAHIA, BRAZIL

16-18 November  WORKSHOP “Social Inclusion and Poverty Eradication” co-organised with Harvard University, CAMBRIDGE, US