

Virtual Link

Global Health: Noerine at the ASPEN seminar in Rome

On the 12th and 13th of February the Aspen Institute and the Health Policy Institute organised a **seminar on Global Health** to discuss the actions needed to face global health challenges, focusing on pandemics, health systems improvement, research, investments and public/private partnerships. The final session, attended by several guests from the G8 and held on the same day of the G7/G8 summit in Rome, examined financial investment mechanisms for global health. One of the panellists (the only one representing civil society) was Noerine Kaleeba, as ActionAid Chair and founder of TASO-The AIDS Support Organization, one of the first community based organizations to fight AIDS in Uganda she's directed for eight years. "It's time for Italy to show it's seriously committed to the GFATM. The fight against poverty needs a constant commitment that doesn't have to be re-negotiated every time. We therefore ask Minister Tremonti not to make further promises, but to keep Italy's word on ODA". This was the appeal Noerine launched to our Government, given that Italy, with just 321 million euros destined to development cooperation in 2009, won't be able to fulfil the promises made in the past, included the payment of the annual contribution due to the GFATM, amounting at 130 million euros. For further info, please contact Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General (luca.defraia@actionaid.org).



Aid Effectiveness: CINI conference

On the 26th of February the Italian Coordination of International Networks gathered development aid experts from the North and the South in an international conference aimed at enriching the current debate on aid effectiveness with the joint perspective of donors and partners. According to Egizia Petroccione – CINI spokesperson: "Political leadership is the most important drive to generate change. Without clear signals from politics and leadership, every change in procedures, human resources management or reporting systems will always have a limited impact". In the session discussing North perspectives, CINI presented the report "**Planning for good: Lessons learnt on aid effectiveness from 6 Eu donors**", a comparative study of aid effectiveness plans of France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, UK and EU, while in the session discussing South perspectives case studies from Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya and Lebanon were presented. According to the report findings, **Italy** ranked second in Europe for the coordinated technical assistance provided. In 2007 Italian aid effectiveness improved in seven areas, as per the indicators of the Paris Declaration. However, a major challenge to be faced is that related to the staff quality: despite a planned increase in their number, there's still no mention of investments in training to improve and update their skills. Recommendations highlight the need for a stronger effort towards a correct evaluation of its work and for a decentralised decision making, through an increased number of local/national units on the field. For further info, please contact Egizia Petroccione (egizia.petroccione@actionaid.org).

Financial G7

On the 14th of February, in conjunction with the summit of the Finance Ministers and Bank Governors of the G7 held in Rome, the Italian Coalition of the GCAP organised a press conference to present the paper: "**G8 2009: global challenges and the Italian civil society proposals**". The document analyses the four global crisis that will be at the centre of the G8 discussions and that require an urgent response from the G8 states, denouncing gaps and providing concrete proposals to face them. Since the conference was held on Valentine's Day, right after the Italian Coalition of the GCAP organised a stunt singing a serenade to Giulio Tremonti, the Italian Finance Minister. Cupid's wings, red hearts and a request: "Don't break our hearts, keep your promises!". For further info, please contact Nina Belluomo, Campaign and Activism Unit (nina.belluomo@actionaid.org).



ONE campaign

On the occasion of the Sanremo Festival – the major singing contest for Italian music – the ONE campaign presented the short “**One voice**” through which Italian and international stars invited the public to join the ONE campaign in the fight against poverty and poverty related diseases. In Italy ONE is supported by the Italian Coalition of the GCAP. The short is available on the campaign website www.one.org.

Violence against Women



Io Donna, the weekly of the main Italian newspaper – *Il Corriere della Sera* – dedicated a special reportage to the issue of violence against women as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The correspondent of the weekly – Emanuela Zuccalà, who had already collaborated with us for the publication of the book “*La ruota che gira*” on ActionAid projects in Cambodia – met some of the victims of this unspoken tragedy between Goma and Bukavu,

documenting the work of our partners there. The resulting reportage – **Congo, the hell in our body** – was published at the beginning of the month, accompanied by the pictures of Alfredo Falvo, Contrasto Agency. “Women are a battlefield. Rape is the sharp weapon of a war that lost the front line; the strategy used by every militia in the country. We went to the African state where war’s been going on for ten years. We wanted to look in the eyes of the victims of such an endless horror” wrote the journalist. Pictures are available on the newspaper photo gallery at www.leiweb.it/iodonna.shtml.

Letter to Brown and Berlusconi

Marco De Ponte commented on the declarations Silvio Berlusconi and Gordon Brown made on the occasion of the visit of the latter to Italy, through an **open letter** published on the main Italian financial newspaper, *Il Sole24ore*. “We strongly ask the two leaders to include the response to the growth of global poverty as a key issue in the G8 and G20 agenda. We believe Italy has an important role to play and we therefore launch an appeal for Silvio Berlusconi to kick start brave initiatives, such as the restoration of the resources to development cooperation cut through the last financial bill”. For further info, please contact our Press Officer, Chiara Palombella (chiara.palombella@actionaid.org).

Uganda Affiliation Review

From the 23rd to the 28th of February, **Chiara Somajni** was the **lead reviewer** of the team involved in the Associate Review for the Affiliation of ActionAid Uganda. The team was composed of Pat Kaplan (ActionAid UK Trustee), Anne Jellema (International Director Policy and Campaign) and Shoaib Siddiqui (Regional Finance Coordinator for Asia Region and Coordinator of this review). After pre-review preparations (included documentary review), the team met the Ugandan Board and Chair and arranged field visits as well as interviews to key stakeholders. A final report will be submitted to the IB for the Affiliation approval.

NEWS FROM ITALY

IFAD

A new office, a new Chair and a new maxi fund for 1.2 billion dollar. IFAD inaugurated its new headquarters in Rome. The Governors Council appointed Kanayo F. Nwanze – former IFAD Vice Chair – as the new Chair. Between the 18th and 19th of February, three roundtables discussed the following key issues: i.) food prices volatility: how to help small farmers manage risk and uncertainty; ii.) increasing land demand and purchase in development countries by foreign investors: threats and opportunities for small farmers; iii.) research and innovation for small farmers in the climate change context.

CIVIL G8

On the occasion of the inauguration of the new IFAD headquarters in Rome, the mayor of the city, Gianni Alemanno, announced that the Civil G8 will be hosted in Rome on the 4th and 5th of May.

G8 and DEVELOPMENT AID

One of the proposals of the Italian G8 Presidency will be the so called “D-tax”, that is the destination of a portion of the VAT to poor countries. “We had lost track of it” Luca De Fraia commented. “The proposal was already presented in 2002 by the Berlusconi government, it was even introduced into the draft legislation for the fiscal reform, but nothing followed. However, it is welcomed as a tool to integrate the Italian ODA, now at an all-time low”.

FRATTINI IN AFRICA

“The visit of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franco Frattini, to Angola, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal is an important signal of a renewed Italian interest towards Africa. However, there can’t be any partnership without the re-launch of the Italian development cooperation”. This was Marco De Ponte’s reminder to Frattini on the occasion of his first mission to Africa. As a consequence of the 2009 financial bill, the Italian cooperation – mainly oriented to Africa – lost 400 million euros, touching for the first time in 20 years the 0.09% of our GNP.

Welcome to...

- **Carlo Fino**, General Secretariat Assistant

Goodbye to...

- **Christian Quintili**, Governance Assistant

