

# SPF SPP Alumni Newsletter

Second Issue

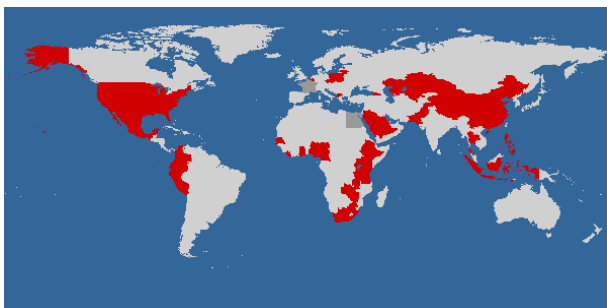
April 2006

## What is in this issue?

### A global view

Had you ever realized that you may find SPF/SPP alumni in so many parts of the world? The current crowd of SPF alumni can be found in 37 countries around the globe, to which can be added the current cohort of SPF and SPP students.

Check the map below to see the countries of origin of the first four cohorts of SPF alumni (red) as well as former students who took part in specific courses (grey). You will find this map again in the next issue of this newsletter; even more countries will be marked in red following the graduation of the 2005-2006 SPF/SPP cohort.



Coming from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, SPF/SPP alumni bring together a wide variety of social protection knowledge and experience. Share your experiences with others through this Newsletter and the Bulletin Board (see below); and ask others for information, advice and best practices. This is a brilliant opportunity to connect with others with similar professional interests.

And, of course, there is also an even more pleasurable aspect to all this... next time you are travelling to a foreign country, maybe you can meet up with other SPF/SPP alumni for a drink and a chat?

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## Events

### Opening of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

On October 1 2005, the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance was opened in style with a historical debate between the grandsons of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill.

After months of careful preparation and hours of enthusiastic planning, Saturday October 1st came faster than expected. With the grandsons of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, Tim Sebastian, Maria van der Hoeven, almost 70 national and international press agencies and about 600 viewers, the opening event of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance can truly be called a tantalizing experience for all those involved.

After a breathtaking discussion volley lead by BBC's Tim Sebastian, six of the Maastricht University students took the stage to talk about the future of Europe in terms of democracy, safety and multicultural cooperation

The overall atmosphere of the day was sharp, witty and above all animated and we can truly look back, indeed, on a grand official opening of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance.

The Maastricht Graduate School of Governance had a supplementary reason to be in festive spirits that day as the accreditation of its newest programme, the Master programme in Public Policy and Human Development had been officially endorsed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The Ministry cites from the accreditation report and calls the brand new programme "an incomparable initiative for the Netherlands and continental Europe". The Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, part of Universiteit Maastricht, offers students scientific programmes which train them to play a leading role within governmental bodies and institutions, as well as in international organisations.



### The fifth SPF class & second SPP class (2005-2006)

Our new SPF/SPP cohort 2005/06 is once again a colourful, heterogeneous group of students. They are fathers and mothers, teachers, fieldworkers and public administrators, consultants and businessmen. The group originates largely from countries in Africa and Asia but also from Peru. It has been a challenging time for students getting acquainted with the Maastricht style of teaching, with classes, assignments and readings every study day and exams that are never further than 8 weeks away. For some of them it has also been difficult to get back into the rhythm of theoretical, busy-minded studies from which they graduated some time ago. Neither has it been easy to unite the practical knowledge and experience acquired from their jobs with the new theories they were learning here.



I was teaching them a refresher course in the economics of social protection and had to face the challenge of integrating the widely varying student knowledge base. Still, I appreciated the openness of the students who approached me to explain that what I wanted them to do didn't fit in with what they felt able to cope with. With the help of some feedback we found a better way to address new economic concepts - extending our meetings voluntarily from 2 to 3 hours and using more repetition of graphs and concepts from the book. Nevertheless, it remained challenging to address the group's diversity, and I was glad that weaker students participated actively while better students took the chance to show their expertise in problems which the group found more difficult to solve.

Throughout the course not only did the SPF/SPP students integrate and consolidate into a new cohort family, they also included me and other colleagues in their new networks.

When teaching them presentation skills, I got the chance to learn some aspects of their home countries. We saw for instance a presentation on *Allianza Lima* "El equipo del pueblo", Henry's favourite Peruvian soccer club. Joseph told us about the civil conflict in his home country Sierra Leone. Stefanie introduced us to

her work in the Community Capacity Support Programme in Kenya. Ayehualem showed us pictures from the beautiful faces of Ethiopia. And Edmund told us that "Ghana is Africa" and that "Africa is Ghana".



The first weeks included social activities such as two bowling nights, an international dinner at Tafelstraat 13, a few common soccer matches, several teacher & student drinks at Murphy's Irish Pub, an evening out in the Python bar, playing billiards, a discovery of Dutch Carnival on the 11.11. and many other smaller occasional meetings where students were able to exchange feelings about the challenges of the programme but also to exchange and share interesting insights into each others lives and cultures.

Robert Bauchmüller, Teaching assistant

### The first ESPP class (2005-2007)

The ESPP Programme (European Graduate Programme in Social Protection Policy) at the school of Governance was launched in September 2005 with its first cohort group of 14 students from all over the world. The diverse group includes students from Albania, Belgium, China, Germany, Jordan, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Romania and the United States. Most of them can be seen in the picture.



The cultural and professional diversity of the students is proving to be an enriching addition to a programme which is already diverse and multidisciplinary in its nature. The program aims at creating a group of solid researchers who excel in policy analysis with emphasis on social protection. This is done through a 3 dimen-

sional approach of combining economic theory, sociology and political science delivered by a faculty with a wealth of experience, and research projects which enrich the academic experience. And there is more than just enjoying the academic life at the ESPP Programme; living in Maastricht adds some extra flavor to the experience. The "Drinks with the Professor" evening has already become a tradition where the ESPP students go out with every professor after the conclusion of a lecture week to enjoy the special charisma and burgundian atmosphere of the city!

### Christmas party

Once again our international group was introduced to the Dutch tradition of *Sinterklaas*. We learned that the Dutch Saint Nicholas comes from Spain, not Turkey and he is always accompanied by the *Zwarte Pieten* (black Petes). *Sinterklaas* warned us that naughty children are turned into the delicious *Kruidnoten* cookies that we were served, but luckily everyone got *Sinterklaas*' stamp of approval.

Each person had to sit on *Sinterklaas*' lap and got a



personal poem and gift, ranging from serious to funny. Some students were thanked for their friendship to fellow students; others got special character traits revealed. The most popular poem was written for Jinging who was told that *Sinterklaas* presents are always made in China and that he should become a *Zwarte Piet* next year for some more multicultural diversity.

It was a special and relaxing evening that was enjoyed by all, also serving as an inspiration to learn more about Dutch culture.



## Experiences

### A brief of my SPF experience at Maastricht University (Xiaowei Gong)



During the 2003/04 SPF study program, we were especially trained in the quantitative methodology in social protection - "Quatrain" - by the UM and ILO tutors. This is the most valuable experience we gained from SPF. Now I always use quantitative methods in economic analysis, projections and policy making in my current work process. In the first block, Managing Social Risk--Economics we used the UM teaching system PBL, where we can express our own point of view freely. This is really helpful for us to keep in mind and apply knowledge, which we read in literature. Since returning to China, sometimes, I used PBL method in lectures for my students.

For doctoral thesis, my experience is linking the SPF knowledge to previous practical experiences and trying to solve some practical issues. For example, in my Master thesis, I applied pension economic theories in Chinese pension reform, analyzing problems, linking with my previous practical experience and suggesting to invest the pension fund in capital market, while also assessing efficiency.

After graduation from SPF UM, I have worked as an economist, researcher and chief assistant at the Xiamen Economic Research Institute. Now I am making policy for Xiamen Free Trade Area project. I have also considered applying SPF knowledge in a new research program, which focuses on "How to set up social protection for people in rural areas who have lost land as a result of industrial processing". As soon as I close it, I will submit it as a working paper to UM and ILO as one point of view.

A suggestion for SPF and ILO is how to continue improving our SPF knowledge in our future career? Can we, as SPF Alumni, continue our further study in PhD program, meanwhile keeping our normal researching job position? And how to increase our collaboration between SPF Alumni and UM and ILO? Shall we have any chances to attend ILO or UM seminars, publish working papers or participate in some programs? SPF Alumni are a resource who have been trained by UM and ILO, and are now spread all over the world. Let them exert effect!

Xiaowei Gong, China (SPF 2003-2004)

### Back home after graduation... and back to Maastricht (Lina Salanauskaite)

Short CV: I hold BA degree in Economics from Rollins College, USA. In 2002-2003 (second cohort ☺) I was studying in Social Protection Financing programme at Maastricht Universiteit and obtained my MSc by writing thesis on relative price change impact in case of Belarus central heating sector. Since September 2005, I have joined the PhD programme in Social Protection Policy at Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Universiteit Maastricht.

I would like to tell you more about my experiences after graduating from SPF programme. As my group-mates might recall, I was really looking forward to going back home to Lithuania and getting some "real work" experience, applying the knowledge I have obtained at that time. After exploring possibilities offered within the public sector, I decided to choose a job in the private sector, which seemed to be very dynamic, challenging and flexible. In September 2004, I joined an investment banking company and worked there for over a year. As Lithuania is undergoing rapid development, coming back after a few years of studies abroad, it felt rather like going to a different time and location. Therefore, choosing to work at the investment banking company was beneficial not only in terms of new job experience, but it also allowed me to get a quick update on the past and current political and economic settings of the country. I was employed as a financial analyst, but soon after I proudly admitted I could understand terms such as "ex-ante", log-frame matrix, budgeting forecasts, etc., I was offered to work exclusively with the public financing projects. Therefore, my main job responsibilities included initiating projects, analyzing strategic goals of the country, liaising with state agencies, and helping both public and private institutions to attract EU structural funding.

I think it was this pride that pushed me to see if I could do more – if I could set and suggest new rules, instead of following the ones that were already created. This was my main driving force to apply for the newly launched PhD programme in Social Protection Policy at Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. I am very much looking forward to getting analysis tools that will widen my possibilities to influence policy developments. It feels nice to be back for studies and to rise to the challenge over the piles of books again. My primary inter-



est for the PhD research falls within the field of micro-simulation and its application to the analysis of various social policy issues. It is a very initial stage of my research plan and thus I am still exploring the variety of topics that fall under microsimulation initiatives. As of today, I plan to focus on analyzing redistributive impacts of selected policy (i.e. personal income tax) by using microsimulation techniques. I am very eager to learn more of the EUROMOD static microsimulation model and check how it could be applied for policy impact analysis within the specific settings of Lithuania.

Besides the studies, I am also helping to coordinate the ESPP programme and cooperate with Chris de Neubourg on the pension reform project for the Russian Federation. In addition to work, I am happy to rediscover Maastricht cafés and biking adventures! I think this time I will even try to start speaking Dutch. ☺

Lina Salanauskaitė, Lithuania (SPF 2002-2003)

### From Addis Ababa to Maastricht (Dagnachew Negash)



Hello folks,

My name is Dagnachew Negash. I am from Ethiopia and am living in the capital Addis Ababa. I have got my first degree in business management from the faculty of Business and Economics of Addis Ababa University in year 2001. After graduation I have started teaching general business courses in a college, under the Ministry of Agriculture, for 15 months.

Then I moved to the Civil Service Reform program Office, which is under the Ministry of Capacity Building, in April 2003. I have been working there as junior expert in the Monitoring & Evaluation department until I came to Maastricht Graduate School of Governance to study the Master's degree programme in the area of Social Protection Financing for year 2004/05.

I arrived in Maastricht, one of the beautiful cities in the Netherlands, on August 26, 2004. It has been a wonderful experience for me to travel such very long distances and arrive in Europe, as I have never before been out of my country. Even if I was leaving all my relatives and friends at home I had no worry since I had already a good impression of Maastricht and its people because of the good communication and valuable information I had been receiving from Celine (Office manager of SPF programme); she is a very kind lady indeed. I also met terrific mentors like Davy Pieters and Julia Kretschmar; they have helped me to settle in this new city really quite well. I believe the first impression is lasting; I thank them all. I would like also to thank all other mentors and staff who have helped all of us (SPF students) to have such an enjoyable time in Maastricht.

The courses I have taken in the programme were interesting, relevant and vital to my country development endeavour. I have also come to know a number of

scholars who are brilliant lecturers from the Maastricht University and ILO staff that has made my study more interesting.

I have also come to know various friends who come from almost all over the world to study in the same programme. That is also fascinating to be in such an international class where all the classmates come from different origins and have different culture, background and language. Thus, I consider myself lucky not only for mastering SPF but also for the opportunity of mastering these different cultures of classmates, lecturers, mentors and also people of Maastricht.

I hope our friendship lasts long (for ever) and we can keep in touch through the website which is opened on July 18, 2005; thanks to the efforts of our friends Nader, Paty, David and Adel, their effort and motivation earned us this channel of communication.

Dagnachew Negash, Ethiopia (SPF 2004-2005)  
From the MGSoG alumni network website

### Enhancing local capabilities in development cooperation (Mirtha Muñoz Castillo)

Mirtha, one of our Ph.D. researchers, spent three months in Nicaragua and El Salvador during the second half of this year. People she knew and experiences shared have left great happiness and hope in her spirit. Here is a picture of Mirtha with a group of women in Santa María, rural settlement in North Central Nicaragua. She is deeply thankful to all participants, community representatives, local authorities, NGOs, public organisms and university contacts there.



Her research intends to assess the impact of 4 development projects on the capabilities of local participants. She will study whether and to what extent the projects improved the options of people in the different aspects of life valuable to them (their quality of life), and furthermore, which factors could explain the different impacts in order to draw conclusions for future projects.

She explores these impacts from two perspectives: individual and community. At the individual level, she focuses on the "ability to choose" (requisite for the existence of the capability set) and at the community

level, in community empowerment that brings the changes out.

She relies on qualitative techniques complemented with historical quantitative data related to the projects and

their impacts. Mirtha is currently in Peru, her home country, where she is working on her data analysis. We expect her to return to Maastricht by March 2006.

Mirtha Muñiz Castillo, Peru (SPF 2002-2003)

## New Projects and Publications

This section of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter is devoted to providing you with up-to-date information on what is happening in Maastricht, at the ILO and elsewhere in terms of new projects and publications.

If you have any interesting news or references to share for the next SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter, please send them to Christina Behrendt ([behrendt@ilo.org](mailto:behrendt@ilo.org)). Or, even better, share them immediately within the SPF/SPP community by posting them on the Bulletin Board (see below).

### MGSOG research on targeted cash transfers in developing countries

Keetie Roelen is currently working on a paper that assesses the feasibility of using non-contributory targeted cash transfers in developing countries as part of their social protection schemes. The draft version can be found at the MGSOG website under the following link:

[http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/home/e\\_researchers/keetie\\_roelen/article%20draft.PDF](http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/home/e_researchers/keetie_roelen/article%20draft.PDF)

### MGSOG research on targeted child benefits in Russia

Geranda Notten presented a paper, co-authored by Franziska Gassmann, at the Conference on Public Sector Transition in St. Petersburg (Russia) in September 2005 entitled "Targeted Child Benefits in Russia; do these benefits assist households in the prevention of (chronic) poverty?" Using the cross-section and panel components of the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) from 2000 to 2003, this paper is the first to evaluate whether the targeting efficiency of child benefits has increased during this period and whether benefit receipt adequately assists households in the prevention of (chronic) poverty.

Please send an email to Geranda Notten ([g.notten@algec.unimaas.nl](mailto:g.notten@algec.unimaas.nl)) if you would like a copy of this paper.

### Changes in the SPF/SPP programme

The alumni who receive this newsletter have finished the programme within the Economic Faculty. As you will have read in the last newsletter, the SPF programme has found a new institutional home in the

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. The School of Governance has developed a Master of Science programme in Public Policy and Human Development (PPHD) and submitted this new Master programme to the national accreditation board. In March 2005 came the good news that the board had accredited the programme, and the next step was to submit the programme to the Ministry of Education for approval. This approval was endorsed last September, which means that the Ministry is financing the programme as an initial master programme. As the content of the SPP and the SPF programmes have an overlap of more than 60% with the new Master of Science programme in PPHD, these programmes as a result are now also officially accredited and accepted by the Ministry. There are many advantages for the students for following the accepted programmes. Firstly, the Dutch and European students will be financed by the Ministry, meaning that their tuition fee will be much lower than that of the non-EU students. Secondly, all students will receive an accredited Master of Science diploma, on which the specialization in Social Protection Policy or Social Protection Finance will be specified. Thirdly, the diploma is validated by the NUFFIC, the Dutch organization which is responsible for diploma validation. This is especially important for the alumni who need this validation for any further studies or for their career perspectives.

### School of Governance Seminar Series

The objective of the School of Governance Seminar Series (SGSS) is to offer a regular forum for the presentation of new research developments and the discussion of social and economic policy issues. Guests will be both scholars and policymakers active in the field of social policy and welfare in the broadest sense.

Up till now we have enjoyed the presentations of Gosta Esping-Andersen, Bea Cantillon, Philippe de Donder and Elsa Fornero. In December Wolfgang Scholz presented joint work with Michael Cichon entitled *Social Protection as a Productive Factor*.

For more information visit:

[http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/news\\_and\\_activities/news/index.html](http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/news_and_activities/news/index.html)

and send an email to Geranda Notten ([g.notten@algec.unimaas.nl](mailto:g.notten@algec.unimaas.nl)) if you want to be on our mailing list.

## ILO STEP programme

The ILO's Programme "Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty" (STEP), an innovative ILO programme, is aimed at fighting social exclusion and poverty and promoting social protection worldwide.

STEP works at two levels:

- The extension of social protection to excluded groups, in particular, with regard to health care (notably on community-based social protection schemes such as mutual health organisations).
- The development of an integrated approach to fight social exclusion at the local level.

Have a look at the website:

[www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/step/](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/step/)

## International Conference on Social Health Insurance in Developing Countries

The German Development Cooperation (GTZ) together with the International Labour Office (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) convened an International Conference on Social Health Insurance in Developing Countries. The Conference took place from 5-7 December 2005 in Berlin, Germany.

You will find a variety of related information on the conference website

<http://www.shi-conference.de/>

## Recent ILO Technical Cooperation Reports

Most of these reports are available on the ILO website at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec>

- **Bahrain:** Social protection for the unemployed: Preliminary findings on unemployment insurance and assistance (2005).
- **Cambodia:** Report to the Government on employment injury insurance in Cambodia: legislation, financing and administration (2005).
- **Chile:** Modelling fiscal implications of the Chilean pension system (2005).
- **Ghana:** Improving Social Protection for the Poor: Health Insurance in Ghana: The Ghana Social Trust Pre-Pilot Project – Final Report (2005).

# SPF/SPP Alumni Network

## SPF/SPP Bulletin Board

If you would like to exchange news with other members of the SPF/SPP community, share publications, ask questions or look for information, you may use the Bulletin Board at [bboard.ilo.org](http://bboard.ilo.org) > ILO Forums.

- **Kuwait:** Demographic projections, macro-economic framework and actuarial bases in the context of the actuarial valuation of the Kuwait Public Institution for Social Security as of 30 June 2004 (2005).
- **Lebanon:** Rapport au gouvernement: Analyse du projet de loi de 2004 sur la réforme des pensions et propositions du BIT (2005).
- **Morocco:** Note Technique: Réforme des régimes de retraite au Maroc (2005).
- **Saint Lucia:** Report to the Government; Eighth actuarial review of the National Insurance Fund as of 30 June 2003 (2005).

## New Website of the ILO Social Security Department

The ILO Social Security Department finally has a new website which provides you information on various aspects of social security. Have a look yourself:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec>



## ILO Social Security Database

The ILO has stepped up its efforts to improve social security statistics around the world. Data are comparable to the statistics collected by EUROSTAT (ESSPROS) and the OECD (SOCX).

With funding from France and the Netherlands, the ILO Social Security Inquiry has already collected statistics on social security in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. These data will shortly be available in the ILO Social Security Database, and more countries will follow soon.

The database will be accessible through the ILO's Social Security Department website:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec>

If you have not yet received a user ID and a password, please contact Christina Behrendt ([behrendt@ilo.org](mailto:behrendt@ilo.org)).

## MGSoG Alumni Website

Have a look at the website produced by four SPF 2004-2005 alumni – Adel, David, Nader and Patricia – from and for Maastricht Graduate School of Governance alumni. Visit <http://www.mgsog.org/>.

Some of the text and photos in this newsletter are borrowed from this website.

## News from the SPF/SPP Community

- **Adel Al-Otaibi** (SPF 2004-2005) has returned to the Pension Department of the General Organization for Social Insurance in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In addition, he works part-time in a UNDP project on poverty reduction and measurements.
- **Chris Esedebe** (SPF 2004-2005) has been reunited with his family in Nigeria. He is also back at work and has been promoted as acting head of the Actuarial Department at the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund.
- **Paty Huitrón García** (SPF 2004-2005) stayed in Maastricht to join the ESPP programme after finishing the SPF master. She wants to look into involving the private sector in the Mexican national health system.
- **Aboud Mwinyi** (SPF 2004-2005) got married to Masha Uki on 2nd September 2005. We wish them lots of happiness and all the best for many blissful years to come!
- **Walaiporn Patcharanarumol** (SPF 2002-2003) has enrolled as a PhD student at the London School of Health and Tropical Medicine.
- **Annemarie Rima** has joined the MGSoG team as the associate academic director for the degree programmes.
- **David Rodriguez** (SPF 2004-2005) also stayed in Maastricht to join the ESPP PhD programme. His interest lies in how individuals make choices in order to protect themselves against health-related risks.
- **Florian Tomini** (SPF 2001-2003) was in the first cohort of SPF students. He has returned to Maastricht (soon to be joined by his newly-wed wife Sonila) to be part of the PhD programme and to research Social Risk Management, Vulnerability, and Social Protection Interventions.
- **Victoria Vasileva** (SPF 2003-2004) has been appointed as head of the Social Policy Department in the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.



- **Hao Yu** (SPF 2002-2003) came back to Maastricht after having worked in China for two years researching and self-learning. She has now joined the PhD programme and her topic is on investment risks in volatile financial markets.

Please keep us informed about changes in your work and life. Any news that should appear in this section should be sent to Christina Behrendt ([behrendt@ilo.org](mailto:behrendt@ilo.org)).

## Most wanted

When sending out the previous issue of the Newsletter, some of the mails bounced back. If you happen to have an up-to-date e-mail address of the following individuals, please forward this newsletter to them and ask them to send their new contact details to Jessica Hagen-Zanker ([jessica.hagenzanker@governance.unimaas.nl](mailto:jessica.hagenzanker@governance.unimaas.nl)).

- Simon Nabia
- Anthony Dewees
- Leroy Fleming

## Next issue of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter

In the next issue of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter, we would like to continue to feature the experiences of SPF alumni. If you have not already done so, please send us a brief account of your experiences in the SPF programme and what happened after you left Maastricht. In particular, please describe how you were able to apply your knowledge in your old or new job after graduation. Please send your contribution (ideally 500-1000 words and a digital photo if possible) to Christina Behrendt ([behrendt@ilo.org](mailto:behrendt@ilo.org)).

Please also keep us informed about interesting projects and publications, changes in your career and life and whatever you think might be of interest to other SPF/SPP alumni. Any suggestions on how to improve the Newsletter are most welcome. The next issue will be published in Summer 2006.

### Impressum

This newsletter has been produced jointly by the Social Security Department of the International Labour Office and by the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance of the Maastricht University (Netherlands). The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

International Labour Office  
Social Security Department  
4, route des Morillons  
1211 Geneva  
Switzerland  
[secsoc@ilo.org](mailto:secsoc@ilo.org)

Maastricht Graduate School of  
Governance  
P.O. Box 616  
6200 MD Maastricht  
The Netherlands  
[info-gov@governance.unimaas.nl](mailto:info-gov@governance.unimaas.nl)