

## **Annual Report of the Managing Director April 2004 to July 2005**

During its first year, the activities of the Geneva Social Observatory have included the development of a mission statement and programme of action, the implementation of multistakeholder dialogue in three thematic areas, and the launching of the *GSO News*. The Managing Director has also played an active role in recruiting new members of the Management Committee. Some highlights relating to these activities are described in this report.

The mission statement was a serious undertaking that occupied several monthly meetings of the Management Committee with the active involvement of the Managing Director. A draft was adopted in August and has continued to serve as the basic format although with modest revisions from time to time. A copy of the latest version of the mission statement is available upon request.

The Managing Director also devoted her attention to the drafting of a detailed “Prospectus” which was subsequently renamed the “Programme of Action”. This document served as the initial elaboration of the three thematic areas in which the Management Committee had agreed that the GSO should seek to facilitate multistakeholder dialogue and a search for common solutions/actions. As these initiatives underwent revisions in the course of the first nine months, a revised Programme of Action was prepared in December 2004. Copies of the original and revised Programme of Action are available upon request.

The first thematic area identified in the Programme of Action was “the role of corporate governance and corporate social responsibility in the regulatory debate for promoting more equitable globalization and development”. The Managing Director moderated a multistakeholder panel discussion organized by the GSO on “CSR and Trade” at the WTO NGO Symposium in May 2004. A similar theme was the focus of a GSO-sponsored panel discussion at the CSR Conference of the European Union hosted by the Dutch in November 2004. The GSO issued reports of both discussions. In addition, the GSO submitted a statement in September 2004 on “Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Related Business Enterprises with regard to Human Rights” to the High Commissioner for Human Rights for a report on the same subject to be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights in March 2005. The GSO participated in a consultative hearing with the High Commissioner in October and monitored the action taken by the Commission on Human Rights on the report in April 2005.

The second thematic area in the Programme of Action was “the impact of supply chain management, including the debate over outsourcing, in the context of the more general issue of global full employment and social protection”. A variation on this theme was developed to address the changing nature of working time as it impacted on trends in outsourcing. This consisted of a roundtable discussion organized in November and a report on the roundtable discussion. No further action has been taken by GSO on this theme.

The third thematic area in the Programme of Action was “HIV/AIDS in the workplace – the issues of prevention, stigma and access to treatment”. In this area, the GSO initiated a series of multistakeholder roundtables starting in February 2005. Three roundtable events were held to review the status of public/private partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS, dealing

with the public/private divide, and addressing the challenges of outreach to small and medium enterprises and the informal economy. At the conclusion of the third roundtable, the participants agreed to shift their attention to developing an action plan and the identification of potential pilot projects in Africa. The first Planning Group meeting was held in July and decided to limit the focus of the action plan to an outreach to the informal economy, with a five-month timeline that will culminate in a report for the Fourteenth International Conference on AIDS/STIs in Africa (ICASA) in December.

The Management Committee started with four members – Pierre Gheysens as President, Brewster Grace, Lorraine Ruffing and Ralph Doggett. New members include Stuart Robinson and Martin Watson. We were also happy to work closely with Leo Palma and Maud Krafft, who were both invited to serve on the Management Committee but opted to work more informally with us. More recently, GSO has been working closely with Susan Crowley, who will be proposed for the Management Committee at the July meeting. I regret that Pierre Gheysens has tendered his resignation as President. On behalf of the membership, I thank him for his thoughtful and patient leadership in the GSO's first year.

Respectfully submitted:

Katherine Hagen  
Managing Director

Geneva  
28 July 2005