

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE OF THE GLOBALIZATION STUDIES NETWORK

**Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation
University of Warwick, 18-21 August 2004**

On 18-21 August 2004 the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR) at the University of Warwick hosted a conference to found the Globalization Studies Network (GSN). The meeting attracted some 150 delegates from over 100 organizations in 44 countries. As such it was the largest gathering ever of centres and programmes that undertake research of globalization.

The GSN initiative developed from preliminary meetings in Washington and Ottawa during 2003 to explore the concept. These exploratory consultations concluded that it would be helpful to have a framework of communication and collaboration that linked the proliferating programmes around the world that study globalization. CSGR offered to host the inaugural conference and was fortunate to obtain supplementary grants from the Ford Foundation and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to support the participation of delegates from the East and the South.

The conference proceedings included several inspiring plenary sessions. An opening speech came from James Rosenau of the George Washington University, who first proposed the establishment of a worldwide consortium of globalization research centres. Rosenau exhorted the assembled founders of the GSN to make the new grouping daring and imaginative in its investigations of the complexities and transformations of a more global world. In another plenary talk David Held of the London School of Economics advocated a reorientation of globalization policies from Washington-centred economic and security strategies to a human security agenda and a global covenant based on social-democratic reform. In addition, and reflecting the GSN aim of fostering practitioner-researcher interchange, a further plenary session heard a panel of academics and officials discuss the recently released report of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization.

Many other conference activities took place in the context of smaller thematic panels. In these sessions over 90 participants described the work of their institute or programme on some aspect of globalization. Panels addressed substantive topics such as global trade, globalization and culture, globalization theory, and global cities. In addition, several panels considered institutional matters such as building centres of globalization studies, developing global studies curricula, constructing research centre websites, and running journals concerned with globalization issues.

Along with these oral presentations almost all of the participating centres and programmes also submitted a written profile of their institution. These summaries cover information such as founding date, objectives, main projects concerning globalization, outputs, staff, funders, and contact details. The assembled profiles, printed in the conference programme, provide a handy reference to sites of globalization studies around the world.

As well as informing delegates about the state of research on globalization, the conference was also meant to foster collaborative research projects among prospective GSN members. Even within the short period of this meeting multiple potential joint projects were explored, on subjects such as global governance, globalization and regionalization, social movement engagement of globalization, global social policy, and globalization and insecurity.

With these many positive results of exchanges, delegates did not hesitate to welcome the official launch of the GSN on the last morning of the conference. The final plenary session approved a framework document to govern the network and also agreed the membership of an enlarged steering committee that will coordinate the GSN until its next gathering. That second annual conference will be held in Dakar, Senegal on 29-31 August 2005.

The conference programme and a full report of the inaugural conference proceedings can be found on the CSGR website. More information on the GSN, including the text of the framework document and a list of members, is available on the GSN website: www.gstudynet.com. Those interested in joining the GSN can contact Jan Aart Scholte at CSGR: scholte@warwick.ac.uk. Those interested in participating in the Dakar meeting can contact Adebayo Olukoshi of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa: adebayo.olukoshi@codesria.sn