Special Debate Section

The Chronic Poverty Report 2008–2009 – Escaping Poverty Traps

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In his introduction to the last issue of the *EJDR*, Rajneesh Narula, our Editor-in-Chief, announced the creation of an occasional specially themed debate section that would focus on landmark development reports, something that we felt has often been lacking in the past in academic development journals. We are pleased to present the first of such a section on the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's (CPRC) recently published *Chronic Poverty Report 2008–2009*.

The CPRC is an international partnership of universities, research institutes and non-governmental organizations from Bangladesh, India, South Africa, Uganda, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Senegal and the United Kingdom, which was established in 2000 with initial funding from the UK's Department for International Development. It is based at the University of Manchester and was founded on the premise that there is an inadequate understanding of the challenges faced by the 900 million people who will still be living in poverty in 2015 even if the Millennium Development Goal targets are fully achieved, and seeks to understand their livelihood strategies and propose means to mitigate their poverty (see <http://www.chronicpoverty.org>).

In 2004, the CPRC launched its extremely influential *Chronic Poverty Report 2004–2005*, which was praised by Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, as 'a landmark report' that was 'a challenge to any complacency', and 'a call for change and ... urgent action'. It particularly highlighted the need for targeted support, social assistance and social protection, and political action confronting exclusion in order to tackle chronic poverty. The success of this report makes it all the more important to consider the CPRC's *Chronic Poverty Report 2008–2009*, which looks in more depth at the problem, in particular identifying five main 'traps' that create chronic poverty, and proposing key policy responses to potentially overcome them.

Our new themed debate section is structured as follows. We begin with a summary of the report by one of its principal authors, Martin Prowse, who is a research officer at the Overseas Development Institute, one of the CPRC UK partners. This is followed by a constructively critical comment by Duncan Green, head of research at Oxfam (United Kingdom), who is well known for his extensive involvement in research and policy work on poverty, especially in Latin America. Finally, we have a response to Duncan's comment – but which also tries to broaden the debate beyond the report – by Tony Addison, Associate Director of the CPRC and Professor of Development Studies at the University of Manchester. We hope that this combination of viewpoints and approaches will be both informative and thought-provoking, and will contribute to enhancing current debates about the report, on the issue of chronic poverty, and concerning development challenges more generally.

Dennis Rodgers
Associate Editor