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ISA Global Development Section – Annual Report on Activities.

The Global Development Section of the International Studies Association (ISA) was established in 1995 to advance the analysis of, and debate about, the political economy of international development, theory, politics, policy and planning, criteria and evaluation, especially between the scholarly and policy communities in both the South and North, and to, furthermore, promote mutual communication and research links among scholars, practitioners, and students on the broad theme of global development.

At the business meeting during the Montreal Annual Convention 2011, the Section discussed and decided on a one-off change to the usual rotation of offices. Kamil Shah was unable to take up the role of Section Chair for 2011-12 due to unforeseen circumstances. The section elected to install Martin Weber to the post one year ahead of the schedule in order to fill the vacancy according to the intentions of our rules of succession. The meeting elected Dr Robbie Shilliam (Queen Mary University, London) to the post of Newsletter Editor.

During 2011, section members have continued to work on enhancing communication and interaction among section members, in particular by exploring the possibility of Social Networking Tools. A proposal to work with an alternative platform to ‘facebook’ will be presented at this year’s business meeting, and put to a decision.

The Section had a strong presence through its members at the 2011 inaugural ISA Asia-Pacific Region Conference in Brisbane, Australia (Sept 29-30).

GDS is set for a great Convention in 2012. The section is involved in sponsorships and co-sponsorships for 65 Panels and 1 Poster Session.
As the result of an initiative by three GDS Section Chairs (past and present), the 2012 Convention in San Diego will see a Global Development Working Group entitled ‘The Afterlives of Neoliberalism: Development, Postdevelopment and International Relations’, which will explore the implications of contemporary transformations and crises-tendencies.

The Section is very pleased to honor Prof Saskia Sassen at the 2012 Convention. Prof Sassen’s scholarship has made a central and indispensible contribution to understanding social change, inequality, and the political ramifications these engender in the context of shifting global forces. She will be honored for this work, as well as for the example she has set as a generous scholar of outstanding integrity and commitment. The panel honoring Prof Sassen will be followed by a reception. The Section gratefully acknowledges Routledge/Third World Quarterly for sponsoring the reception; this support has been central to making GDS receptions a continuing success, with excellent attendance at both, the panels for our honorees, and the receptions afterwards.

We are looking forward to the 2012 Convention, and to new initiatives strengthening linkages among section members, encouraging further collaboration both within and alongside the ISA Conference circuit, and to keep increasing our membership-base, particularly from underrepresented parts of the globe.

For the GDS,

Dr Martin Weber