

International Federation of Social Workers
Report to the General Assembly 2020 – Place: virtual

Biannual Report 2018-2020 of the IFSW Representation in Geneva

Organisation of the IFSW Representation in Geneva

Name and e-mail	Status and year of appointment	Position, function membership	Priority areas of activity
Priska Fleischlin	Main Representative 2017-2020 (<i>Representative since 2014</i>)	Secretary of the NGO Committee on Ageing	SDGs, Older People
Swetha Rao Dhananka	Main Representative since 2020	WSWD organizing committee	Housing and urbanization, Social and environmental justice. WSWD
Klaus Kühne	Representative since 2011 (<i>Main Representative from 2011-2017</i>)	Member of the core group of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors	Poverty and the promotion of social security.
Tobias Roosen	Representative since 2006		UNHCR
Pascal Rudin	Representative since 2013	Steering group for the international Training Tool	Children's rights
Bruno Keel	Representative since 2019	Member of Geneva Global Health Hub (G2H2)	Health /WHO

In the time spanning 2018-2020 changes happened among the representatives:

- The IFSW General Meeting 2018 agreed to establish an IFSW UN Commission and nominated Priska Fleischlin as IFSW UN Commissioner.
- Therefore, a successor as 'IFSW Main Representative to the UN, Geneva' had to be found. Additionally, the vacancy of one Representative could to be filled.
- Various
- The policy paper on the Role of SW and the SDGs has been established and submitted to the General Meeting of 2020

Meeting of the Team

In this period, the team has met regularly during the meetings with Avenirsocial, commission on foreign affairs as most of the Representatives are members of it. Additionally, three separate meetings have been held, two of them with Rory Truell.

See first what happened with the goals of the previous period (2016-2018) mentioned in the last report:

- The need to update policy papers -> the information has been forwarded to the General Secretariat
- Establishing a new policy paper-> a policy paper on the Role of SW and the SDGs has been established and will be presented to the general meeting 2020.
- Creating a guideline about the procedures with the IFSW UN Commission-> pending.
- Submitting statements -> two statements have been published by IFSW newsletter and social media.

Recommendations for the next period

- It would be desirable that IFSW members who belong to the trade union movement in their country engage in the trade unions fight for decent work and social protection, leaving no one behind.
- IFSW should better document and prove the contribution of social work to the realisation of social security
- Rewrite the manual on 'social work and Human Rights (1994).
- Strengthening the exchange and partnership between IFSW members and the UN.

WSWD 2019

Social Workers – standing up for Human Rights as a two hour event, alongside the one day event organized by IASSW and UNRISD. The event, in the form of a round table, discussed social workers' professional commitments to human rights and ways to translate those commitments into everyday social work. In their final remarks OHCHR said: *"It emerged clearly that social workers are in fact human rights defenders, agents for change who work closely with the most marginalized to uphold their rights in the key areas such as gender equality, housing, health, food, education and they strive to protect the best interest of the child.(...) Given the shrinking of the democratic space, partnerships between social workers and other stakeholders, including Amnesty International and the United Nations, were deemed essential. It was suggested that these partnerships could focus on a global human rights advocacy agenda in the wider context of the growing inequalities and discontent, to promote sustainable development and inclusive and peaceful societies."*

World Social Work Day 2020

Due to CoVid-19 WSWD 2020 was first postponed to autumn and later it was decided to use the program for WSWD 2021.

Fields of activities of the Representatives

Priska Fleischlin

2018/19: Several meetings with OHCHR on the renewal of the 'Manual on Social Work and Human Rights' and Interview with Kate Gilmore, OHCHR Deputy on 'Social Workers standing up for Human Rights'.

2019: Written a Statement on Women's Day

2019: Organizing a panel during WSWD 2019 with OHCHR, Amnesty International, IFSW Representatives and Avenir social (swiss social work assoc.)

2019: Attending the High Level Political Forum on SDGs' at the UN in New York, participating in the half day workshop with the ISFW New York Team

2019-2020: finding a successor for my role as Main Representative and introducing the new representative in this role

2018-2019: NGO Committee on Ageing: Secretary. This role has been quiet due to the lack of time resources.

Swetha Rao Dhananka (WSWD)

Swetha was nominated by IFSW Europe Executive in January 2020. In her new role, she will represent IFSW within the WSWD committee and guarantee the social work perspective. Furthermore, she will coordinate the activities of the whole team according to the role description.

We warmly welcome Swetha in this new function and in the team.

Klaus Kühne (Social Protection and Poverty)

The ILO Recommendation R202 concerning the national implementation of Social Protection Floors (2012) and the IFSW Policy “The role of social work in social protection systems” (2016) provides the basis and orientation for my endeavour. SPFs gained in importance as they were explicitly included in the Sustainable Development Goal 2030 (Goal 1, target 1.3) as a crucial instrument for poverty reduction.

In 2018 I participated in the International Labour Conference (ILC), “Building a future with decent work” Geneva.¹ A standard setting committee discussed a new convention to combat violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work. A year later, in 2019, ILC adopted a new international labour standard to combat violence and harassment at work (Convention C190 and Recommendation 206).

In November 2019 the **Global Social Protection Week** on “Achieving SDG 1.3 and Universal Protection (USP2030) in the Context of the Future of Work” aimed to provide a roadmap for the future of social protection within the framework of the recently adopted the “ILO Centenary declaration for the Future of Work”². The Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors was actively involved.

The conference impressively demonstrated that the expansion of social security for all fulfils a human right and is equally a worthwhile investment in social and economic development. SPFs are feasible and are affordable, even in poor countries³.

Besides these core activities, other tasks have been fulfilled over the past two years:

- **Introducing** new members of the UN IFSW team to their task;
- Informing social workers about the IFSW engagement at the UN (visitors, conferences, teaching, writing, meetings etc.);
- Support of Priska Fleischlin, chairperson of the IFSW UN Commission in her work: description of the Commission's tasks and the functions of the different stakeholders, IFSW policy on SDGs.

Tobias Roosen (Refugees and Migrants)

The attended UNHCR conferences of the years 2018 and 2019, were itemed as “Putting People First”, and “Working Together Better”. Both made visible the denials or violations of human rights in the contemporary world. I announced the importance to work with or employ more social work in this field.

¹¹ See the Resolution concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (June 2018)

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_711674.pdf

⁴ See the preparatory document: **Universal social protection for human dignity, social justice and sustainable development** General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_673680/lang--en/index.htm

The numbers of Refugees and Internal Displaced People (IDP's) is constantly increasing and is now up to more than 70 million worldwide. The Global Compact on Migration (GCM) as well as the Global Compact on Refugees, (GCR), established in 2018, are addressing this concerning fact. For IFSW, I wrote a Statement on the Global Compact on Migration in 2018.

In the last period, the 60th anniversary of IFSW's consultative status at UN-ECOSOC (1959 – 2019) passed.

Pascal Rudin (Children)

All around the world, thousands of children are travelling across and between borders as unaccompanied and separated children. Different countries may respond to the needs of these children in different ways, but the concern for children on the move is a global one. More than 20 organisations, including IFSW, ISS, UNICEF, and UNHCR, have come together to design a course for social workers and others concerned with the welfare of children called 'MOOC on Children Moving Alone'. As a member of the task force, I represented IFSW during the design and implementation phase. The course was launched in May 2019, available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.⁴

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, IFSW joined 7 other organisations to design and implement a MOOC called 'on Child Protection and Covid-19'. Kathy Wehrmann, IFSW Corona Virus Response Office has joined the taskforce, working in tandem with me to represent IFSW in this project. The course is informed by the expertise and experience of young people, professionals, volunteers, and academics. This new, free, six-week online course is available from 29 June 2020, available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.⁵

Finally, a dedicated Children and Mental Health Working Group, under the roof of Child Rights Connect, is currently in discussion and would potentially further strengthen the voice of Social Work in this field.

Bruno Keel (WHO, Health)

I started my work with the aim of: 1. getting to know WHO better and 2. establishing contacts with international NGOs in Geneva that deal with the human right to health.

On the occasion of Social Work Day at the UN, I heard about the newly established Geneva Global Health Hub (G2H2). With the support of the Secretary General of IFSW, I represent IFSW in this Hub, among 38 international NGOs, that allows me to stay close to WHO.

With this Membership, I took part in the WHO consultation on the 'Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for all at all ages'. This serves to implement SDG Number 3 "Health". 39 NGOs, 8 states and 105 individuals or institutions participated in the consultation. My main message was that health care and social welfare should work closer together, as health is very much determined by social aspects. Our profession can bridge between SDG 1 "Poverty" and 3 "Health" to reach the most vulnerable groups.

⁴ More information can be found here: <http://www.childrenonthemovemooc.com/>

⁵ For more information, please click here: <http://www.covid19-childprotectioncasemanagementmooc.com/>

On 31 January and 1 February 2020, I attended the G2H2 Annual Meeting, where the issues on the agenda for the following week's WHO Executive Board meeting were discussed. The G2H2 NGOs. Representatives of the global South were also present, for example the former and now retired Health Minister of Mozambique, who now supports the NGOs.

In January 2020 I was invited by Dr. van Ommeren and Dr. Alison Schafer, Technical Officer, to lunch at WHO headquarters. Dr. Schafer is preparing a manual for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. They are interested in working with professional organizations such as IFSW. They considered the international definition of social work to be excellent. It was agreed that we would remain in contact and that I would be invited to the next annual WHO Mental Health Forum in Geneva.

My sincere thanks to the engaged IFSW representatives for your valuable work!



Priska Fleischlin
Switzerland June 2020