



## **2022 Report from the IFSW Global Indigenous Commission**

Submitted by Hilary N. Weaver, Global Commissioner

The Indigenous Commission was formally launched by IFSW in 2021 after years of advocacy from Indigenous social workers seeking space and voice at a global level within our profession. Appointments to the Indigenous Commission were completed in June. Membership consists of nine members: Hazel Berg (from Canada representing the North American region), How Kee Ling (from Malaysia representing the Asia/Pacific region), Linda Ford (from Australia representing the Asia/Pacific region), Jenny Linares (from Peru representing the South American/ Caribbean region), Charles Rutikanga (from Rwanda representing the Africa region), Carole Tana-Tepania (from Aotearoa/ New Zealand lead representative for the Asia/Pacific region), Margaretha Uttjek (from Sweden representing the European region), Yvonne/ Yangjian (from China representing the Asia/Pacific region), and Hilary Weaver (Global Commissioner).

The first meeting of the Indigenous Commission was held via Skype on August 20, 2021. Subsequent meetings were held in October and December 2021 and in March and April 2022 with the next meeting scheduled for May 25, 2022. The Indigenous Commission has been working to identify our priorities and how we will work together across regions. We have reached out to other IFSW Commissions seeking opportunities for partnering around shared areas of interest (for example, we hope to work with the IFSW Human Rights Commission around issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women).

As Global Indigenous Commissioner, Hilary Weaver has participated in quarterly meetings with other Global Commissioners. This provides an opportunity to facilitate collaboration across commissions. It enables us to learn from and replicate their models, as we see fit. We also recognize that the Indigenous Commission may develop distinct ways of operation based on our values, accountabilities, priorities, and protocols as Indigenous people.

In late 2021, the Indigenous Commission was approached by organizers of regional IFSW conferences to share our voices. Since we as a Commission have just begun our work as a unified entity, Regional Commissioners have provided Indigenous perspectives at conferences. For example, Regional Representatives Carole Tana-Tepania, How Kee Ling, and Linda Ford participated in a keynote panel on the Indigenous Commission and Social Development Goals at the 26th Asia Pacific Regional Conference on November 13, 2021. Their presentation emphasised the importance of the inclusion of Indigenous participation, knowledge, and practices to create solutions. African Regional Commissioner Charles Rutikanga and European Regional Commissioner Margaretha Uttjek also participated in IFSW conferences in their respective regions in 2021. The North American Regional Conference held March 29,

2022, had the theme, *Honoring the Indigenous Journey*. Global Commissioner Hilary Weaver provided the opening Keynote address, *Degé'nya: Social workers honoring Indigenous journeys through respectful helping* and Hazel Berg the North American Regional Representative participated in a panel discussion.

The Indigenous Commission looks forward to our continued contribution in advancing Indigenous voices and ways of being within IFSW and throughout the regions. The Commission is currently preparing a panel presentation, *Implementing Traditional Indigenous Knowledge in Social Work: Challenges and Possibilities* for the People's Summit on Co-building a New Eco-Social World: Leaving No One Behind. Furthermore, some members of the Indigenous Commission are involved with planning or presenting at the 6th International Indigenous Voices in Social Work on-line Conference April 27-29, 2022.

Additionally, Margaretha Uttjek and Hilary Weaver will represent the Indigenous Commission at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) taking place in New York City April 25-May 6, 2022. With support from the IFSW UN Commission, they will deliver an on-line presentation on May 4 entitled *Challenging government intrusion into the lives of Indigenous women: Rectifying violations of free, prior, and informed consent*. Hilary Weaver will attend the final portion of the UNPFII in person. This will be a transitional year where the primary responsibility for planning a side event at the Forum will be transferred from the IFSW UN Commission to the IFSW Indigenous Commission. It is anticipated that on-going collaborations between the IFSW UN and Indigenous Commissions around the UNPFII can serve as a model for how Commissions can work together on areas of shared interest.

As we move forward, we will continue to solidify our vision and processes as a united Commission integrating the voices of Indigenous people in the social work profession. We will identify our priorities for work and will take action accordingly. We anticipate developing and strengthening collaborative efforts with other Commissions and regular participation in events such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as well as regional and international IFSW events and conferences.