

2022-2024 Report to the General Meeting

IFSW UN Commission

IFSW has been granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In addition, IFSW is working with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). The commission supports IFSW representatives and IFSW members to act as facilitators and bridge the gaps between the community's aspirations and UN agendas. At the same time, the knowledge of the UN's work shall flow back to the IFSW board and the IFSW members to create a partnership and realize social change.

This report is a summary of the two annual reports 2022/2023 with few amendments. For more details, please visit the IFSW website.

The IFSW UN Commission is a large team of 20 Representatives from 8 different countries:

- *1 Regional Commissioner and 3 additional Representatives, UN Office in Bangkok, Thailand*
- *1 Regional Commissioner and 4 additional Representatives, UN Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland*
- *1 Regional Commissioner, UN Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya*
- *1 Regional Commissioner and 5 additional Representatives (plus 2 Interns), UN Headquarters in New York, USA*
- *1 Regional Commissioner and 2 additional Representatives to the UN Headquarters in Vienna, Austria*
- *1 Global Commissioner*

In the last two years, five people have left the Commission, and two new representatives have begun their role. Open position: for the UN Office in Santiago de Chile and Nairobi there are open positions. For more details, please visit the website of IFSW.

Policy Papers

For the General Meeting in 2022, the policy paper "*The Role of Social Workers in Advancing a New Eco-Social World*" has been submitted and adopted by the General Meeting. As you will read in this report, the UN Commission has been using this, and the Policy Paper on SDGs, for its statements towards the UN.

Submitted IFSW Statements

The IFSW UN Commission frequently submits statements on numerous occasions, see here a selection of statements:

- Statement on the situation in Afghanistan
- Statement on the convention on the right to development

- Statements on the annual meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women
- Statements on the sessions of the Commission for Social Development
- Statement on the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs
- written and oral statements to the UN ESCAP (Bangkok) Committee on Social Development, Committee on Environment and Development

Meetings and events

It is an essential part of our work to co-organize events or attend events from other NGOs and UN Agencies. To give you an idea of the events we have attended, here some examples:

- WSWD have taken place at the UN in Geneva, New York and Bangkok - always in cooperation with UN offices. Due to the high prices for events at the UN HQ in New York, there will be no WSWD in 2024.
- The **Nairobi team** attended the UN-Habitat in Nairobi within its mandate and mission of promoting socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements and developments.
- The **New York team** attends the monthly briefings for DGC & ECOSOC affiliated NGOs. The following committees are represented by IFSW in New York: The Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mental Health, Status of Women, Family, Ageing, Social Development, Financing for Development and Migration.
- The **New York team** organized several events, one was the SDG High Level Political Forum in New York on 'Social Workers as a Stakeholder in Co-building, promoting, and Sustaining an eco-social World'
- Representatives of the **Asia Pacific Team** were invited to take part in the UN's Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution expert working group, advocating for policies that recognize the impact on marginalized communities
- **Representative from Geneva, Bangkok and NY** co-organized the 2023 WSWD and co-produced a contribution for the UNRISD conference in Bonn on eco-social contracts. Since 2023 IFSW is part of the UNRISD Research and Action Network and attended working group meeting on rights of nature and general strategy meeting
- The **Vienna Team** attended the annual sessions of the 65th Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna

Additionally, the global UN Commissioner represents IFSW at the board of CoNGO (Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations), one of the NGO umbrella organization at the UN.



Collaboration

The Commission has held frequent virtual meetings, namely 3 in 2022, and 5 in 2023. In those meetings, we strengthen our global perspective of Social Work by exchanging among us and inviting guests. We have had: IFSW President Joachim Mumba and Noel Muridzo (IFSW Africa President), Rory Truell (IFSW GS), and Meredith Powers (IFSW Climate Justice Program).

Besides the regular work of representing Social Work and the people we work with to the UN and providing information of the UN to the global social work community, the commission has held **its first in-person three-day meeting in Switzerland in June 2023**, with financial support from the Swiss Association of Social Workers and the employers of individual team members. Besides internal workshops (even while traveling!), the team also had meetings with WHO, OHCHR, and other UN representatives.



Key Planned Activities and Events for next years

We continue to work on capacity building within the UN, but also phase three from the original Guideline (2018) 'Future phases: Towards Fulfilling the Vision Statement', combined with the latest vision that we developed during the face-to-face meeting in Switzerland. The 'Summit of the Future' and the World Social Summit are two major events in 2024 and 2025 that we will follow closely.

It remains essential, that the volunteering team can build up strong partnerships with UN Agencies to increase the visibility of Social Work on local and national levels. Social Workers' skills in community work, mediation, psycho-social-work and the whole-society approach are well respected by UN representatives.

To have a strong(er) voice at the UN, we collaborate with global NGO Committees. This includes paying membership fees, traveling to the UN and holding -at least the annual WSWD at the UN – are fundamental for our work. Witnessing that CSOs must pay the UN to hold events limits our visibility. Hence, we will discuss and search for solutions to cover this cost. As the Global Commissioner, I feel strongly committed to not seeing the team paying NGO Membership fees, travel costs and payment for the events from their pocket.

Dear Social Work colleague, I hope this report has given you an idea of the work the Commission is doing, all to liaise the UN with the work you - one of 5Mio Social Workers with IFSW - are doing. We will continue to represent Social Work to the United Nations professionally, passionately, and always with a strong focus on increasing the visibility of professional Social Work in every country.



I look forward to continuing working with this professional team, with the IFSW global board and the IFSW Secretariat and I hope that IFSW members will benefit from our work.

Priska Fleischlin Switzerland / March 2024, IFSW UN Global Commissioner