

## Commissions

# Indigenous Commission

The aim of the Indigenous Commission is to create a structure for utilization of the indigenous knowledge and skills in service delivery locally and globally...

[Read more about the Indigenous Commission.](#)



## Latest Statements

[IFSW statement on the 2024 International Human Rights Day by Hillary Weaver](#)

[Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: Where are we in addressing this global epidemic?](#)

## Commissioners

### Global



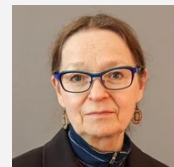
**Hilary Weaver**  
Global Commissioner

### Africa Region



**Charles Rutikanga**  
Regional Commissioner

### Europe Region

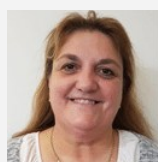


**Margaretha Uttjek**  
Regional Commissioner

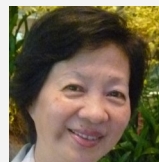
### Asia and Pacific Region



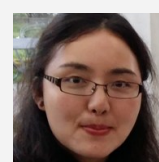
**Caroline Tana-Tepania**  
Regional Commissioner



**Linda Ford**  
Representative

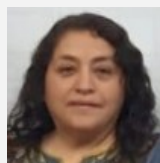


**Dr Ling How Kee**  
Representative



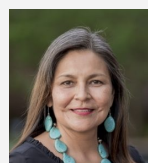
**Yang Jian (Yvonne)**  
Representative

### Latin America and the Caribbean Region



**Jenny Linares**  
Regional Commissioner

### North American Region



**Pamela L. Begay**  
Regional Commissioner

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### Commission Membership

The Indigenous Commission consists of nine members: Pamela L. Begay (from the United States representing the North American region), Carole Tana-Tepania (from Aotearoa/New Zealand lead representative for the Asia and Pacific region), How Kee Ling (from Malaysia representing the Asia and Pacific region), Linda Ford (from Australia representing the Asia and Pacific region), Yvonne/Yangjian (from China representing the Asia and Pacific region), Jenny Linares (from Peru representing the Latin American and Caribbean region), Charles Rutikanga (from Rwanda representing the African region), Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek (from Sweden representing the European region), and Hilary Weaver (Global Commissioner from the United States).

### Report on General Activities and Achievements

The Indigenous Commission has developed a schedule of meetings that take place every other month. Each year we develop an annual workplan that identifies tasks, timeframes, and members of the commission who will take the lead on each project. This workplan provides a focus and structure for our work.

As Global Indigenous Commissioner, Hilary Weaver has participated in regular 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, as we identify how all peoples may benefit from integration of Indigenous Knowledges, norms, practices, values, and skills in service delivery, locally and globally.

Our work has included participating in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, issuing three statements through IFSW to commemorate key days, and exploring collaborative opportunities with other IFSW commissions.

### United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



Jenny Linares, Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek, María Panjoj Salvador, Hilary Weaver, Pamela L. Begay & Ausirys Alviz, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

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Celebratory dinner with members of the UN and Indigenous Commissions following the panel presentation at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Four members of the Indigenous Commission, Pamela L. Begay, Jenny Linares, Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek, and Hilary Weaver traveled to New York City to participate in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). The panel also included María Panjoj Salvador, an Indigenous social worker employed at a school in Guatemala. Interpretation from Spanish to English was provided by Ausirys Alviz, a doctoral student from Monmouth University. The theme for the 2024 forum was Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination while emphasizing the voices of the youth. Participation in the UNPFII was facilitated by support from our New York City colleagues affiliated with the IFSW UN commission who assisted with registration at the United Nations and publicizing the panel. The panel was titled "The strength and promise of Indigenous youth: Leading the charge for self-determination and Indigenous continuity". Members of the Indigenous Commission, UN Commission, and guests from Latin America gathered for a celebratory

dinner after the panel. Travel to participate in the 23rd annual UNPFII was made possible by support from IFSW. See flier for the event below.

*Members of the IFSW Indigenous Commission will describe how Indigenous youth in Sábmie, North America, and Latin America are asserting our right to self-determination. For example, Sámi youth are organized in NGOs and are advocating*

*The Strength & Promise of Indigenous Youth:*

*Leading the Charge for Self-Determination & Indigenous Continuity*



**Join the Indigenous Commission  
of the International Federation of Social Workers**

*April 23, 2024*

*1:15-2:45pm*

*Salvation Army International Center*

*221 East 52<sup>nd</sup> St., New York City, NY*

*for our common future, including passing on culture and language, and fighting against climate change to save Mother Earth and have clean water. Examples of Indigenous youth voices from the US calling for self-determination will be shared including early poetry by children taken to residential schools, stories written by youth about resilience in the face of adversity, and youth leadership of move-*

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*ments such as NoDAPL, fighting against pipelines in defense of clean water.*

### Statements

The Indigenous Commission issued three statements in 2024. The purpose of these statements is to raise awareness about significant issues of concern to Indigenous Peoples, particularly highlighting their importance for social workers around the world. These statements raise visibility and serve as educational resources.

[Statement for World Indigenous Peoples Day \(August 9\).](#)

[Statement for Orange Shirt Day on the impact of residential schools on Indigenous people \(September 30\).](#)

[Statement for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women \(November 25\).](#)

### Collaborative opportunities with IFSW commissions & IFSW as a whole

Global Commissioner, Hilary Weaver, submitted a written report and offered a verbal report of the Indigenous Commission's activities from 2022 through March 2024 at the General Meeting in Panama in April. The General Meeting also offered opportunities to meet with other Global Commissioners in person (in addition to quarterly on-line meetings) and for members of the Indigenous Commission to meet in person with members of the Education Commission to plan how to move forward with our

collaborative effort to explore how Indigenous Knowledges are incorporated in social work education and practice.

Members of the Indigenous Commission participated in a series of on-line webinars, Connecting Social Work Practitioners with UN Human Rights Mechanisms and the OHCHR, developed by the UN Commission in collaboration with the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. In planning for our participation, members of the Indigenous Commission were able to make connections with key Indigenous staff from OHCHR and learn about other UN mechanisms that our commission may want to participate in in the future, beyond our ongoing participation in UNPFII. On May 15th, Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek and Hilary Weaver participated in the closing webinar in this series, delivering the presentation, Understanding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): It's implications and implementation.

The Global Commissioner meets regularly with the Secretary General to share updates and participate in consultations. Additionally, throughout the year, she participated in reviewing and offering feedback on various iterations of the draft document outlining commission structures and the regional commissioner appointment process. In 2024, a new commissioner from the North American region joined the Indigenous Commission, having been appointed in alignment with the collaborative process described in the draft document.

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Global Indigenous Commissioner Hilary Weaver participated in an on-line side event at the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development hosted by the IFSW UN Commission team in North America titled 'Social Workers as Partners in Advancing Sustainable, Innovative, and Community Engaged Solutions through Co-Building an Eco-Social World'. To watch the recording of the event, click [here](#).

Members of the Indigenous Commission are consulting with leadership from the European region as they plan for their 2025 conference. The theme for the conference includes Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and there will be a post-conference extension to Sábmie (Indigenous territories.)

Indigenous Commissioner for the European Region, Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek, participated in the European Delegates' Meeting in Lisbon in October. She updated participants about the work of the Indigenous Commission and has made herself available to answer future questions.

On behalf of the Indigenous Commission, Global Commissioner Hilary Weaver delivered a video message for International Human Rights Day (December 10th). The message emphasized social work as a human rights profession that need not be bound by a limited, individualistic, legalistic interpretation of human rights. Rather, human rights are embedded within relationships and must be embraced as a collective responsibility that extends to the wellbeing of our non-human kin.

### Key Planned Activities and Upcoming Events

The Indigenous Commission is currently working on our workplan for 2025. We anticipate continuing to participate in the UNPFII and possibly other UN mechanisms. We plan to continue to issue statements, drawing social workers' attention to important issues for Indigenous Peoples. We will continue collaborations with other IFSW commissions, including moving forward with our plans to collaborate with the Education Commission to explore how Indigenous Knowledges are incorporated in social work education and practice.

The Indigenous Commission is exploring the possibility of participating in three international conferences in 2025. In addition to the IFSW European Regional conference in October, we have been invited to participate in an Indigenous social work conference in Peru (dates to be determined) and are exploring the possibility of participating in the International Indigenous Voices in Social Work conference to be held in Calgary Canada in August.

As we move forward, we continue to solidify our vision and processes as a united Commission integrating the voices of Indigenous people and Indigenous Knowledge in the social work profession. The Indigenous Commission looks forward to our continued contribution in advancing Indigenous perspectives and ways of being within IFSW and throughout the regions.