

**UN Report, Vienna – Dunja Gharwal
International Federation of Social Workers
Representative Team to the United Nations-Vienna**

Annual Report 2014-2015

This report covers the activities of the Vienna Representative Team to the United Nations in Vienna from the period of March 2014 to December 2015. The Team of three representatives with a new main representative as team leader had to organize itself and get into the different challenges and issues of interest and concerns to the profession of social work. In this complex and unique structured environment the small team tries to build new networks and partners and strengthen the relationship to other NGOs as well as to UN staff.

Team:

Dunja Gharwal – Main UN Representative in Vienna, working at the youth department Vienna (child protection), founder of the European Socialwork HUB.
Silvia Franke – Social worker and psychotherapist
Christine Petioky – Social worker at the Vienna Social Fund, – Corporate Communication Unit - - International Networks and Incentives

**Brief report of the representatives of the IFSW in the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic
Drugs (2014-2015)**

The Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee (VNGOC) provides a vital link between NGO's, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Initially created in 1983, the objective of the Committee is to support the work of the UNODC, provide information on NGO activities and involve a wide sector of civil society in raising awareness of global drug policies.

VNGOC has a rich history in facilitating important events and relationships between NGO's and the UN system. Focusing primarily on the value added contributions of NGO's, the Committee welcomes a diverse range of ideological representation.

The key activities of the VNGOC include:

- Promoting the diversity and contributions of NGO's within the UN drug control system
- Hosting an annual NGO Forum in conjunction with the CND
- Providing an annual statement to the CND
- Providing a means through which UNODC-approved NGO's can participate at the CND
- Supporting NGO's in their relationships with UNODC
- Hosting extraordinary NGO events such as the 4th International Forum - "Beyond 2008" - on the 1998-2008 UNGASS on illicit drugs.
- Providing orientation briefings for NGO's attending the CND
- Encouraging the inclusion of NGO's on national delegations attending CND
- Acting as the primary interface between NGOs and the UNODC civil society officer.

The VNGOC is composed of members representing international, national and local NGOs.

Many of these organizations have ECOSOC approved consultative status which also defines their respective roles during UN events such as the CND. Membership on the Committee is completed through [application](#) to the Secretary (info@vngoc.org). The Committee has an Executive which is composed of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Secretary and Deputy Secretary. The terms of office for these positions are two years and any member of the committee is eligible to run for office.

The VNGOC represents an essential and important mechanism for NGOs to substantively contribute to global drug policy.

The main focus of the IFSW delegation's activities consisted in participating in the regular meetings of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs and in the events during the 57th and 58th annual sessions of the High Level Segment and Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), including the briefing and coordination meetings of the VNGOC. In both years, CND side events were visited focusing the review of the single convention on narcotic drugs UN laws, cannabis regulations strategies as well as harm reduction measures.

The IFSW was present at the 3rd Informal Civil Society Hearing in March 2014 and participated in voting for the members of the VNGOC Membership Group (MG) in 2015.

It took part in the preparing of questions for the NGO Dialogues with Commission, UNODC and INCB during the CNDs, focussing on evidence based prevention, cannabis regulation and availability of opiate substitution treatment.

The IFSW contributed to the CND process by facilitating contact with Viennese media and also provided technical support for the Austrian Association of Drug Experts (ÖVDF) to become a member of the VNGOC and to provide professional inputs. There is also a regular exchange with the other IFSW representatives in Vienna based UN committees.

Report of the representatives of the IFSW in Vienna NGO Committee on Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. We also facilitate the participation of civil society representatives.

- See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw#sthash.gK3Y0BDY.dpuf>

The Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGO CSW Vienna), accredited at the United Nations Office in Vienna, was founded in 1982 and works on a voluntary basis on both national and international levels. The Committee is comprised of around 40 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a focus on women's issues. The Committee's main purpose is to facilitate the activities of its member organizations in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It acts as a forum for the exchange of information and views on matters of common interest and coordinates the drafting of joint statements to UN agencies and commissions including the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

The purposes are to:

- Promote gender equality and the mainstream women's issues in the work of the UN;
- Monitor implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG#5 on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Participate in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, submit statements to its sessions, disseminate related documents, and support the activities of UN Women;
- Advocate for women's issues with UN Member States' missions;
- Consult with subject matter experts and provide the expertise and experience of our member organizations to UN agencies;
- Follow meetings and disseminate information on the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- Follow the work of the Vienna-based UN commissions and agencies, in particular the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); submit statements and disseminate information;
- Participate in drafting UN documents and reports on women's issues.

NGO CSW Vienna provided input to the ECE NGO Regional Reviews and Preparatory Meetings in 2004 and 2014, and was involved in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action for Beijing+20 in 2014-2015. The IFSW delegation empowered the CSW to endorse a statement on the Situations of girls and women during displacement and war. It also focused on the awareness of the committee on the increasing number of trafficked girls and women in the refugee and migration movement in the last 2 years.

Report of the representatives of the IFSW in Vienna NGO Committee on Aging

The NGO Committee on Ageing promotes participation of older persons as well as a new concept of ageing and the potential of older persons in society. Discussing issues of ageing and older persons consequently from a human rights perspective, the Committee urges awareness-raising measures combatting discrimination and ageism. The Committee strongly recommends an explicit reference to ageing in strategic policies (the UN's Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, specifically addressing the issue of ageing in some parts is being considered as a positive example in this respect). Altogether, involving and consulting older persons systematically in the design of policies, strategies and measures directly or indirectly influencing their lives ranges among the Committee's

main priorities; advancing health and wellbeing into old age and ensuring and enabling supportive environments are paramount as well. The Committee acts as a forum of exchange of information on issues of ageing from a broad international perspective and co-operates, among others, with UNECE, the OEWG and the Human Rights Council Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons.

The purposes are to:

- Emphasize the fundamental rights of older persons never to be undermined or restricted (e.g. concerning legal representation in the case of dementia)
- Contribute to topics of concern for the ageing population at an early stage of development i.e already in agenda-setting phases
- To gain influence so that concerns of older persons become significantly reflected in official texts and positions
- Overcome stereotypes as generalized assumptions of older persons as 'frail and forgetful'
- Put life experience to the benefit of society wherever possible
- Require adequate appreciation of older persons
- Require acknowledgement and organized support from society for older persons with disabilities and nursing needs as well as a right to hospice and palliative care
- Promote design for all and age-friendly environments – not only barrier-free but also better adapted to the needs of older persons
- Promote the concept of a society for all ages, approached by a life-course perspective taking into account the different stages and conditions of ageing

In 2014, the Committee focused on the topics 'social innovation solutions and technologies for active and healthy ageing' and 'violence against older persons'. A list of recommendations on the production and usability of new technologies was published. The issue of violence was treated at a side event in the framework of the annual meeting of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Vienna, 12 to 16 May 2014 on the topic 'Burning issues in the area of crimes suffered by older persons', organized by the Committee with the support of UNECE.

In 2015 the Committee co-operated intensely with the EU-funded SiforAGE Project (Social Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing) identifying barriers and obstacles for participation and inclusion in society and identifying opportunities and action to be taken. The latter was based on conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of 104 best and 5 bad practice examples. The Committee published the comprehensive report 'Recommendations for Decision Makers to Promote Active Ageing in a Society for All Ages'. The report was distributed at the International Day of Older Persons 2015 at the UN in Vienna.

Issues of Older women in the Beijing Platform for Action 2015 (Beijing +20) and the further implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action and Ageing remained on the agenda of the Committee.