

IFSW-Newsletter

2 - 1996



*IFSW Continues Strengthening
Presence in Asia & Pacific*

President's Message: Empower the Children to Claim Their Rights!

Looking back at the World Congress and General Meeting in Hong Kong recently, I am happy to see that we could report a very fruitful two-year period with new members, many tasks fulfilled and new plans for development. More than 435,000 social workers are currently linked to IFSW. We are now facing another two years with many challenges and new tasks.

IFSW soon on Internet

One of those is introducing IFSW on Internet with our own homepage and soon hopefully with many important links and possibilities for professional exchange and development.

Committee on Ethics, Constitution and By-Laws

The setting up of our Committee on Ethics, though with quite some difficulties and obstacles, is now at last accomplished.

A Task Force to present a suggestion for a revised definition of the social work profession was set up. The work, though not an easy task, is essential for the profession and IFSW. The result must reflect cultural aspects as well as regional differences and specialities of the profession.

A very important revision of the Constitution and By-Laws was approved. This will enable us to function more smoothly and support continuous development. One important part is the setting up of an elections committee. Another crucial issue is the mechanisms to address deadlock situations with rivaling associations.

SAP and Landmines

Suggested by our new member in Brazil, the General Meeting decided to set up a task force to identify and record the damaging consequences of structural adjustment and neoliberal policies pursued in many countries and to elaborate a social work response to this.

An extremely important resolution was once again passed by the General Meeting banning all use of land mines which are killing and injuring thousands of children and innocent people every year. It is now imperative that each member association in the IFSW puts pressure on their own governments to ban all land mines in all countries.

Global Protest against Child Abuse

Sexual exploitation, commercial and non-commercial, destroys millions of children and young people every

year. A world congress was held at the end of August in Stockholm, Sweden. IFSW was represented with three representatives.

This was not merely a congress. It was a global protest against the heinous crimes committed against children and against the existence of a market for commercial sexual exploitation of children. Poverty, sexism and racism put together with the social and moral deprivation and pollution of corruption has turned children into refuse in the backyard of our global society.

Grief, anger and distress were imminent in the congress, but also determination, hope and joy over the possibilities of cooperation of so many good forces.

Education and information are important means of prevention. Social workers will have a role and responsibility in advocating the rights of children and educating children and young persons of their human rights. IFSW will be working on a manual on Child Rights to address these issues. For the children and with the children we can work, empowering them to claim their rights and to develop their own resources and potentials.

Through the IFSW network we, as an international NGO, must take on our responsibility in all parts of the world to promote the professional commitment to address these vile problems.

Stockholm, September 1996

Elis Envall

IFSW President

Sharing Bread and Salt



Israeli and Palestinian social workers shared bread and salt at a historical lunch during the IFSW General Meeting in Hong Kong. The first steps were taken towards a more close cooperation. The picture shows Sara Tov, Chair-person of the Israel Organizing Committee for the Jerusalem Conference in 1998 and Mohammed Ahmed El-Aydi from the Palestinian Social Workers Association.



Hong Kong Congress

Stimulating a Process of Change

1077 participants from 64 countries were gathered in the vibrant and vital city of Hong Kong July 24 - 27, 1996 at "Participating in Change - Social Work Profession in Social Development" - the Joint World Congress of IFSW and the International Association of Schools of Social Work.

More than 500 abstracts from 56 countries were received, and the Hong Kong Social Workers Association had a hard time reviewing them all. The Congress directed attention toward the dramatic changes taking place, not only in Hong Kong with 1997 around the corner, but within the social work profession itself. The Acting Chief Secretary of Hong Kong, Donald Tsang Yam Kuen, stressed in his opening speech the vital role social workers have in this transition.

Global citizenship

Plenary speaker Stuart Rees emphasized the inclusive nature of citizenship in his presentation, and underlined that it should be defined in a global sense rather than on a nationalistic level. Strategic issues concern the need for full employment, alleviation of poverty and the extension of health services to all citizens. Yet for the vast majority, these ideals remain a dream. Vast poverty in both the developing countries and increasingly also in the developed world are witness to this.

IASSW's David Cox, Co-Chair of the International Program Committee, pointed at the importance for the profession to be more aware of how to 1) tackle poverty and other grassroot issues, 2) link social development with macro-economics and 3) involving people in community through empowerment when he summarized the congress.

South Africa

Fikile Mazibuko from South Africa linked in her key note speech some of the challenges for the profession to an African context and the two related crisis of development and environment experienced in the continent. Social work has by some been criticized for being irrelevant, inappropriate, ineffective, inflexible and unimaginative in its approaches to the situation. Still, the strength of the profession is demonstrated by its ability to accept criticism like this, and be aware of the complexities, tensions and difficulties presented by the positions we have taken. A process of restructuring and getting priorities right is in motion.

Professional HK organizers

The core papers from the congress, handed out to participants at registration in an almost 400 page book of proceedings, should stimulate a process of change. Many enabling, creative, innovative, dynamic and participative strategies are presented from all over the globe.

The congress was an exciting and stimulating event, very professionally organized by the social workers of Hong Kong. For those who participated, the 1996 World Congress was a memorable event.

This presentation is partly based on the closing speech by Nigel Hall, IFSW Vice President for Africa and Co-Chair of the International Program Committee.

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IFSW General Meeting 1996 Focusing

34 of IFSW's member associations were represented at the 1996 General Meeting in Hong Kong July 21 - 23 to set the policies and programs for the federation for the two years to come. The agenda presented a number of issues of importance to the future development, and discussions were often lively.



New Member Associations

Applications from social worker associations in Albania, Belarus and Latvia were approved by granting provisional membership while more information on the situation in the countries is put together. Another Danish social worker association were approved, and three organizations now form the Danish Coordinating Body for Membership of IFSW.

Representatives of social workers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Palestine National Territory and South Africa presented their greetings to the General Meeting, bearing strong witness of the situation for social workers in their home countries.

Guidelines for Representatives, Ambassador, Conference Planning and Selection

In order to make the federation more transparent, the General Meeting 1994 had asked that Criteria and Guidelines for IFSW Representatives, Role Description for the IFSW Ambassador and Guidelines for Conference planning and selection be prepared. Documents were approved at the meeting in Hong Kong.

Ethical Committee finally to function

The designation of a Permanent Committee on Ethical Issues has been postponed several times since the Committee was established in 1994, due to problems in several regions to recruit members. The General Meeting received designations from two more regions, and the Committee should therefore be able to function as soon as a final decision on localisation of its secretariat has been decided, either Australia or Canada. One of the tasks of the Committee will be to prepare a special conference in connection with the world congress in Jerusalem in 1998, looking into this vital area for contemporary and future social work.

New Definition of Social Work ahead

The General Meeting decided to set up a Task Force to elaborate and present a revised definition of the social work profession, taking into account and reflect all relevant cultural aspects as well as all regional differences and specialities and other varieties of the profession currently represented within the federation. The Task Force is also asked to consider a revision of the Minimum Standards for Social Work Training.

Debate on Constitution and By-Laws

Of the many proposed amendments to the IFSW Constitution and By-Laws, a proposal to set up a Committee of Inquiry when there are conflicting interests among an existing and an applying social worker association in a country, led to a long debate. Different opinions were presented, and in the end a compromise reached accommodating the Committee of Inquiry as an instrument in IFSW's decision process, and leaving the final decision to the General Meeting.

Revised Policy Papers on Human Rights and Refugees

The General Meeting approved revisions of the Policy Papers on Human Rights and Refugees. In the two year period to come, the other Policy Papers will be considered for revision, and it is expected that the next meeting will deal with a major round of revision which can take IFSW into the next millennium with a completely revised set of instruments on central social issues.

ing Substantial Issues

Dublin, Jerusalem and Montreal coming venues for IFSW

The General Meeting made official that the world conference in 2000 will take place in Canada (Montreal). The next Executive Committee meeting will be in Dublin in August 29 - 31, 1997 and the next General Meeting in Jerusalem July 1 - 3, 1998.

Secretary General to continue

The contract between IFSW and the present Secretary General, Tom Johannesen, will be renewed until year 2001.

Many resolutions passed

The General Meeting passed resolutions on Landmines, HIV/AIDS, Social Work and Human Rights, International Adoptions, Human Rights and Democracy in Burma and several individual human rights cases. A Task Force was also established to identify consequences of and strategies to combat structural adjustment and neo-liberal policies globally.

IFSW Officers and EC Members

Elis Envall, Sweden was re-elected as IFSW President for a new two year term. So were the Vice Presidents *Nigel Hall*, Zimbabwe (Africa), *Ng Shui Lai*, Hong Kong (Asia & Pacific), *Eilis Walsh*, Ireland (Europe) and *Gloria Lizarraga de Sossa*, Bolivia (Latin America & Caribbean). *Julie Foley*, Canada is new Vice President for North America, while *Margaret Dewhurst*, Canada was re-elected Treasurer for her third term.

The following were elected as Members-at-large of the Executive Committee: *Terry Bamford*, United Kingdom, *Juan Manuel Latorre Carvajal*, Colombia, *Jay J. Cayner*, USA, *Buster Curson*, New Zealand, *Imelda Dodds*, Australia, *Maria Herczog*, Hungary, *Abd El-Monssef H. Hozaien*, Egypt, *Patricia B. Luna*, Philippines, *Josphat M. Mathe*, Zimbabwe, and *Tan Ngoh Tiong*, Singapore.

Eugenia R. Moreno, Canada was elected as Elections Officer with *Evelyn Balais Serrano*, Philippines as first and *Eila Malmström*, Finland as second alternate elections officer.

Active IFSW Presence in Asia

Viet Nam

A group of 55 social workers visited Viet Nam after the Hong Kong Congress for a social work study tour. The visit also gave IFSW an opportunity for an informal exchange with Vietnamese social workers to strengthen links and discuss the situation of professional social work in the country.

Macau

The IFSW President and Secretary General visited Macau with the Vice President for Asia & Pacific Ng Shui Lai after the Hong Kong Congress. This Portuguese enclave, which will be returned to China in 1999, has an active social worker association and will hopefully enter IFSW membership in the near future.

China and Japan

The first IFSW visit to China will take place in October to continue developing the already good contacts with social workers in the vast country. The IFSW delegation has also been invited to Japan, where the Japanese Association of Social Workers will host a conference on international social work for Japanese social workers October 29.

Bahrain

For the first time, IFSW will be present at the Gulf Cooperation Council Congress of Social Associations and Societies, to be arranged in Bahrain late November. The Gulf Cooperation includes social workers from Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, meeting every second year to discuss social work and social development in the area.



IFSW President Elis Envall, Vice President for North America Julie Foley and Secretary General Tom Johannesen with Vietnamese social workers Nguyen Thi Oanh and Nguyen Thi M. Phuoc in Ho Chi Minh City.

News from Member Associations

Denmark

From reform to revision

The announced reform of the social benefit scheme (Act on Social Benefits) is now to be substituted by a revision of the current legislation. In the revised legislation the government wishes to increase the individual's responsibility for himself/herself and his/her family, but also to intensify the help to the most disadvantaged - mentally ill, homeless, drug addicts etc.

The bills have not yet been introduced, and it is therefore difficult at present to form an opinion of them. However, the Danish Association of Social Workers (DS) will oppose amendments to the legislation which will result in the Act being divided into a part applying to the weak and another applying to the more fortunate.

In addition, activities are being carried out to reform the Danish anticipatory pension scheme. No bills have been introduced in this area yet. But reports have been publicised from the committee set up to prepare the reform. The committee proposes that focus should be shifted to people's ability to function instead of their loss of earning capacity. The report also proposes that people under the age of 50 should only be granted pensions, if they have no or only an insignificant ability to function left. DS is opposing this age limit, believing that in consequence a large number of people (mentally ill, drug addicts, people worn-out) will be transferred to more uncertain maintenance on social assistance benefits without being able to meet the provision in the Danish Social Assurance Act concerning their availability for the labour market.

USA

New Executive Director

Josephine Nieves became executive director of NASW on July 1. Nieves has over 30 years of professional and volunteer experience in social action, public and private sector program development, policy formulation, and institution building. Most recently she was a presidential appointee with the U.S. Department of Labour. She succeeded Robert H. Cohen, former general counsel, who held the position following Sheldon Goldstein's departure in June 1995.

HIV/AIDS Training Project

NASW is in the second year of a three-year contract awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide education and training for social workers on the mental health aspects of HIV disease. Project staff developed curricula and provide training workshops to social workers who treat populations affected by the HIV/AIDS. The skill-building modules of the core curriculum address HIV transmission, infection, and treatments; psychosocial factors of HIV disease: identification of and interventions for mental health and neuropsychiatric problems; and social workers' role and ethical issues in treating people with HIV/AIDS.

Legislative activities

President Clinton has signed a welfare reform bill that will make significant changes, mostly negative, in the U.S. social safety net. The administration of many programs will be transferred from the federal government to the states in the form of "block grants", which will provide a fixed amount of money to meet the states' needs (rather than matching funds, as in the past). The bill places time limits on some benefits and will deny some benefits to legal immigrants. NASW's efforts will now focus on the implementation and monitoring of the consequences of this bill.

NASW was able to help prevent a downgrading of the definition of "social workers" under several Medicare programs. The new language would have allowed providers with a "BSW or equivalent" to provide social work services, potentially leading to lowered quality of care and challenging social work professional standards. These programs will continue to require a master's or bachelor's degree in social work.

Partnerships in Russia

NASW has completed two collaborative projects with the Association of Social Pedagogues and Social Workers (ASPSW) in Russia.. The first trained leaders in eight of their affiliates on management and program development issues; the second trained social workers and native people in Yakutia on how to advocate for the protection of the rights of native people. Both projects published training manuals which can be obtained from ASPSW. US AID provided the matching funds for these projects.

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Generous Contribution from Kuwait



The delegation from the Kuwait Association of Social Workers to the General Meeting received thanks for a generous contribution of US\$ 3,000.00 to the Jane Hoey Development Fund. The successful auction during the World Congress brought another US\$ 4,750.00 to the Fund.

Turoa from Aotearoa - Friend No 500



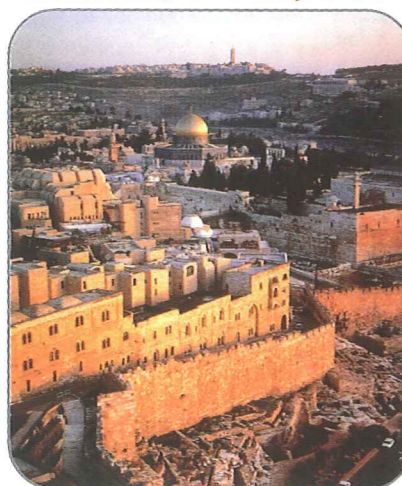
Turoa Haronga from Aotearoa - New Zealand joined as IFSW Friend number 500. If you want to know more about the Friends program, designed to give social workers, agencies, corporations and others a possibility to link with international social work, please contact the IFSW Secretariat.

*Joint European Regional Seminar
IFSW Europe and European Association of
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Culture & Identity:
Social Work in a Changing Europe
Dublin, 24 - 28 August 1997*



For more information, contact The Conference Co-ordinating Committee (Dublin 1997), PEC Ltd., Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland, tel (353) 1 661 3788, fax (353) 1 661 2073, E-mail: iasw@iol.ie

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Jerusalem, 5 - 9 July 1998*



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