

International Federation of Social Workers
Report to the General Assembly 2014 in Melbourne

Biannual Report 2012 – 2014 of the IFSW Representation in Geneva¹

Organisation of the IFSW Representation in Geneva

After the many years, Ellen Mouravieff-Apostol had successfully represented IFSW at the UN in Geneva; there was a transition period during which a new Team of representatives had to organise itself. We had to find new ways to operate in this extremely complex surrounding and structure of the UN in Geneva. We had to build up new networks and had to define priority areas of action. These tasks have been achieved during the last two years. We find now an active, informed, competent and effective IFSW representation at the UN in Geneva. As all our work is done on a honorary and volunteer base, we can of course not compete with professional international civil society NGO having professional and paid staff for analysis and lobbying at their disposition.

Name and e-mail	Status and year of appointment	Priority areas of activity
Klaus Kühne klaus.kuehne@sunrise.ch	Main Representative since 2011	Human Rights esp. Economic, social and cultural rights, Social Protection, poverty reduction
Tobias Roosen geray.roosen@bluewin.ch	Representative since 2006	UNHCR, refugees and migration
Pascal Rudin ifsw@rudinweb.com	Representative since 2013	Children's rights
Vacant	4. representative	
Vacant	5. representative	
Pilar Filomeno Vigezzi pfilomeno@hotmail.com	IFSW Member of working group on the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights	Manual: Making human rights work for people living in extreme poverty.

IFSW has the right to appoint up to five representatives. The potential is not fully used. Two places are vacant and there are many topics of interest for Social Work not covered such as aging, women, sustainability or the promotion of the participation of member associations to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Process.

In the beginning of 2014 some organisational decisions have been taken to enhance the visibility of the UN delegations and to facilitate coordination and cooperation among UN delegations, with the Secretary General, with the IFSW Executive Committee and with the member associations:

- Twice a year a meeting with the Secretary General to discuss organisational issues and to coordinate activities with IFSW Executive Committee.
- Establishment of an IFSW UN Representative Global Coordinator. (Pascal Rudin was appointed to this post.)
- Installation of a UN page on IFSW website to ensure the visibility of representatives' work; to enhance cooperation and coordination between the different IFSW UN teams

¹ You will find more information and documents to most of the mentioned events soon on the UN page on IFSW website.

and to feed information relevant for social work from UN activities and publications to IFSW bodies and members.

Cooperation with IFSW Human Right Committee.

Feeding the information from the UN to IFSW is an important task of IFSW UN representatives. Especially the frequent consultations from the UN High Commissioner of Human Right or other UN bodies showed to be an occasion to make the voice of social work heard. This was e.g. the case for the Response to the request for information for the Secretary General on the question of the death penalty since 1 April 2013 given bei Ruth Stark in March 2014.

Achievements

In 2012 two UN decisions had great relevance for social work and for the **promotion of more economic and social equality**, goal given priority for 2012 - 2014 in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development.

- ILO Recommendation 202 on the national implementation of Social Protection Floors.
- UNHCHR Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

My main activities in Geneva during the last two years concentrated on these both topics. Highlight during the year for the UN representation in Geneva is World Social Work Day in March, which I organised since 2012 and since then the numbers of participants are doubling each year. WSWD is an occasion to present the three global organisations of social work and social development IASSW, ICSW and IFSW to a broad audience of UN-officers, national missions, NGO representatives, academics, student and social workers.

World Social Work Day

The theme of **WSWD 2013** and **WSWD 2014** was: “**Social Work and Social Development and the United Nations; Promoting Social and Economic Equality**”.

WSWD 2013 was jointly organised with the Swiss Association of Social Workers, WSWD 2014 with the School of Social Work in Geneva. Both years representatives from IASSW, ICSW and IFSW contributed to the event in a panel discussion.

Key note speakers in 2013 were Christina Behrend from ILO presenting the ILO Recommendation 2002 “**Social Protection Floors for All**”; Janet Nelson from ATD Fourth World speaking on the “**UN Guiding Principles on extreme poverty and Human Rights**” and Stéphane Beuchat speaking on the **Universal Periodic Reviews** and the participation of the Swiss social work association in this process.

In 2014 Charles Beer, former education minister from Geneva spoke on “**Fighting inequalities: What are the contributions of education policy, and what are the local and international challenges?**” and Edmundo Matinho from International Association of Social Security spoke on “**International minimal standard in Social Security**”
Both years the event ended with a presentation for students on “**Social work in the UN and in international organisations; Ways into the UN and international NGOs for social workers**”

The organisation for WSWD 2015 to the topic “**Promoting Dignity and Respect**” is underway in collaboration with UNAIDS and IASSW and will take place March 17th at Kofi Annan Memorial Hall at UNAIDS.

Side Event to the 25th Session of the Human Right Council 24th March 2014

“Social Protection: A Universal Rights-Based Developmental Goal; the Role of Social Services and Social Work”. The event was supported by the Mission of Portugal, Public Services International, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, the International Movement ATD Fourth World, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work, and the International Council of Social Welfare.

Odile Frank, Health and Social Services Officer from Public Service International spoke to the topic: “Importance of the quality of social services for the functioning of social protection floors” and Janet Nelson from ATD Fourth World presented the thesis that Social protection systems will lead to a sustainable reduction in inequalities, and enable all people to contribute to their societies, only if implemented within a framework that respects the fundamental rights of the most impoverished.

As result of the discussions on of this side event an on WSWD 2013 and 2014 we are convinced that social work has an important role to play in the implementation and delivery of social protection floors. Therefore we present a motion to the IFSW General Meeting in Melbourne to publish a set of Guiding Principles for Social Workers concerning their role in the development, implementation, administration, provision of services of Social Protection Floors.

ILO Recommendation 202 for the implementation of national Social Protection Floors
Social Protection Floors as proposed by the ILO Recommendation 202 are strong, feasible and affordable instrument to fight poverty, for social cohesion and for economic and social stability.

I became active member of the core group of the **Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors**, an organisation with more than 90 international NGOs lobbying for the promotion of SPF worldwide, especially ATD Fourth World, Public Service International, ICSW, Help Age, pweser (Programme on Women’s Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and the sponsoring Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The Global Coalition had two conferences in Geneva and Berlin and many meetings in Geneva to organise the lobbying process and we succeeded to speakers of the Global Coalition on SPF as speakers from civil society at many UN conferences since the end of 2013. We also strongly promoted SPF as an issue in the post 2015 Sustainability Developmental Goal.

Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

ATD Fourth World and Franciscan international took the lead to produce a manual “to help those working directly with people living in poverty understand the situation of those in poverty from a human rights perspective and help them and local authorities, undertake activities that help them enjoy their human rights and escape their situation.” Since summer 2013 Pilar Filomeno Vigezzi, social worker in Geneva was IFSW representative in the working Group. A first draft was presented in June 2014 and IFSW members are called to test this important instrument to promote social and economic equality as much as human dignity people living in poverty often being clients of social workers.

UNHCR. Tobias Roosen, IFSW representative at UNHCR since 2006 actively participated in the Annual Consultations with NGO in June 2012 and 2013 and in the 63rd and 64th EXCOM Sessions in October 2012 + 2013. (see the detailed reports on the UN page of IFSW website.)