

**International Federation of Social Workers
Representative Team to the United Nations-New York**

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

This report covers the activities of the New York Representative Team to the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the period of September 2013 through May 2014. This proactive team of four representatives and two interns cover a wide variety of substantial issues of interest and concern to the profession of social work. Please note that this report captures only the major contributions, as reporting on all activities would be exhaustive for an annual report.

Team Update

- Dr. Michael Cronin remains as the Main UN Representative in New York. Dr. Cronin is Assistant Professor at the Monmouth University School of Social Work in West Long Branch, New Jersey and will be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure on July 1, 2014.
- Dr. Robin Mama is Professor, and Dean of the School of Social Work at Monmouth University.
- Dr. Elaine Congress is Associate Dean at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.
- Ms. Marcia Wallace is a retired social worker with over 38 years of experience in mental health and administration.
- Graduate social work interns for 2013-14:
Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service
 - Cathy Jeong
Monmouth University School of Social Work
 - Elyse Archambeault

UN Department of Public Information/NGO Section (UNDPI/NGO)

- Individual team members and interns attend weekly briefings on topics relevant to the UN and associated NGOs. The briefings consist of panel discussions which typically feature a UN representative, a government representative and an NGO representative. Some of the topics of this past year have included:
 - Disaster Risk Reduction
 - Youth Led – Importance of Education
 - UN Media
 - Human Rights
 - Bioenergy
 - Happiness & Well-being
 - World Press Freedom Day
 - African Agenda 2063
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Remembrance of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
 - Education for Global Citizenship
 - Faith
 - Town Hall Meeting

The following link contains all DPI/NGO briefings for this time frame with webcasted videos, descriptions of the events, and which speakers attended. <http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/calendar/briefings/>

ECOSOC Commissions, Forums, Conventions & GA High-Level Segment Meetings

Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

The CSocD is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN which consists of 46 elected members. Since the convening of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the Commission has been the key UN body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Each year, the Commission takes up key social development themes as part of its follow-up to the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit.

- IFSW delegation attended the 52nd session with “policies promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all”, as the priority theme. The Commission concluded with the approval of six draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council that addressed issues of empowerment, older persons and the family, as well as one text that would hone the Commission’s own focus on visual health.

<http://undesadspd.org/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2014.aspx>

Commission of Status of Women (CSW)

The CSW is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

- IFSW delegation attended the 58th session with the priority theme as “challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”.
- Participated in four NGO parallel events.
- IFSW endorsed the Statement on Gender, Economic, Social and Ecological Justice for Sustainable Development A Feminist Declaration for Post 2015. <http://ifsw.org/news/ifsw-endorses-statement-on-gender-economic-social-and-ecological-justice-for-sustainable-development-a-feminist-declaration-for-post-2015/>
- The agreed conclusions can be found at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2014/L.7

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

Established in 1992, the CSD is responsible for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; as well as providing policy guidance to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) at the local, national, regional and international levels. The CSD meets annually in New York, in two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on clusters of specific thematic and cross-sectoral issues, outlined in its new multi-year programme of work.

- Report on the 20th session can be found at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.17/2013/4&Lang=E

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>

- IFSW delegation participated in the 13th Session with the special theme as “principles of good governance consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Articles 3 to 6 and 46.
- The Forum attracted over 2000 indigenous peoples and NGO representatives.
- IFSW is represented on the Executive Committee by Elaine Congress, with an active role in planning a cultural event at the opening of the Forum.
- IFSW organized a side event to promote education, empowerment, and advocacy around self-determination for indigenous peoples. The event focused on the concept of self-determination and how it relates to the struggles of indigenous peoples who often are denied “free, prior, and informed consent,” The well-being and survival of many indigenous peoples are continually challenged by large scale development projects to which they have not freely consented.

The panel provided historic and current examples of how indigenous peoples living on tribal lands, as well as in outside communities, are not permitted to exercise their rights to self-determination and concluded with a discussion of positive examples in which indigenous communities, despite obstacles, have been able to practice self-determination. Hilary Weaver, of American Indian Lakota background, Associate Dean at the University of Buffalo, School of Social Work, and President of the American Indian SW Education Association, Ronald Holloway, Chief of the Sand Hill Indians, and Sister Ellen Cafferty who has spent many years working with Maya people in Honduras and Mexico participated in this side event on May 16th that over 30 people attended.

Other UN Events

- The **Global Social Work Student Conference** was first held in 2008 as a supplementary event to Social Work Day at the United Nations in New York. Since then, GSWSC has been a mainstay in the international social work community in creating a space where social work students from around the world can come together to learn and share ideas and information for best practice in the rapidly growing field of professional social work.

- IFSW interns planned and coordinated the **2014 Global Social Work Student Conference** at the UN Church Center. The theme was: The Future of International Social Work: Finding Careers and Engaging in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. More than 100 people were in attendance. The conference included a panel on UN and international careers followed by a workshop on the post 2015 development agenda.
- **Social Work Day at the United Nations –New York**
The theme for the 31th Annual Social Work Day was “Social Work Practice and Education: Voices on the Post-2015 Development Agenda”. The event was held in the North Lawn Building Conference Room 4 Room on April 28, 2014. After greetings from Darla Spence Coffey of Council on Social Work Education and Jeane Anastas of the National Association of Social Workers (USA), the morning’s event began with a keynote address from Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu, PhD, the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, and Vice-President of the General Assembly. Her presentation was well-received by the audience of approximately 350 social work students, faculty, NGO representatives and social work practitioners.

Additional speakers included Dr. Lakshmi Balaji, Chief, Strategic Planning, UNICEF, New York City; Mendy Marsh Gender-based Violence Specialist in Emergencies Programme Division Child Protection in Emergencies Cluster UNICEF, New York, and Cristina Diez Main Representative to the UN International Movement ATD Fourth World. An update on the Global Agenda was provided by Julia Watkins, IASSW and our IFSW President, Gary Bailey. Dr. Lynne Healy, Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and a member of the IASSW Executive Board was the wrap-up speaker. The programme may be viewed at:

http://bluehawk.monmouth.edu/swork/UN/Program_Spring-2014.pdf

NGO Committees (CoNGO)

The Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) Committees bring together NGOs, members of the Secretariat and government delegations to discuss current themes and issues before the UN and the global community. Through these committees, CONGO members and the larger NGO community work together to share information, to cooperate on substantive issues, and to bring NGO expertise into the discussions of governments at the United Nations. Committees operate in Geneva, New York and Vienna. IFSW is represented as active participating members on the following 13 NGO Committees, Sub-Committees, or Working Groups in New York:

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing
<i>Michael Cronin</i>
<i>Marcia Wallace</i>
<i>Cathy Jeong, intern</i>
Subcommittee on Older Women
<i>Cathy Jeong, intern</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Issues
<i>Elaine Congress served on Executive Committee</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health
<i>Robin Mama served on Executive Committee</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration
<i>Elaine Congress</i>
<i>Cathy Jeong, intern</i>
<i>Elyse Archambeault, intern</i>
Task Force on Refugee Children, Task force on Children in Detention, Task Force on Migrants in Transit
<i>Elyse Archambeault, intern</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Development
<i>Marcia Wallace</i>
<i>Elyse Archambeault, intern</i>
Subcommittee on the Eradication of Poverty
<i>Elyse Archambeault, intern</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family
<i>Michael Cronin</i>
<i>Cathy Jeong, intern</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Rights
<i>Marcia Wallace</i> |

- **Human Rights**

Marcia Wallace, Subcommittee on Racism

Cathy Jeong, intern

Elyse Archambeault, intern

- **Status of Women**

Robin Mama

Elaine Congress

Cathy Jeong, intern

Elyse Archambeault, intern

Working Group on Girls

Elyse Archambeault, intern

UN Meetings (UN General Assembly, Secretariat, Agency, Programme or Fund)

UN Secretariat

Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA)

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 61/106 of 13 December 2006. It came into force on 3 May 2008 upon the 20th ratification. Article 40 of the Convention stipulates that “The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention.” Since 2008, five sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held at United Nations Headquarters.

- IFSW attended the 3rd session of the COSP (17-19 July 2013), with the theme; “Ensuring adequate standard of living: empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities within the framework of the CRPD”. At the opening of the conference, International Disability Alliance Chair, Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis, speaking on behalf of civil society and NGOs in particular, highlighted the importance of mainstreaming disability in future global development goals, noting that this issue currently represents the most important advocacy activity for the disability community worldwide. The conference programme included thematic roundtables and an informal panel on economic empowerment through inclusive social protection; poverty reduction strategies; disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes; community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society; and an interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention.
- IFSW participated in an NGO side event at the COSP focusing on a mental health perspective on disability.
- The Seventh Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will take place from 10 to 12 June 2014 at the UN Headquarters, in New York. IFSW delegation will participate.

UN General Assembly

High level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million. Migration can bring substantial benefits, but can also have negative consequences. Both developing and developed economies need migrants to meet the demand for workers with different levels of skills. In brief, migration in the context of globalization brings opportunities and challenges, which need to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion. This is why the UN convened the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development from 3-4 October 2013 with an eight-point agenda for action on making migration work. IFSW was invited to participate in both the interactive hearings and the high-level dialogue. The 8-point Agenda for Action can be found at:

http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration_8points_en.pdf

IFSW representation at other significant events and meetings (2013-2014)

Celebration of the International Day of Older Persons, International Day for Disaster Reduction, General Assembly Third Committee meetings, Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, OHCCR briefing on thematic strategies for 2014-2017, UN Symposium Toward Preventing Genocide, Child Poverty Network Roundtable discussion, the International Day of Families, and the Coordination Meeting of the Global Migration Group.