



International Federation of Social Workers

**Newsletter** 1/99



*First IFSW ECCO Meeting*  
*Prioritized Activities and Enhanced Transparency*



# President's Message

**Social Work as a profession is in essence an act of solidarity.** We need to show our solidarity in many ways. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrated last December. More than 10 million individuals have signed their commitment for the Declaration as an act of solidarity with these values and the victims of the violations. The anniversary reminds us of how much there still is to be done, by Human Rights activists and social workers. Human Rights violations are – for the victims suffering – man-made disasters.

In the last year many people and many colleagues have had to experience the enormous powers and devastation of Nature. Our thoughts have gone to the colleagues in Colombia hit by several earthquakes and in **Nicaragua** and **Honduras** suffering the effects of the hurricane Mitch. More than 11,000 people were killed and three million are left homeless. In Nicaragua 30 percent of the population have lost their belongings. The costs and efforts required to reconstruct these societies are astronomical. Social workers will be instrumental in much of this work for many years.

In a special effort to give support to colleagues in Central America a fund raising for the victims of the hurricane Mitch was organised by IFSW in November last year. We have thanks to the solidarity of several IFSW member associations been able to send our colleagues in Nicaragua a total of **17,500 US dollars** for reconstruction efforts in the area. I especially want to thank those associations who responded very quickly. In addition to these efforts to support our Kuwaiti member association has succeeded in influencing its national Red Crescent society to send 200,000 dollars to the area.

As you can see in this Newsletter we are now in the **International Year of Older Persons**. IFSW celebrates this by publishing a new Policy Statement on Older Persons. In this area together with issues on *Violence against Women* IFSW needs to strengthen the social work profile in the future.

The newly formed Executive Committee Council of Officers (**ECCO** for short) has had its first meeting in New York. Together with the sub-committees now active in different fields this is – I am convinced – the beginning of a very exciting and positive development that will strengthen our federation with a more involved and active leadership and enhanced transparency. In this process the just

developed **Activity Plan** will play an important part.

Our co-operation with sister organisations and other partners will also be developed further in the near future. The need to join forces and co-ordinate efforts to develop a framework of successful policies and programmes is absolutely essential in order to meet the needs of people living in poverty, exclusion and oppression around the world.

Stockholm, February 1999

Elis Envall  
President

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SUMMIT

### Anniversary of Declaration of Human Rights

**The Human Rights Defenders Summit** celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by adopting the "Paris Declaration". The 22-article declaration denounces the increasing gap between the dramatic reality of human rights violations and government rhetoric.

**Organised by four** human rights organisations; Amnesty International, ATD Quart Monde, Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme and France Libertes, the Human Rights Defenders Summit strongly denounced the violations committed towards those dedicated to defend human dignity, whether through violence or intimidation.

In one of the most significant public commemorations of the 50th anniversary Amnesty International presented over 10 million individual pledges of support for the Declaration to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

**Evelyn Balais-Serrano**, IFSW's former Human Rights Commissioner for Asia-Pacific, was part of the steering committee of the world summit, representing Asia-Pacific: - By broad definition social workers engaged in defending the rights of their clients are all considered human rights defenders. This makes this event relevant to every social worker anywhere in the world for it tried to recognise the defender's legitimate right to do his/her work and to be given protection by law, she said.

## In this issue

Human rights defenders summit	2
IFSW ECCO meeting	3
IFSW towards the new millennium	4 - 5
News from the UN	6
Saddam Hussein's prisoner for eight years	7
Conference information	8
Advertisement for the Conference	
"International Perspectives in Social Work"	
from Pavilion Publishing	insert

## IFSW Newsletter

is open for advertisements, including inserts  
Deadline is **May 20, 1999**  
for the June edition.

For more information, please notify the Secretariat.



# First IFSW ECCO meeting held in New York

**At the IFSW General Meeting in Jerusalem 1998, new arrangements for executive meetings were approved, including the establishment of an Executive Committee Council of Officers (ECCO), consisting of the President, the five regional Vice Presidents and the Treasurer. ECCO had its first meeting in New York City January 18 - 20 with all officers present.**

As part of the meeting, a study visit to the United Nations and talks with the IFSW Representatives to the UN in New York took place. ECCO also met with the Board of Directors and members from the New York City Chapter of NASW. The meeting was mainly held at the Columbia University School of Social Work, established in 1898.

## **Biannual Activity Plan 1998 - 2000**

Based on the recommendations of the General Meeting, a main theme at the meeting was to develop a coordinated Activity Plan for the period 1998 - 2000, for the first time in IFSW. The different activities were prioritized and put into a structure that is aimed at enhancing transparency toward the member associations and others.

## **Further development of Policy Statements**

Based on recommendations from the Executive Committee Sub-Committee on Policy, the Policy Statements on Child Welfare, Peace and Disarmament and Self-Help were suspended for further consideration. The Executive Committee, meeting in Helsinki in June 1999, will be asked to consider developing a broader

social policy platform that will incorporate these and possibly others of the IFSW Policy Statements. ECCO approved a revised International Policy on Older Persons, just in time for the UN International Year of Older Persons.

## **Relocating the IFSW Secretariat**

ECCO approved plans to relocate the IFSW Secretariat to Bern, Switzerland after having been located in Oslo, Norway since 1993.

The move is based on cooperation and sharing of offices with the Swiss member association. The move is also expected to facilitate cooperation with the United Nations and other international NGO's.

The move is scheduled to take place in September 1999.

# Links strengthened between Gulf social work and IFSW

## **Gulf Social Work Conference in Kuwait, November 21 - 23, 1998**

**The Kuwait Association of Social Workers invited the IFSW President and Secretary General to participate in the Gulf Social Work Conference, which is held every second year.**

The Conference gathered social workers not only from the Gulf region (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates),

but also other Arab countries as Lebanon and Egypt. The theme was:

**"The Civil Society in the Gulf"**, focusing on the rapid changes in the region and the need for collaborative and integrated

efforts to meet the challenges of a modern world. The Conference was opened by the Minister of Social Affairs, and included a number of contributions on how voluntary organisations and societies can act in the ongoing process of transformation.

**Abdul Aziz Abdulla Al-Sarawi**, President of the Kuwait Association of Social Workers, (photo to the right) expressed the commitment of Gulf social workers to be active in international social work. As of today, only Bahrain and Kuwait are in IFSW-membership. IFSW had discussions with the social worker organisation in the United Arab Emirates, who is hosting the next Gulf Conference in 2001, on possible membership in the Federation, as well as with the Arab Federation of Social Workers on extended co-operation with Arab countries outside the Gulf region.

In some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the possibility of forming organisations are limited, while obtaining support from the authorities to link with international organi-



sations as IFSW is difficult in others. Nevertheless, the rapid changes in the region and the ongoing links between Gulf and Arab social work and IFSW give reason to believe that we in the future will be able to experience a stronger presence in international social work from this part of the world.





# IFSW towards the new millennium

What are the most important tasks in your region in the period until the next General Meeting in 2000?

The Vice-Presidents were asked the question. Here are their answers.

## Asia and the Pacific:

### Sub groups facilitate communication

The Asia Pacific Region of IFSW covers the largest land mass stretching from Bahrain to the Pacific Islands.

In order to accommodate this diversity, the region has developed sub groupings

in the following areas: North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. The goal is to facilitate easier and more regular communication between member associations,

feed the development of projects and to provide support to non-member associations with a view to membership.

The preparation for the 1999 Regional Conference in Brisbane in September and developing a more formal process for arranging future conferences is a key task. The conference will be preceded by a one-day workshop on Human Rights convened by the Secretary of the IFSW Human Rights Commission and also a one-day formal Asia Pacific region Meeting. It is hoped that this meeting will set regional goals for the next four years.

*Imelda Dodds*

*Vice-President Asia and the Pacific*

## Europe:

### Ambitious programme

The European region is a very diverse region with 38 members. As the Vice-President of Europe I have an advantage to be part of an excellent and



experienced team, the European Secretariat and Executive. This teamwork is necessary for an ambitious working programme, which was decided at the European delegates meeting in Jerusalem. This programme will concentrate on the areas of

- Social policy (continuing the Project on Social Exclusion, User/Consumer Involvement etc.)



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### Comparative Focus

The journal places particular emphasis on articles concerned with comparative analysis and cross-national research. In each issue you will find discussions and analyses of trends and issues in social welfare policy and social work practice, with a scope extending far beyond any single country. *International Social Work* will also provide you with timely thematic issues dedicated to specific international developments both in the developing and developed world.

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- Professional Issues (Mutual Recognition of Diplomas in the EU etc.)
- Communication with Members, networks and partnerships.

One of our most important activities is to support the 1999 Seminar in Helsinki and St. Petersburg, where we hope to meet our colleagues and friends from the global level of IFSW.

*Herbert Paulischin  
Vice-President Europe*

### **North America: Continue collaboration among colleagues**



My goal for our work in the North American region during the period from 1998-2000 is to continue our emphasis on facilitating collaboration among social work associations in this region while working especially closely with our colleagues in the Caribbean and South American region.

The efforts, begun in the October Social Work Summit in Washington DC, toward building greater unity and enhancing the image of the profession will continue.

It will be critical as we approach the new millennium to emphasize inclusiveness while celebrating our diversity. Global awareness and support for our NGO team at the United Nations will also be key.

In addition, we must work to increase our influence by participating in intensified policy and programmatic efforts to secure the well-being of our societies globally.

*Josephine A.V. Allen  
Vice-President North America*

### **Africa:**

#### **Working towards 2002**

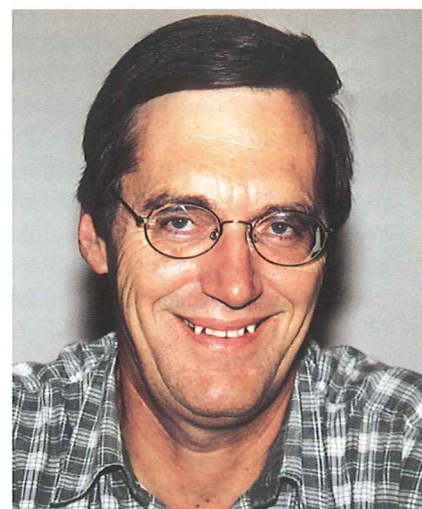
The major task for the African region is to support the Kenyan Association of Social Workers to host the first Pan-African regional Conference in that country probably during November 1999. This conference will also have a business side where regional co-operation among Social Worker associations in Africa will be discussed.

A further priority for the region is to complete the three-year capacity building project of the Zimbabwe association and an evaluation of it. We would like to see what lessons/guidelines for association building could come out from this project to assist other developing associations. We are also working towards the 2002 World Conference, which will be held in Harare.

Recruitment of further member associations to boost membership in IFSW is a major task for the region.

There are now 11 members out of the possible 53 states in Africa, so although we have increased membership in the last years, there is still a long way to go.

*Nigel Hall  
Vice-President Africa*



### **America Latina y Caribe: Ampliar cobertura afiliación Latinoamericana a la FITS**

1. Realizar un encuentro latinoamericano en Abril 1999.
2. Ampliar cobertura afiliación Latinoamericana FITS
3. Precisar directorio organizaciones de la región, y mejorar comunicaciones.
4. Conformar y dinamizar 3 sub-regiones para el trabajo continental
5. Impulsar proyectos resultantes del plan de desarrollo regional
6. Propiciar intercambio de publicaciones a niveles mundial y Latinoamericano.
7. Reforzar niveles de comunicación y trabajo conjunto con la IASSW
8. Trabajar por el desarrollo del código de ética.
9. Impulsar las líneas programáticas de la FITS, mediante comités temáticos particulares.
10. Garantizar mayor presencia de latinoamericanos en los proyectos de la FITS.
11. Dinamizar la participación Latinoamericana en el congreso de Canadá.



### **Latin America and the Caribbean: Increase Latin American affiliation**

1. Accomplish a Latin American meeting in April 1999.
2. Increase Latin American affiliation to IFSW.
3. Determine the leadership of the organisations and improve communications.
4. Establish and strengthen three sub-regions for the work on the continent.
5. Stimulate projects that evolve from the regional development plan.
6. Accomplish exchange of publications at global and Latin American levels.
7. Reinforce levels of communication and co-operation with IASSW.
8. Work to develop the Code of Ethics.
9. Influence the different IFSW programs through its respective sub-committee.
10. Guarantee greater Latin American involvement in the IFSW projects.
11. Encourage Latin American participation in the conference in Canada.

*Juan-Manuel Latorre Carvajal  
Vice-President Latin America  
and the Caribbean*



# News from the UN

We are now in the **International Year of Older Persons** whose sub theme is *A Society for All Ages*.

Implicit in the theme is the recognition that there needs to be mutual support between generations. Investment in the well being of both young and old will benefit society as a whole. The United Nations Population Fund has issued these recent figures as follows:

In the next 50 years, the proportion of people of 65 will more than double, growing from 6.8% of the global population to 15.1%. In Western Europe, more than one person in four (27.5%) will be over 65 in 2050.

This growth will severely test the ability of families and societies to provide the financial, medical and social support older people will need. But the "new generation" of elderly people will also be healthier, better educated and more productive than its predecessors, according to the World Population 1998 report.

## UNICEF

On Dec.3, 1998, the Working Group on the Rights of the Child honored our team member Thelma Stackhouse for her devoted service and her leadership as chair and co-chair of the Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the NGO Committee on UNICEF.

Thelma also chaired a sub committee on the Rights of the Girl Child. Many parts of the world still discriminate against the girl child. There is now more discussion of how to educate the boy child who has been socialized with negative attitudes about girls.

## The Commission on Social Development

The IFSW team has been very involved in preparing a statement for the Commission on Social Development.

The statement to be presented by IFSW makes the case that because social workers have training, education, and experience, and because they emphasize the person or family within their situation and within their environment, they are particularly

equipped to collaborate with governments and other non governmental organizations to develop programs and projects. These in turn will serve to implement the plan of action stemming out of the Copenhagen Summit.

The statement urges governments to collaborate within countries as well as across borders to join hands with the non governmental organizations who have had the grass root experience of meeting people's needs. We need each other to do this.

## The NGO Committee on the Status of Women

The major thrust of this committee has been toward a UN Special Session in June 2000, entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development, and Peace for the Twenty-first Century". Another area of great interest is the resolution put forth to the General Assembly by 79 countries against traditional health practices that harm girls and women, such as genital mutilation which is viewed as a form of violence against women.

Another effort to avert violence against women was a resolution supported by 33 countries against sexual trafficking among women and girls.

Jean Verthein, the IFSW representative who covers this committee, notes that the HIV-AIDS has taken the spotlight as a crisis. Statistics drawn from the World Bank and 23 countries offer the following: Worldwide, 30.6 million people suffer from HIV-AIDS including 21 million Sub Saharan Africans, 6.4 million Asians, 1.4 million South Americans and Caribbean people, and a million North Americans and Europeans.

There has been a 100% increase in HIV-AIDS since 1994 and 27 countries have doubled their totals of persons with HIV. Uganda and Tanzania have decreased their HIV rate in campaigns for condom use, later marriage and sex, education, and preventative work with the young.

Celia B. Weisman

## UNITY AND ACTION to increase professional influence

As part of the celebration of **100 years of professional social work**, the **National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**, USA invited social work organisations from all over the USA to take part in a **"Social Work Summit"** in **Washington, DC October 4 - 6, 1998.**

The event was the first-ever meeting of leaders of social work organisations in the USA, and as many as 44 delegations representing a great diversity of settings took part.

The main agenda was to explore common concerns and begin planning action to increase the profession's influence on social policy and professional issues.

**Josephine A. V. Allen**, NASW's President pointed at the Summit's goal as "finding ways to harness the vast power of social work. To be effective, we must seek out what is essential and vital to social work, and then find, collect and assert our power".

**Josephine Nieves**, NASW's Executive Director, underlined "the need for social workers in every practice method and setting to come together to address the challenges of the next century. We live in critical times when despite unprecedented economic strength, social conditions have worsened, and violence, child abuse, homelessness, substance abuse and poverty are escalating"

By conclusion of the dynamic event, participants agreed to act on a set of recommendations, including a communications network.

The Summit was a powerful arena for increased co-operation between social workers in the USA, and also demonstrated the international commitment of the major social work community in the world.



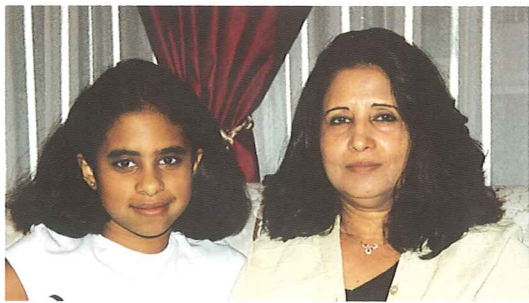
# Saddam Hussein's prisoner for over 8 years

## The case of Feisal Al-Sane

There are still 605 persons not accounted for after the Gulf war, prisoners of war (POW's) or missing persons in detention in Iraq. In at least 85 percent of the cases there are documented witnesses that they have been in Iraqi detention at some time. Iraq has still not provided information on their fate or whereabouts and condition. Most of them, 540, are Kuwaitis and most of them, 389, are civilians.

One of the more prominent of the detained persons is **Feisal Al-Sane**, *Secretary General* of the Kuwait Association of Social Workers, for whom IFSW and our Human Rights Commission has been making representations since 1992. Until now we have had very little information about his case.

On a visit to Kuwait in November 1998 the IFSW Secretary General and the President had the opportunity to visit Feisal Al-Sane's family as well as the National Committee for Missing and POW's Affairs.



They met with Feisal's wife **Muneerah Alqusaibi**, their daughter **Shikha**, 11 years, their niece Dalal Al-Sane, who's father Nasser Al-Sane is also detained somewhere in Iraq and many others. That Feisal, for the Iraqis, is one of the most important prisoners is one thing they learned.

Kuwait was invaded on August 2, 1990. All members of the royal family who ruled Kuwait had left the country. The following day, Feisal was brought to the high command of the invaders and asked (or offered) to form a government in opposition to the royal Al-Sabah family under protection from the Iraqi occupation forces.



Feisal al-Sane asked for two weeks time to consider the offer. With this response he sealed his fate. The Iraqis knew that Feisal with that was refusing the offer.

In the weeks to come Feisal held daily meetings with influential men in society in the "duoania" (a big sitting room used to receive guests and meetings) in his house to organise survival under the occupation and help for people. The Iraqis succeeded in placing a spy with a tape recorder in the group meeting in Feisal's house.

On September 18 Feisal was summoned to go to Baghdad. He refused and three days later when Feisal was working in the garden in the evening, a large group of Iraqi soldiers arrived at the house and apprehended him. His wife and everyone in the house were seized, his small children were woken up at gun point by the soldiers.

The house was occupied for ten days by a very large, but concealed group, and every person arriving at the house to see Feisal or his family was arrested. One of them was Feisal's brother in law, Nasser Al-Sane who came to look for his son who had stayed overnight with his cousin Ziad. After ten days the smaller children and Feisal's wife were released and the prisoners were transferred to a police station in Kuwait city and later taken to Iraq and held in the Basra area. Feisal's son Ziad and the son of Nasser were released in January 1991. Most of the over 7000 prisoners held by the Iraqis were released or liberated in connec-

tion with the Gulf war and the Shiite up-rising in South Iraq that followed on the war.

The last eye witness to see Feisal and his brother in law Nasser met them in Basra in December 1990. The latest clear evidence that they are still alive is from 1993. There are still 605 persons held in Iraqi prisons or not satisfactorily accounted for. Of these four belong to the Al-Sane family. In addition to Feisal and Nasser there is also Khaled Al-Sane, nephew and Abdel Aziz, second cousin of Feisal.

The relatives of Feisal Al-Sane are certain that he is still alive as are most of the 605 prisoners. There have been indications that Feisal's freedom lies directly in the hands of Saddam Hussein and only his. According to this analysis Feisal is the key to the freedom of all prisoners still held.

Feisal used to have a personal and political relationship directly with Saddam Hussein. Feisal Al-Sane was politically active from his years as a student. When he studied in Cairo in the 50s he gave Saddam Hussein a hide out in his apartment when he was wanted and sought after by the then Iraqi regime. For his help to Saddam Feisal was expelled from the university and Egypt.

By rejecting Saddam's invitation Feisal made himself a target after Iraq invaded Kuwait and incorporated into Iraq as its 19th Province.

**Please write to Saddam Hussein and demand the immediate and unconditional release of our colleague, the Secretary**

**General of the Kuwait Association of Social Workers, Mr. Feisal Al-Sane** along with his relatives and all other persons still held in Iraq, and full information on all arrested persons and their fate.

See IFSW web site for more information:  
<http://www.ifsw.org>





# Social Work Conferences 1999 - 2000

If you want more information about any of these conferences, or would like to be on the mailing list, please contact the relevant conference secretariat

## ***Helsinki, Finland/St. Petersburg, Russia, June 13-18, 1999***

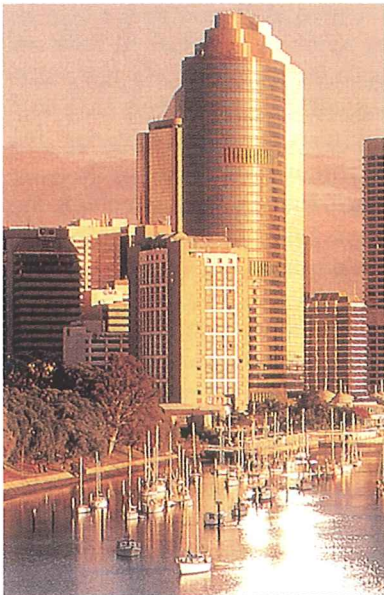
The IFSW European Seminar 1999 is based on a cooperation between associations of social workers in Finland and Russia, and will be located in the two Baltic cities of Helsinki and St. Petersburg.

### **Work, Economy and Welfare -**

#### **Professional Social Work Promoting Human Society for All**

Can social work manage change, is a question that must be asked when major changes are taking place. The aim of the seminar is to explore ways by which social work can play an active part in societal and economic changes and thereby helping to build a humane society for all. The seminar will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Finnish Association of Social Workers.

**Seminar Secretariat:** IFSW European Seminar 1999, Congrex/Blue & White Conferences Oy, P. O. Box 81, FIN 00371 Helsinki, Finland. Tel (358) 9 5607 500, Fax (358) 9 5607 5020, E-mail: ifsw@bluewhiteconferences.fin



## ***Brisbane, Australia, September 25, 1999***

IFSW Human Rights Commission: one-day workshop in conjunction with the Regional Conference of IFSW.

### **Human Rights and Social Work: Regional Perspectives and Action Responses**

For more information contact Jim Ife, Secretary, IFSW Human Rights Commission, School of Social Work & Social Administration, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6907, Australia, Fax +61 8 9380 1070, Email: jife@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

## ***Brisbane, Australia, September 26 - 29, 1999,***

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IFSW and APASWE (Asia Pacific Association of Social Work Education) in conjunction with the 26th National Conference of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

### **Promoting Inclusion - Redressing Exclusion: The Social Work Challenge**

Social work has retained a core interest in promoting a just and inclusive society. The conference will explore the causes and consequences of social exclusion, and the manner in which social work can confront and redress social exclusion in many domains of its practice.

**Conference Secretariat:** Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IFSW and APASWE,

P. O. Box 3496, South Brisbane Business Centre, Queensland 4101, Australia

Tel (61) 7 3844 1138, Fax (61) 7 3844 0909, E-mail: social99@icms.com.au

Web-site: [www.icms.com/social99/](http://www.icms.com/social99/)

## ***Montréal, Canada, July 29 - August 2, 2000***

Joint IFSW and IASSW World Conference

### **Promoting Equitable Societies in the Global Economy:**

#### **Social Work in the 21st Century**

We live in a world where changes occur at a greater pace than ever before. What role will social work play in the 21st century? How can social work be oriented to better meet the needs of people and communities in a global economy? Social workers must promote the inclusion of all people; they must formulate and articulate social and multidimensional solutions for today's complex problems of inequity, violence, migration, population health etc.

The World Conference will look at the development of successful experiences that could bring changes and foster equality everywhere in the world. Social workers and Educators will be invited to inform each other about the projects and ideas that empower people and that can be translated from one community to another.

**Conference Secretariat:** World Conference of IFSW/IASSW 2000, Events International Meeting Planners Inc., 759 Victoria Square, Suite 300, Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 2J7. Tel (1) 514 286 0855, Fax (1) 514 286 6066 E-Mail: [info@eventsintl.com](mailto:info@eventsintl.com)



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