

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

**ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16**

This report covers the activities of the New York Representative Team to the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the period of September 2015 through June 2016. 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 was promoted as an Associate Professor with tenure at the Monmouth University School of Social Work in West Long Branch, New Jersey.
- 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 has retired from the team at the end of 2015, she has served IFSW for many years.
- Graduate social work interns for 2015-16 were:
  - Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service
    - Philip Gnaedig
  - Monmouth University School of Social Work
    - Monica Kristen

**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:
  - 2016 DPI Conference Planning
  - Right to Life: Death Investigation Protocol
  - Migrants & Refugees
  - Holocaust Remembrance
  - Victims of Slavery
  - Access to Information
  - Conflict Prevention & Reconciliation
  - Integrating Health & Mental Health
  - Human Rights & Poverty
  - Women & Girls
  - Education for Global Citizenship
  - 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 (CSocD54) 3-12 February 2016***

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 54<sup>th</sup> session with “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”, as the priority theme. The CSocD concluded its fifty-fourth session (CSocD54), approving three draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council with one on Africa’s development, traditionally endorsed by consensus, requiring a rare vote to address the United States’ concerns over language around trade issues, and more generally, “the right to development”. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/54th-session-of-the-commission-for-social-development-csod54.html>
- Submitted IFSW statement <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/371/53/PDF/N1537153.pdf?OpenElement>
- Participated in three NGO parallel events.

### ***Commission on the 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 60<sup>th</sup> session with the priority theme as “women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development”.
- Participated in four NGO parallel events.
- Submitted IFSW statement [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/NGO/63](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/NGO/63)
- The 60th session concluded with UN Member States committing to the gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030. A set of agreed conclusions called for enhancing the basis for rapid progress, including stronger laws, policies and institutions, better data and scaled-up financing. The Commission recognized women’s vital role as agents of development. It acknowledged that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of Agenda 2030 will not be possible without gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The agreed conclusions can be found at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016/session-outcomes>

### ***Commission on Population and Development (CPD)***

The Commission on Population and Development (CPD) was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 3 (III) of 3 October 1946. IFSW participated in the 49th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD49) took place at UN headquarters in New York from 11-15 April with the theme, “strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda.” Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend on the availability of reliable, accessible and timely evidence about demographic patterns and trends for all countries. The United Nations Secretary-General, in a report prepared for the Commission on Population and Development in April 2016, emphasized [key findings](#) on this topic and related points for action.

### **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.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2.html>

- IFSW delegation participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Session with the special theme as “Indigenous peoples: Conflict, Peace and Resolution”.
- The Forum attracted over 2000 indigenous peoples and NGO representatives.
- The [advanced unedited version](#) of the official UN report is available: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/15th-session/Report\\_of\\_the\\_Permanent\\_Forum\\_15th\\_Session\\_unedited.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/15th-session/Report_of_the_Permanent_Forum_15th_Session_unedited.pdf)
- IFSW organized a side event, *Recognizing the Rights of Indigenous Communities Around the World in Conflict Transformation and Peaceful Communities*.

Hilary Weaver, of American Indian Lakota background, Associate Dean at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work and, NASW-USA member, along with two other NGO speakers focused on how rights for indigenous peoples are challenged both in the past and present, but can be promoted in Australia, Canada, Latin America, and the United States.

### **Other UN Events**

- **Social Work Day at the United Nations –New York**  
The theme for the 33rd Annual Social Work Day was “Refugees and Displaced Persons: Ensuring the Dignity and Worth”. *Refugees and Displaced Persons: Ensuring Dignity and Worth*, which brought approximately 600 social work students, faculty, practitioners and others interested in this topic to NY UN Headquarters. The panel presentation included: Ninette Kelly, Director, New York Office, UN Office of the High Commission on Refugees, Ambassador Nazifullah Salarzai, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Guglielmo Schinina, International Organization for Migration Head, Mental Health, Psychosocial Response & Intercultural Communications Global, Patricia Talisse, MSW Student at Fordham University from Aleppo, Syria and Ruth Stark, President, International Federation of Social Workers. The program may be viewed at: [http://www.monmouth.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/School\\_of\\_Social\\_Work/student-resources/UN\\_Day\\_Information/UNSocialWorkDayProgram2016.pdf](http://www.monmouth.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/School_of_Social_Work/student-resources/UN_Day_Information/UNSocialWorkDayProgram2016.pdf)
- 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 **2016 Global Social Work Student Conference** at the UN Church Center. The theme was: Careers in International Social Work. More than 100 people were in attendance.

### 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 14 NGO Committees, Sub-Committees, or Working Groups in **New York**:

- **Ageing**  
*Michael Cronin, Marcia Wallace, Philip Gnaedig*  
**Subcommittee on Older Women**
- **Indigenous Issues**  
*Elaine Congress, Philip Gnaedig*
- **Mental Health**  
*Robin Mama*
- **Migration**  
*Elaine Congress, Philip Gnaedig, Monica Kristen*  
**Task Force on Refugee Children, Task force on Children in Detention, Task Force on Migrants in Transit**
- **Social Development**  
*Marcia Wallace, Monica Kristen*  
**Subcommittee on the Eradication of Poverty**
- **Family**  
*Michael Cronin, Monica Kristen*
- **Financing for Development**  
*Monica Kristen*
- **Human Rights**  
*Marcia Wallace, Subcommittee on Racism*
- **Status of Women**  
*Robin Mama, Elaine Congress, Monica Kristen*

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

#### ***Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).***

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.”

- IFSW attended the [9th session of the CRPD](#) (14-16 June 2016), with the theme; “Implementing the 2030 development agenda for all persons with disabilities: Leaving no one behind”.
- IFSW participated two NGO side events.

#### **IFSW representation at other significant events and meetings (2015-2016)**

Celebration of the International Day of Older Persons, International Women’s Rights Day, International Day for Disaster Reduction, General Assembly Third Committee meetings, and the International Day of Families.