

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

BIANNUAL REPORT 2010-12

This report covers the activities of the New York Representative Team to the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the period of September 2010 through May 2012. This proactive team of four representatives and interns cover a wide variety of substantial issues of interest and concern to the profession of social work.

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.
- 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 36 years of experience in mental health and administration.
- Graduate social work interns for 2010-11:
Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service
 - Ian Laidlaw 2010-11, Eva Lessinger 2011-12Monmouth University School of Social Work
 - Rachel Forbes 2010-11, Bethany Andrade 2011-12
- David Roth (1923-2010), a founding IFSW UN team member passed away in 2010. David was a life-long advocate for children and families. He earned his master's degree from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Mr. Roth was the former Executive Director of the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA) until 1993. Prior to joining JCCA, he was Assistant Director of the New York Jewish Child Care Council. Roth was a Senior Fellow of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and represented both CWLA and IFSW on several UN NGO Committees. He was particularly noted for his outstanding leadership in both the CONGO Committee on the Family and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. One of his last appearances was as a panelist at the 25th anniversary of Social Work Day at the UN, an event which Mr. Roth initiated along with his team in 1983. David Roth was a selfless and deeply committed professional and has greatly impacted generations of social workers and advocates through his mentorship and leadership.

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:
 - Biodiversity
 - Communications
 - CyberCrime
 - Human Rights
 - Social Protection for All
 - Violence Against Children
 - Volunteerism
 - Legacy of Slave Trade Victims
 - Climate Change
 - Genocide
 - Peacekeeping
 - Countering Terrorism
 - Microfinance
 - International Women's Day
 - Space and Society
 - DPI Executive Committee
 - Global Food Security
 - Autism
 - Preventing Non-communicable Diseases
 - Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide
 - Universal Access to HIV Prevention
 - Racism

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/>

NGO/DPI Executive Committee

- Elaine Congress elected as Member-at-Large, Served as Chair, Resource Center Subcommittee
- Member of following Subcommittees: Nominations, Youth, Fundraising

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 49th session with poverty eradication as the priority theme. The Commission concluded session by adopting five draft resolutions calling for wide-ranging steps, from support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the upcoming review of the action plan on ageing to improving the lot of youth, persons with disabilities and families.
<http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2011.aspx>
- IFSW delegation attended the 50th session which continued with the priority theme on poverty eradication. The Commission concluded by recommended seven draft resolutions for adoption by ECOSOC, covering topics that ranged from the mainstreaming of disability into the international development agenda, to the priority theme for the next session, "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. It also approved a resolution titled "Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda". <http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2012.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. Full UN reports: 2011: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm>
2012: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2012/27

- Participated in three NGO parallel events in 2011 and 2012.
- IFSW submitted official statement in 2011. E/CN.6/2011/NGO/8
English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese versions available from IFSW Secretariat.

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.

- IFSW attended the 4th Implementation Cycle: Policy Session, 2 - 13 May 2011. The focus was on the following thematic issues: Transport; Chemicals; Waste Management; Mining; and the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption & Production Patterns. http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml
- For 2012, CSD was suspended from its normal rotation, as the General Assembly had resolved to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio as a 20 year anniversary to the original conference. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will focus on two themes: Green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and Institutional framework for sustainable development. <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

- 2011 IFSW delegation (Elaine Congress, Rachel Forbes, Hilary Weaver of the University at Buffalo) participated in the Tenth Session of this advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. The IFSW delegation was able to participate in meetings with staff and the new Chair of Indigenous Forum.

- 2012 IFSW delegation (Elaine Congress, Justin Solamillo, intern- University of Calgary, Canada) This High-level event marks the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Almost 2,000 indigenous participants from all regions of the world participated in the eleventh session of the UNPFII. Themes addressed during the session included the rights of indigenous peoples to food and food sovereignty, the situation of indigenous peoples in Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, the upcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014), and the special theme of the enduring impact of the “Doctrine of Discovery” – the way courts justified the annexing of indigenous lands – and the right to redress for past conquests.
<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIISessions/Eleventh.aspx>

Other UN Events

- IFSW interns planned and coordinated the **3rd Global Social Work Student Conference (GSWSC)** at New York University. Approximately 200 people were in attendance. The GSWSC 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 **4th Global Social Work Student Conference** at Fordham University, with over 300 in attendance. The theme was: From Passion to Action.
- **28th Annual Social Work Day:** Promoting Human Rights through Social Work & Social Welfare. ECOSOC Room, March 29, 2011. Approximately 400 people were in attendance with four speakers. The program began with a tribute to Katherine Kendall and David Roth, followed by a moment of silence to commemorate those who have lost their lives in recent disasters and insurgencies. IFSW, IASSW and ICSW leadership presented an update on the Global Agenda. The speakers were: Yvonne Rafferty, Professor, Pace University, on Child Trafficking and the Girl Child: Promoting A Global Action Agenda; Kevin Brabazon, UN Representative for Generations United on Innovations in an Intergenerational World; and Michael Cronin, IFSW UN-NY Main Representative on Why Should Social Work be Concerned with Climate Change? Robert Huber, Senior Social Affairs Officer, UN Division of Social Policy and Development, provided the UN welcome. Michael Cronin served as Co-Chair on behalf of IFSW.
- **29th Annual Social Work Day:** Partnering with the United Nations: The Social Work and Social Development Global Agenda, March 26, 2012. More than 600 people were in attendance for the program which highlighted the UN-New York launching of the tripartite Global Agenda for Social Work & Social Development. The program began with an official welcome from Helen Clark, Administrator United Nations Development Program and Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, followed by Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-NY, who both received the document on behalf of the United Nations. In addition, H. E. Tekeda Alemu - Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the UN and a representative from the Chinese Mission to the UN were also in attendance and received the Global Agenda document. The Presidents of IFSW, IASSW, & ICSW spoke to the audience about the history, the process, and main elements of the document. Jeane Anastas, President, National Association of Social Workers and Julia Watkins, Executive Director, Council on Social Work Education, offered the United States Social Work Professions’ Response to the Global Agenda. Robin Mama served as Co-Chair on behalf of IFSW. <http://bluehawk.monmouth.edu/swork/UN/>

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 participating members on the following 10 NGO Committees in New York:

- **Ageing**
Michael Cronin
Marcia Wallace
Ian Laidlaw served as registrar and volunteer coordinator for the International Day of Older Persons
- **Mental Health**
Marcia Wallace served on Executive Committee
Bethany Andrade
- **Sustainability**
Rachel Forbes
- **Family**
Michael Cronin
- **Human Rights**
Marcia Wallace, Subcommittee on Racism
Bethany Andrade, Subcommittee on Racism
- **Indigenous Issues**
Elaine Congress served on Executive Committee as Secretary
- **Migration**
Elaine Congress
Bethany Andrade
Eva Lessinger, Taskforce on Trafficking
Ian Laidlaw served as Secretary, member of Refugee Task Force, submitted proposal for 2011 UNHCR, Annual Consultations with NGO
- **Social Development**
Marcia Wallace
- **Child Rights**
Marcia Wallace
- **Status of Women**
Robin Mama
Elaine Congress

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

66th Session of the General Assembly

All members of the United Nations are represented in the General Assembly. Each nation, rich or poor, large or small, has one vote.

- IFSW was privileged to attend the GA ninth plenary meeting which several heads of state gave country reports on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. President Obama (USA) in his report recognized that “development is not only a moral imperative but is also a strategic and economic imperative”.

Informal Interactive Hearing of the General Assembly with Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector on the 2011 High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

- Evelyn Tomaszewski of the National Association of Social Workers-USA, represented IFSW at this meeting which aimed to inform preparations for the 2011 High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, including negotiations by Member States of an outcome document for the meeting. The hearing included an opening session, followed by three thematic sessions. Each moderated thematic session included brief comments by individual panelists, comments from designated civil society representatives and a question and answer session between the moderator and the panel. Ms. Tomaszewski gave comments on behalf of IFSW during this meeting, drawing from the IFSW Policy on HIV/AIDS she stressed that comprehensive universal access must include mental health/psychosocial care and support for adults and children living with, and affected by HIV, including caregivers. Ms. Tomaszewski will be representing IFSW at the forthcoming UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS to be held 8 –10 June 2011 in New York.

Informal Thematic Debate on International Migration and Development

States and civil society organizations are increasingly recognizing that international migration is integral to development processes and to the functioning of modern economies. In 2006 Member States, United Nations entities, observers, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector gathered to consider ways to maximize the developmental benefits of international migration and to reduce its negative impacts. In 2008, the General Assembly decided to convene a one-day Informal Thematic Debate on International Migration and Development at UN Headquarters in New York on 19 May 2011.

- IFSW attended this debate which was intended to build on the on-going dialogue on international migration and development, and to contribute to the process leading to the second High-level Dialogue on International

Migration and Development to be held by the UN General Assembly in 2013. As the first informal thematic debate on this issue in the General Assembly, the interactive debate provided a unique opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to take stock of achievements to date and to consider what has been learned about effective policies and practices that promote migration's positive contributions to development. It also provided an opportunity to discuss the obstacles that reduce the benefits of migration and suggested ways to eliminate them, and to consider the way forward.

UN Secretariat

Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA)

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

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, three sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held at United Nations Headquarters. While the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had some 103 signatures, its Optional Protocol had only been ratified by 62 Member States. The Optional Protocol allows individuals and organizations to bring complaints of non-compliance with the Convention before the United Nations. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

- IFSW attended the 3rd session of the Conference of States Parties (1-3 September 2010), with the theme; "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". It began with the election of members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and included roundtable discussions and an interactive informal session with civil society.
- IFSW attended the 4th session (7-9 September 2011), with the overall theme: Enabling Development, Realizing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. One highlight was the presentation of the landmark World Report on Disability, produced jointly by WHO and the World Bank. The report stressed that very few countries had the mechanisms to address the barriers and challenges facing persons with disabilities and that the compliance rate of States submitting reports was at a low of only 30%.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

- IFSW attended a briefing on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

UN Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Human Rights Commission: IFSW attended a special meeting for NGOs concerning human rights issues including Middle East and Northern African uprisings, global issues concerning lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgendered persons, the death penalty, and terrorism.
- Human Rights Committee: This is a body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. IFSW attended the 104th Session in March 2012 during the presentation of member state reports to the Committee on how the rights are being implemented in their country. The Committee examined the report and addressed its concerns and recommendations in the form of "concluding observations".

Presentations and Publications

Congress, E., Cronin, M., & Wallace, M. (2010). *Ageing, Long-Term Disability, and Disasters*. Presentation for the NGO Committee on Ageing, United Nations, New York.

Congress, E., Cronin, M., & Wallace, M. (2010). Ageing, long-term disability, and disasters. In Mayer, M.J., & Demark, F.L. (Eds.), *Issues of ageing and disability: International perspectives*, 5-12. New York: UN NGO Committee on Ageing/NY. <http://www.magcloud.com/browse/Issue/141078>

Laidlaw, I. (2011). *Working with Children of Mixed Race: AmerAsian Children in Okinawa*. Presentation for the NGO Committee on Migration, United Nations, New York, March 17, 2011.