

# **International Federation of social workers General Meeting 2012 Stockholm**

## **Report of the IFSW Representative in Geneva**

### **Current State of Affairs**

End 2011 Ellen Mouravieff-Apostol retired after being responsible representative at the UN in Geneva for many years. She fulfilled this task successfully with great commitment and broad knowledge and could rely on a wide network of partners. Appointed as her successor it will be hard to comply with the standards she set and I will need some time to grow into the task.

Fortunately I can rely on bases led by Ellen and on her support and advice.

The immediate issue for me are now:

- Defining the role of representative. Learning about IFSW structures. Cooperation and Coordination with IFSW bodies and UN Representative at other UN sites.
- Learning about structures and functioning of the different UN bodies and the respective possibilities of actions for representatives of civil society's through participation at NGO events and especially at the joint NGO briefing of United Nations Office in Geneva.
- Networking. I contact the established network and renew, enlarge, intensify and focus our partnerships. Up to now the main are ICSW, IASSW, ATD, WILPF and different NGO Groups like the CONGO Committee of Human rights, the NGO Group for the Children Rights Convention and a Group of NGO's promoting the Autonomous Recommendation on the Social Protection Floor.
- Information management. I am overwhelmed by the rich information material and by the great number of interesting and relevant conferences, sessions, events, surveys, consultation I am invited to. What is relevant? Where do I set the focus and priorities and what has to be fed into IFSW.

### **Achievements**

#### **WSWD 2012**

For the first time World Social Work Day was celebrated at the UN in Geneva on invitation of the IFSW representative in Geneva. The audience of UN-officers, NGO representatives, academics, student and social workers and the Swiss Association was welcomed by Rory Truell IFSW Secretary General, by Susan Lawrence, Vice President of IASSW and by Eva Holmberg-Herrström from ICSW. The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development was presented by David N Jones, IFSW Agenda Coordinator. On behalf of the Secretary General, Assan Diop, Managing director of ILO Social Protection Department received the Global Agenda, warmly welcoming the Global Agenda being "fully compatible with the mandate of the ILO and the UN at large" and being "also a formidable support for the transmission of that mandate into reality." In particular he calls for help to implement the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Silvia Staub Bernasconi –winner of the Katherine Kendall Award 2010 in Hong Kong gave a comment to the Global Agenda putting it in a theoretical context and highlighting the opportunities for social worker to support and promote HR in their professional activities.

**UNHCR.** Tobias Roosen, IFSW representative at UNHCR participated in the Annual Consultation with NGO in June 2011, in the 62nd EXCOM Sessions in October and in

December in the Commemoration Session for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 50<sup>th</sup> Convention on statelessness. He specially engaged with a favourably greeted statement and letter asking to create the post of a special Rapporteur / trice on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). For more details see his report) Therefore the IFSW representatives sent a letter to UNHCR, asking to create the post of a special Rapporteur/trice on SGBV.

### **ILO Social Protection Floor Initiative**

ILO has the intention to adopt the Recommendation on national Social Protection Floors at the 101<sup>st</sup> session of the International Labour Conference in May/June 2012. Under the lead of the International Movement ATD Fourth World a group of NGOs, among them IFSW, submitted a common statement in support of the ILO recommendation on the Social Protection Floor. I accepted it will be an important task for IFSW members to support and promote ratification and implementation of the recommendation on SPF.

### **Future plans for 2012 -2013**

- WSWD 2013 (First preparation are underway together with the School of Social Work Geneva and the National Associations of Social Workers in Switzerland. Other partners (associations, NGOs, UN bodies) will be contacted to organise a representative and powerful event.
- Inform about Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) and periodic national reports to HR Bodies. Promote and support participation of Social Work associations. A fact sheet is in preparation for national associations.
- Establishing a functioning Team at the UN in Geneva. Setting Priorities for the commitment at the UN in Geneva in coordination with IFSW Executive Committee, Human Rights Commissions, representative at other UN sites and partner Organisations.
- Establish and organise a team of representative in Geneva
- Make an informed choice on main issues and focal areas of IFSW commitment at UN in Geneva. Setting priorities will be developed in alignment with the Global Agenda and rely on inputs from IFSW, on the capacity and availability of the IFSW team and on opportunities. Important issues are for sure:
  - Human Right Council (Children, Women, Disabled)
  - ILO, Social Protection Floor
  - Millennium Development Goals 2015+ (Extreme Poverty)
  - Social dimension of Sustainability

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