IASSW Team of Representatives to UN Headquarters, New York

Report to the IASSW Board

January 2018 for Period July-December, 2017

The New York team of 6 representatives and two interns continues to actively represent IASSW on NGO Committees of relevance and at UN meetings. A highlight of this 6-month period was our participation in the High Level Political Forum of ECOSOC in July. We have also prepared 3 newsletters that were disseminated to the IASSW membership. Details are as follows:

**Volunteer Representatives and their Assignments:**

Lynne Healy, (University of Connecticut, Retired) Main Representative and IASSW representative to the NGO Committee on Social Development and intern supervisor.

Martha Bragin, (Hunter College) Committee on the Rights of the Child and member, Planning Committee for Social Work Day at the UN.

Rebecca Davis (Rutgers University) Committee on Mental Health.

Shirley Gatenio Gabel (Fordham University) Committee on the Status of Women and lead member for IASSW of the Social Work Day at the UN Planning Committee

M.C. “Terry” Hokenstad. (Case Western Reserve University) Committee on Ageing.

Rebecca Thomas (University of Connecticut) Committee on Migration.

Interns: Justice Burch Konowe and Katherine “Shrevie” Shepherd, University of Connecticut. They spend 20 hours per week each on IASSW work at the UN. They are members of the following NGO committees: Migration and the Climate Subcommittee, the Working Group on Girls, Social Development and its Grassroots Subcommittee, Committee on the Status of Women. They are also part of the Planning Group for Social Work Day and are taking the lead in planning a coordinating Student Event for March.

Note: in addition to the above volunteers, Carol Cohen (Adelphi University) is our third representative on the Planning Committee for Social Work Day.

**Sessions Sponsored at the High Level Political Forum**

IASSW co-sponsored two side events (workshops) at the High Level Political Forum held at UN Headquarters in July. The first was “Poverty to Prosperity: Shared Stories from NGOs Working with Communities.” It was held on July 11, 2017 at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, with the Irish Mission as a co-sponsor. It emphasized community level efforts to address extreme poverty as an essential strategy to meet SDG 1.

During the second week of the HLPF, IASSW co-sponsored a second event: “Grassroots Perspectives: Reviewing SDG Implementation.” IASSW Main Representative Lynne Healy spoke and moderated the discussion session. Speakers in this session presented the preliminary findings from a survey of grassroots organizations conducted by a subgroup of the NGO Committee on Social Development. The survey was circulated to IASSW membership in spring 2017 and some members responded. The intent of the survey was to assess the level of awareness of the SDGs at the grassroots level among those countries scheduled to present their voluntary reviews in July 2017.

In addition to Healy, several other team members attended elements of the Forum. We need to find more ways to get input from members in countries participating in the voluntary reviews each year.

**IASSW Presentation at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting**

At the request of the President, the UN team organized the designated IASSW partnership session at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in Dallas, Texas, U.S.A. in October 2017. Five members of the team (Rebecca Davis, Shirley Gatenio Gabel, Lynne Healy, Terry Hokenstad & Lynne Healy) presented on the topic: Why the UN Matters to Social Work? Grand Challenges go Global. Panelists discussed the UN as a forum where critical global social issues of high relevance to the profession are discussed; as a repository of data, research and other resources to enhance social work education; and as a target for advocacy to strengthen UN policies for human rights and human well-being.

In addition, the team held a meeting at the conference to plan its work for the year.

**Statement Endorsed**

We signed on to a statement on the needs and rights of girls that was submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women by the Working Group on Girls.

**Social Work Day at the United Nations**

Planning for the joint IASSW-IFSW sponsored Social Work Day at the UN is underway. The date has been confirmed for Monday, March 26. A supplementary event targeted for social work students will be held on Sunday March 25. Shirley Gatenio Gabel is the lead member of the planning committee for IASSW. In 2017, the event was live-streamed, making it widely accessible.

**Proposals submitted for CSocD and for CSW**

Shirley Gatenio Gabel has submitted a proposal for a parallel event for the March meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women. Lynne Healy assisted in submitting proposals for two side events for the February meeting of the Commission for Social Development. We are waiting to hear the results of the submissions. In addition, Justice Konowe and Shrevie Shepherd and Team member Rebecca Thomas worked with the Subcommittee on Climate Induced Migration to plan a side event for the Commission on the Status of Women.

**Newsletters**

Our two interns have done an outstanding job of writing and producing three full and informative newsletters on our activities and other major events at the UN headquarters. Issues have been sent to the membership for October, November, and December. This effort will continue in the spring. I note that this is something I have implemented as a member service and in appreciation of the stipends that IASSW provides to help outset transportation costs for the interns.

**Additional work of Main Representative**:

In addition to weekly supervision of the interns and my duties as a member of the NGO Committee on Social Development, I have to complete additional duties as our main representative in New York. I have to write and submit an annual report to the Department of Public Information to maintain our accreditation; I keep in touch with the team members and follow up to assess what representation activities are being done; I receive and pass on to team members, interns and/or the President’s office numerous communications from the UN; and I have to manage conference participation by team members. This fall, the UN initiated a new system for conference registrations. It involves substantially more work for me as our “Focal Point” for the new system. Rashmi Pandey was very helpful in completing the designation of focal points and has continued to be highly efficient in ensuring that our annual pass applications are completed on time. She makes my job easier and I am very grateful for that.

We welcome input from the board on ways to strengthen our visibility and impact at the UN.

Submitted by Lynne Healy, IASSW Main Representative to UN Headquarters

January 4, 2018