

Report to the IASSW Board of Directors
Team of Representatives to the UN New York
January-June 2022

QUESTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

During the pandemic, the NGO Committees that IASSW participates in (New York) moved to virtual meetings. Many plan to transition to hybrid meetings in September 2022. This suggests that IASSW members who are not New York-based could potentially join the team of representatives. They would not have a UN pass, but could participate in NGO meetings. My recommendation is that IASSW consider whether we wish to open up this possibility. If the answer is yes, other considerations must be addressed, including: would any new representatives need approval from the International UN Chair; who would manage the representation; how to ensure that those participating virtually comply with guidelines in place with the current team (such as clearing all endorsements through the Main Representative and keeping the Main Representative informed of representation efforts). I believe we have had one request to date.

The Report:

IASSW's representation at the UN in New York continued as usual during the 6 month period January-June 2022. Our work was done almost entirely through virtual meetings during this period. Some in-person meetings did resume during the spring months and we anticipate that NGO committees will begin in-person or hybrid meetings in September. In May, the UN announced that accredited NGOs would be able to secure the normal number of passes. In early June, Rashmi assisted me and secured passes for all 6 of our representatives who are based in or near New York. In addition, we will be able to secure temporary passes or passes from the Office of Global Communications for interns.

During the period covered by the report, IASSW sponsored or co-sponsored 3 side events at UN Commission meetings and co-sponsored Social Work Day at the UN in New York.

At the Commission for Social Development in February, IASSW co-sponsored two side events and both featured speakers from IASSW. IASSW submitted the application for a side event co-sponsored with the Grassroots Task Force of the NGO Committee on Social Development on "Food Insecurity: Youth Voices from the Grassroots" on February 16. It featured video presentations by youth in Asia and Africa and presentations by Prof. Alexandra Mustafa (IASSW Brazil) and Miroslav Budimir (social work doctoral candidate from Slovenia, recruited by Daria Zavirsek), with concluding remarks by Lynne Healy. IASSW was also invited to co-sponsor a February 9 side event organized by ICSW on "Reaching nutritionally vulnerable social groups: The quest for multifaceted policy response." In addition to ICSW and IASSW, it was co-sponsored by IFAD, UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Affairs Finland, and the Korea National Council on Social Welfare. Both Alexandra Mustafa and Lynne Healy spoke as members of the panel. We continue to experience good cooperation with ICSW and Sergei Zelenev at the UN.

On March 21, IASSW co-sponsored a parallel event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. It was organized by our representative Dr. Rebecca Davis and featured MSW student speakers from Rutgers University. The theme was “Grassroots Empowerment Approaches that Give Girls a Voice.”

All of these side events were advertised to the IASSW membership.

Social Work Day at the UN, New York, was again a virtual event, co-sponsored by IASSW, ICSW and IFSW. It was held on March 15, World Social Work Day. This is not often possible when the event is in-person, as the UN controls the calendar for use of the building. This year’s theme was: “Moving Toward Food Security for All: The Role of Social Work.” Shirley Gatenio Gabel led the planning team for IASSW.

At this time, we anticipate that we will have one or two MSW interns at the UN for the academic year 2022-23. This should enable us to resume more regular newsletters for the membership.

Submitted by: Lynne Healy, Main Representative