

IASSW Team of Representatives to the United Nations New York

Report to the Board

January 1-March 31, 2024

Submitted by Lynne Healy, Main Representative

Commission for Social Development February 2024: IASSW was very active at the 62nd session of the UN Commission for Social Development to be held in February. We are co-sponsored two side events that were accepted as part of the Commission meetings. One, co-sponsored with ICSW, was held on February 7: “Social policies to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Promoting civic engagement and community participation.” Speakers included Dr. Peta-Anne Baker of Jamaica, former IASSW board member, and Lynne Healy, IASSW Main Representative. Sergei Zelenev of the International Council on Social Welfare was the main organizer of the event. The second one, “Still left behind: SDG implementation seen from the grassroots,” was submitted by IASSW and cosponsored with the Grassroots Task Force of the NGO Committee for Social Development. Diana Dupuy-Faustin, IASSW graduate student intern, presented the results of a survey that solicited grassroots views on SDG implementation in their localities. Lynne Healy provided summary comments following several speakers and 3 short video statements from Colombia, India, and Zambia. Both events were virtual and the links were sent to the IASSW membership. Lynne Healy and the IASSW interns also prepared and submitted a written statement as part of the Commission’s documentation. IASSW team member Marciana Popescu of Fordham University also presented in a side event at the Commission session. Her presentation focused on migration.

Commission on the Status of Women: Team member Dr. Rebecca Davis organized a side event for the March Commission on the Status of Women. The title is: GIRLS’ RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS: EMPOWERING GIRL CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS. It will be held on March 20 and again, the link has been circulated to all IASSW members. With Rebecca Davis as moderator, the presenters are Diana Dupuy-Faustin, University of Connecticut MSW Student and IASSW Intern; Veerja Mehta, Rutgers University MSW Student; and Sam Slewion, Social Work Department, United Methodist University & National Social Work Board of Liberia. It is good to see how students are being highlighted.

Social Work Day at the United Nations. A huge disappointment is that the annual Social Work Day at the UN in New York cannot be held this year. This was to have been a celebration of the 40th such Social Work Day. There seems to be shrinking space for NGO participation at the UN. Sponsorship by a government mission is required to hold an event in the UN building. Although the IASSW, IFSW, ICSW organizing committee devoted several months to planning, they were unable to secure a sponsor. It is hoped that the event can go forward next year. Perhaps board members can be helpful in making contacts with their governments. We need to thank Shirley Gatenio Gabel and Rebecca Davis for their efforts.

As a result of the cancellation, the usual student event will not be held in person. However, a student planning group of the IASSW and IFSW interns has developed an online student event. It will be held on March 28.

Panama Conference: Four members of the IASSW team will be presenting a symposium in Panama on social work advocacy at the United Nations. Speakers are Shirley Gatenio Gabel (session organizer), Rebecca Thomas, Martha Bragin, and Lynne Healy. The session is scheduled for Friday April 5.

Other UN News of Interest:

The United Nations has approved a proposal to hold a **Summit for Social Development in 2025**, the 30th anniversary of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit for Social Development. Although the planning time is short compared to the Copenhagen experience, it is important for IASSW and our sister organizations to engage in the summit preparations as much as possible.