

**International Federation of Social Workers  
Representative Team to the United Nations-New York  
ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2019-20**

This report covers the activities of the New York Representative Team to the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the period of May 2019 through May 2020. This proactive team of four representatives and one intern cover a wide variety of substantial issues of interest and concern to the profession of social work. Please note that this report captures only the activities that team members were able to participate in due to the limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

**Team Update**

- Dr. Michael Cronin remains as the Main UN Representative in New York. Dr. Cronin is an Associate Professor at the Monmouth University School of Social Work in West Long Branch, New Jersey. He is currently on sabbatical this year as a Fulbright Scholar in Ukraine teaching social work at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and capacity building activities for the Ukrainian National Red Cross Society.
- 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.
- Graduate social work intern for 2019-20: Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service-Elizabeth Manus
- Dr. Anne Deepak is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Global & Community Practice Concentration Monmouth University School of Social Work.
- Continued collaboration with NASW-USA and IFSW North American Region to support team development and increased regional participation.

**UN Department of Global Communication/NGO Section**

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. These briefings went on hiatus after January 2020. The following link contains all DPI/NGO briefings for this time frame with webcasted videos, descriptions of the events, and which speakers attended.

<https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/article-archive/briefings>

**ECOSOC Commissions, Forums, Conventions & GA High-Level Segment Meetings**

***Commission for Social Development (CSocD58) 10-19 February 2020***

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 58<sup>th</sup> session with “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness” as the priority theme. In 2020, the UN celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Commission and the 25th anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development.
- Participated in two NGO parallel events.
- This year, IFSW submitted the following statement which is now part of the official meeting documentation: <https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2020/NGO/11> .

***Commission on the 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.

- IFSW intended to attend the 64<sup>th</sup> session from 9-20 March 2020 with the priority theme as “a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”. In the light of concerns regarding coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Commission on the Status of Women convened, on 9 March, for a meeting that included opening statements followed by the adoption of the draft Political Declaration (E/CN.6/2020/L.1). The session was then suspended as well as all meetings and side events originally planned.
- Participated in the preparation of two NGO parallel events. (canceled)

- **Submitted IFSW statement** <https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2020/NGO/142> which is part of the official meeting documentation.

### **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

- IFSW delegation intended to participate the 19<sup>th</sup> Session from 16-27 April 2020, with the special theme as “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources”.
- The 2020 Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has been postponed, until a later date to be determined. The Informal Interactive Hearing of the President of the General Assembly on Enhanced Participation of Indigenous Peoples at the UN has also been postponed.
- IFSW organized a side event which was canceled.

### **Other UN Events**

- **Social Work Day at the United Nations –New York**

The 37th Annual Social Work Day at the UN was scheduled to take place on Monday, March 23rd with a **Global Student Conference** scheduled for Sunday, March 22nd at Fordham University. The theme of this year’s event was “Building Human Relationships Through Social Inclusion and Gender Empowerment” and was scheduled to be held in the Trusteeship Council room from 10am to noon. Close to 700 people were registered for this event, and 150 for the student event on Sunday. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, both events had to be canceled by mid-March as the UN went into lockdown. All registrants were notified by email that both of our events were canceled; all money paid by students for the registration fee for the student conference were returned.

### **High Level Political Forum on SDGs Learning, Training, & Practice May 2019**

IFSW was selected to deliver a workshop during the High-Level Political Forum on SDGs. This proposal was initially submitted and accepted with the title, “NGO advocacy from grassroots to governmental: The role of social work in achieving environmentally just sustainable development”. The planners asked us to join with two other accepted proposals from International Science Council and Harvard University to combine our content into one presentation. IFSW worked with representatives from the partner organizations to create a revised concept note and plan for the session titled “Practices and approaches on quality education towards environment and climate”. The session was attended with full capacity.

### **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 active participating members on the following NGO Committees, Sub-Committees, or Working Groups in **New York**:

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| • <b>Ageing</b><br><i>Michael Cronin</i>         | • <b>Indigenous Issues</b><br><i>Elaine Congress</i>                 |
| • <b>Mental Health</b><br><i>Elaine Congress</i> | • <b>Migration</b><br><i>Elaine Congress,</i>                        |
| • <b>Family</b><br><i>Michael Cronin</i>         | • <b>Status of Women</b><br>Robin Mama, Elaine Congress, Anne Deepak |

### **IFSW representation at other noteworthy events and meetings**

An Equitable and Sustainable Future of Work Conference: ILO 100th Anniversary Conference at Lehigh University. This conference focused on the future of work and celebration of ILO 100th anniversary. Session topics included Human Agenda for the Future of Work, Effective Lifelong Learning Systems at Work, Transformative Agenda for Equality at Work, Improving Global Value Chains for Decent Work.