



TRIENNIAL REPORT OF THE CONVENER OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

Members: Dorothy Meyer (*New Zealand*), Acting Convener; Leena-Maija Laurén (*Finland*), Convener; Clara Ikekeonwu (*Nigeria*); Marion Minis (*The Netherlands*); Mary Scott (*Canada*); Jennifer Strauss (*Australia*); Louise Croot, IFUW Vice-President

A Convener and six members were elected to Status of Women Committee (SWC) at the IFUW Conference in Perth in 2004. One member, from France, was unable to take up her position due to pressures of her own work. In view of the financial crisis, the IFUW Board of Officers decided not to fill the vacancy. After discussions with both the SWC and Resolutions Committee, the IFUW Board asked the Convener of the Resolutions Committee to serve as an *ex officio* member of the SWC beginning in March 2006. We are grateful to the current Convener, Sushil Bhardwaj for her assistance over this time.

Programme for Action 2004-07: Interaction with NFAs & IFUW UN Representatives

Facilitator: Dorothy Meyer

A key component of the SWC's work is to encourage national federations and associations (NFAs) to develop programmes addressing one or more aspects of the triennial Programme for Action. The theme for 2004-2007 was *Women: Agents for Change - Education, Information Society, Human Security and Peace*. The Committee promoted the use of the special brochure and website materials launched in Perth.

A review of the current Programme was undertaken for the 2006 meeting. Only a small number of NFAs responded to the survey on their activities to date. Based on informal discussions already occurring on existing IFUW email networks, the Committee decided that creating opportunities for NFAs to report on their actions on the theme and to share ideas online might inspire others. The Committee decided to experiment with online discussions using forums that had been started for members on the IFUW website. The first SWC-moderated discussion on HIV/AIDS was held at the end of 2006. The messages shared may have helped many others to understand the complexity and the impact of the pandemic, especially on women. A second discussion on Access to Affordable Universal Primary Education opened in April/May 2007. A third discussion on Higher Education and Research is scheduled for October 2007.

Another initiative during the triennium was intended to strengthen links between the work of IFUW's Representatives to Inter-governmental Organizations and the work of the SWC. A member of the SWC was given responsibility for liaising with the Representatives and for disseminating advocacy information and proposals for action to NFAs. NFAs were invited to nominate their Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) or her proxy to be the link in the Advocacy Network. The person designated was to pass advocacy messages on to grassroots members and to report back to IFUW any advocacy work being undertaken by her NFA. Like the reports on the programme, this initiative is encouraging NFAs to share information about actions they are taking.

Special open sessions on IFUW's advocacy work have been organized during the last two Board and Committee meetings in Geneva. This has increased the awareness of the work of our representatives on the teams in Geneva, New York, Paris and Vienna.

A member of the SWC helped IFUW representatives and staff to plan a special IFUW initiative encouraging NFAs to organize events celebrating International Women's Day 2007 in their country/city/town. A special section was created on the IFUW website inviting NFAs to describe what they had done. While in a great many cases NFAs/Branches work with other NGOs to mark IWD, especially Project Five O partners, it gives opportunity for focused action

In 2005, IFUW was invited by UNESCO to contribute to the mid-term report on A Culture of Peace and Non-Violence against the Children of the World 2001-2010. Seventeen NFAs sent information, which was included in a substantial report compiled by the SWC on behalf of IFUW and forwarded for inclusion in the report to the UN Secretary-General and UN General Assembly. We continue to keep members informed about developments and work being undertaken for A Culture of Peace and Non-Violence against the Children of the World through the Advocacy network.

Administration of Interdisciplinary Seminars

Coordinator Jennifer Strauss, assisted by Clara Ikekeonwu and Dorothy Meyer

The SWC continues to organize the Interdisciplinary Seminars to be offered at the 29th Conference in Manchester. Of the 110 proposals for papers received, 75, from 33 countries, have been recommended for acceptance by 7 conveners in 12 Seminars to be presented over 3 half days. The abstracts will be posted on the IFUW website. The growing use of e-communication by members applying to present a paper in the Interdisciplinary Seminars has led the SWC to recommend that there be only one call for papers for the 2010 Conference. The fact that all material can now be sent electronically has sped up the process considerably.

Administration of Workshops

Coordinator Marion Minis assisted by Mary Scott

The SWC is responsible for coordinating the workshops to be offered by NFAs at the 29th Conference. Workshop proposals this time were made electronically. Twenty-three Workshops are planned from 13 countries. A good number of applicants have requested to present a joint workshop and, in some cases, have asked the Coordinator to help find a co-presenter. In addition, the Coordinator has encouraged workshop leaders to design their workshops with a follow-up activity. An innovation for this Conference is that ID Seminars and Workshops will run in parallel, so conference participants will need to look carefully at the programme to be able to go to the seminar or workshop of their choice.

Programme for Action 2007-10

Another significant task for the Committee has been to prepare the Programme for Action for the next triennium. The 2007-2010 Programme for Action will follow will continue the format of the 2004-07 Programme with a leaflet highlighting the theme of *'Building Sustainable Futures'* and sub-themes of *Education, Environment and Economy, and Human Rights*. When launched at the Conference in Manchester, it will be supported by new web pages with further references and ideas for action.

General

The committee had hoped to reduce the need for three annual meetings in Geneva, but this was not possible due to the pressure of work requiring face-to-face discussion. Under the leadership of the Board liaison member, the Committee reviewed its working rules. The new Terms of Reference, approved by the Board of Officers, reflect the responsibilities of the committee members. The

Committee also put into place, on a trial basis a new protocol for electronic decision-making. A review of the Training and Workshop Guides on the IFUW Website has started and the material will be up-dated following the Manchester Conference.

Future Work

The Committee recommends that the next SWC:

1. Encourage NFAs to use the IFUW website and to develop their own websites, keeping both up to date with activities they are undertaking on the Programme for Action and advocacy;
2. Identify global concerns for IFUW members and recommend appropriate action;
3. Prepare guidelines for action for NFAs to undertake on resolutions passed at Conference 2007, in consultation with the Resolutions Committee;
4. Continue to lead and encourage participation in website Discussion Forums;
5. Organize a single call for ID Seminar papers at the 30th IFUW Conference;
6. Provide guidance on the preparation of abstracts for the ID Seminar papers;
7. Encourage workshop presenters at the 30th IFUW Conference to develop follow-up activities that can be undertaken after the Conference; and
8. Promote and support IFUW initiatives for International Women's Day and for the Decade for a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World.

Dorothy Meyer, Acting Convener
May 2007