



TRIENNIAL REPORT OF IFUW REPRESENTATIVES TO UNESCO IN PARIS

IFUW REPRESENTATIVES: Marianne Bernheim, Coordinator (*until December 2009*)
Françoise Sauvage, Coordinator (*from January 2010*)
Eliane Didier
Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin
Murielle Joye-Patry
Anne Nègre (*ad hoc from January 2010*)

The last three years were of strategic importance for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In addition to number of key world conferences, UNESCO continued its close working relationship with civil society, offering IFUW and other NGOs opportunities to give input to both short- and long-term programme planning.

IFUW's Role in UNESCO

IFUW's consultative status with UNESCO was reconsidered and evaluated as part of the sexennial review and report adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in October 2007. IFUW easily obtained the renewal of its accreditation.

IFUW's participation and leadership within UNESCO were very visible. Françoise Sauvage finished the second of two mandates as president of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. This is the body representing all NGOs in official relations with UNESCO. In 2009, she was invited to address first the UNESCO Executive Board NGO Committee and then a plenary session of UNESCO's General Conference to assess progress in the cooperation UNESCO and Member States' cooperation with civil society.

The team's participation in NGO collective activities during the triennium was very strong, particularly in two of the Joint Programmatic Commissions (JPC). Marianne Bernheim and Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin presided over the JPC on Education for Sustainable Development. One of its main events was a round table on cities, which brought together architects and specialists on the protection of the cultural heritage. Eliane Didier played an important role in the JPC on Science and Ethics.

World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE)

In July 2009, the second WCHE brought together 1200 participants representing a broad range of actors with a vested interest in higher education to assess progress made in the ten years since the first WCHE and to identify challenges remaining in the field of higher education and research. With a four member delegation, IFUW was one of the few NGOs advocating for women's empowerment. IFUW delegates were especially involved in a session on Women in Higher Education, Research, and Innovation: Gains and Further Challenges for a Research Agenda, for which Murielle Joye-Patry was the rapporteur. The panellists presented progress made and remaining obstacles in the areas of university leadership/management, research careers and the role of higher education in preparing entrepreneurs for the workplace.

An NGO declaration, drafted in a one-day session prior to the WCHE conference, highlighted four areas of particular concern. It called for higher education's triple mission of teaching, research and service to be considered a public good; for higher education to be associated with the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action for EFA; for the strengthening of the role of higher education and

research for sustainable development; and for the implementation of policies to increase women's access and success in higher education. The latter was included in the final 2009 WCHE Communiqué (conference outcome document), which called for Member States, working in collaboration with all stakeholders, to develop policies and strategies at system and institutional levels to encourage women's access, participation and success in higher education. The International Conference of NGOs (see below) has recommended that concerned NGOs adopt the NGO Declaration and asked that UNESCO include NGOs in the follow-up to WCHE. Murielle Joye serves on the UNESCO Committee responsible for WCHE follow-up

Other International Conferences

In September 2008, UNESCO was host to the UN DPI NGO Conference met in Paris with the theme of *Reaffirming Human Rights for All: The Universal Declaration at 60*. It was the first time that the NGO Conference organized by the UN Department of Public Information was held outside New York. It gave us the opportunity to welcome members from other centres and highlighted the importance for IFUW to create more networks in the framework of the United Nations' reform and the role of civil society locally.

In March 2009, Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin was invited by UNESCO to participate in the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development: *Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade*, held in Bonn. The meeting highlighted the need to strengthen links between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Education for All (EFA).

The last important meeting of the year was the International Conference of NGOs, which had as its theme *What ethics for a world in crisis? The answers of NGOs*. Eliane Didier organized a workshop, *Are decision-makers definitively deaf to the scientists' warnings?* One of the resolutions adopted encourages NGOs to continue work on Education for Sustainable Development, to develop understanding of bioethics and promote its education, in a context of cultural diversity and the mainstreaming of gender equity. The meeting also decided that future sessions should be held prior to the General Conference in order to give NGOs the opportunity to study and give better input on future budget and programming of activities of the organization.

Other Highlights

The NGO International Day offered a programme on *Education for Bioethics: What role for NGOs?* Eliane Didier wrote a paper for this seminar and later published one on the subject in the French Association review *Diplômées*. Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin was the coordinator of a workshop celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She also wrote an article for the same review.

Murielle Joye-Patry and Françoise Sauvage participated in the 48th session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva, which focused on Inclusive Education. Conchita Poncini was also a member of the delegation to the meeting.

These are only a few of the many activities during the triennium. The team works on a continual basis throughout the year.

Looking Ahead

The UNESCO General Conference in October 2009 was an historic meeting. UNESCO elected Ms Irina Bokova of Bulgaria as its first woman Director General. She has made gender mainstreaming

one of her top priorities for action and involvement in the fight against poverty. A key instrument will be the *Priority gender equality action plan for 2008-2013*.

This year has been declared the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. UNESCO has been designated as the lead agency. The main strategies for the year involve promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity; building a framework for commonly shared values; strengthening quality education and intercultural competences, and fostering dialogue for sustainable development.

Changes in the Team

Two new members were added to the team during the triennium: Murielle Joye-Patry in 2007 and Anne Nègre, in January 2010. In December 2009, Marianne Bernheim retired after 20 years of service. The present team wants to express its recognition and deep admiration for the excellent work she has done for so many years as IFUW's representative at UNESCO. She first became a representative in 1989 and in 1990 set up a new group of IFUW representatives including Denise Macé, Christiane Winter, and later Marie-France Bonnet and Corinne de Beaufort. Over the years she faithfully worked for IFUW and recruited many new representatives.

*Françoise Sauvage, Coordinator
May 2010*