



TRIENNIAL REPORT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

Members: Dorothy Meyer (*New Zealand*) Convener; Ayden Birerdinc (*Turkey*); Aliaa El Erian (*Egypt*); Clara Ikekeonwu (*Nigeria*); Alice Kagoda (*Uganda*); Marion Minis (*The Netherlands*); Jennifer Strauss (*Australia*); Mary Hall (*Canada*), Resolutions Convener, *ex-officio*; Phyllis Scott (*Canada*), IFUW Vice-President, *ex-officio*

The Convener and six members of the Status of Women Committee (SWC) were elected at the IFUW Conference in Manchester in 2007. For the first time, the Convener of the Resolutions Committee automatically served as an *ex-officio* member of the SWC. The Committee has been grateful to Mary Hall for her assistance during the triennium. The Committee met face-to-face in February of 2008 and 2009. All other business has been conducted by e-mail.

During the triennium, committee members have been involved in the following activities.

International Advocacy:

Aliaa El Erian, Dorothy Meyer and Phyllis Scott served as international advocacy liaisons. In this role, they regularly circulated information to the membership via the Advocacy Network about events and actions occurring in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, especially on issues closely related to IFUW's Strategic Priorities and Programme for Action. This appears to have encouraged some CIRs to send messages to the network about work in which they are involved.

At the end of 2008, national federations and associations (NFAs) were invited to submit examples of advocacy action they had undertaken. Because the request was circulated with a questionnaire from the Working Group on the Girl Child, a number of NFAs were confused about what was wanted and the response to the questions from the SWC, although interesting, was very small.

Aliaa El Erian, together with two members of the Lebanese Association, represented IFUW at the UNESCO Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on Higher Education in Cairo in May 2009. Alice Kagoda attended a similar conference in Bonn in April 2009. Both submitted reports to IFUW.

The Committee received annual reports from IFUW's Representatives to the United Nations in Geneva, Paris, Vienna and New York.

International Women's Day (IWD):

Following on from the previous triennium, it was decided to encourage NFAs to be involved in IWD events in their country. Alice Kagoda collected information following the 2008 IWD and provided a report which was published on the IFUW website.

On-line Discussions:

The Committee organized a series of on-line discussions to offer members a forum for exchanging information and views on issues of global concern. Immediately following the Manchester Conference, Jennifer Strauss led a discussion on 'Higher Education'. In 2008, Alice Kagoda led a discussion on 'What Constitutes Quality Education?' Ayden Birerdinc and Dorothy Meyer assisted her, preparing weekly summaries and editing the final report. We were grateful to Peet van de Loo, a young member from the Netherlands, who led a discussion in the closing months of 2008 on 'Women: Building Sustainable Futures, for us and the generations to come'. Marion Minis led a discussion

early in 2009 on 'Women and Employment', which was followed later in the year by one led by Jennifer Strauss on 'Women and Wealth'. Reports of all these discussions were posted on the IFUW website.

Working Groups:

Clara Ikekeonwu represented the SWC on the special Working Group on the Girl Child, which was created as the result of a resolution adopted by the 29th Conference. In her capacity as President of the Nigerian Association of University Women, she promoted the education of girls, and NAUW hosted the Federation of University Women of Africa's Conference on Girl Child Education in 2009. Alice Kagoda and Dorothy Meyer contributed to the Handbook on Education Advocacy being prepared by the Education Advocacy Working Group. Ayden Birerdinc offered to represent the SWC on the Higher Education Working Group, which was not active.

2007-2010 Programme for Action (PfA):

Following the Manchester Conference, the Committee updated the PfA website information and resources. Material in the Overview, as well as the Education and Human Rights sections were modified to reflect changes in the approach to these themes.

Consultation for the Development of Programme:

At the end of 2008, a Board-led survey offered NFAs and individual members an opportunity to share their views on the PfA. This resulted in a new process for developing the PfA for 2010-2013. A three-phase consultation, facilitated by Dorothy Meyer, was initiated. Phase I in April 2009 invited NFAs to identify the three most significant issues they faced. In Phase II, the three themes identified most often - Education, Financial Independence and Empowerment of Women -were examined in greater detail. In Phase III, at the beginning of 2010, NFAs were invited to identify examples of best practice action they have used in the past or plan to use in the future related to the three themes. The input from this consultation, combined with input from the seminars, workshops and plenary sessions in Mexico, will be presented at Conference in a session to be chaired by Marion Minis. The Conference will decide the new themes, which will be developed by the next SWC. The aim of this process is to develop a programme that will better reflect and meet the needs and interests of the membership at large.

Triennial Conference 2010:

Members of the SWC have been involved in three aspects of planning for the 30th IFUW Conference in Mexico.

- **Interdisciplinary Seminars:** Jennifer Strauss was appointed as Coordinator for the ID Seminars. She has been responsible for organization of the seminars, including preparation of the calls for papers and guidelines for writing an abstract, the preliminary selection of papers, liaison with the conveners and IFUW staff, and handling of all problems. As the ID Seminars and Workshops will be part of special thematic days in Mexico, this process has been more time-consuming than in the past. It was decided to trial refereeing some papers deemed to be suitable for posting on the IFUW website. Presenters will be asked to give permission to post their papers on the website either in an open site or a refereed site.
- **Workshops:** Clara Ikekeonwu was appointed as Coordinator of the ID Seminars. She has been responsible for the call and selection of workshops.

- **Parallel Sessions:** Members of the SWC are also organizing two of the parallel session opposite business meetings, one on Education (Dorothy Meyer) and one on Sexual and Reproductive Health (Jennifer Strauss and Alice Kagoda)

While the SWC appreciates the principle behind the organization of the Theme Days, we believe that the process needs to be more coordinated with responsibilities better delineated, if the Board and the SWC are to be working together to develop and arrange the programme.

General Comments:

In reviewing the work of the Committee for this Triennium it was apparent that we had spent a lot of time planning a new 'process' for developing the next PFA. In addition the change in the 'process' for designing the Theme days involved a great deal of consultation between the Board and the Committee. Although there was a new Programme for Action introduced at the Manchester Conference it was followed by the introduction, by the Board, of the Priority Action Areas and the IFUW Strategic Framework as separate entities to which the SWC and the NFAs have had to adapt. All these changes created tensions that have made it difficult to fully accomplish the tasks outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Committee, and resulted in our having less time to build closer relationships with NFAs in developing their programmes, and with the work that is being carried out by the IFUW UN representatives.

As a team we have worked well together and this despite some members of the Committee holding important office in their NFA as well as being senior persons in their professional life.

My personal thanks go to Phyllis Scott, our Board Liaison, and to the IFUW staff for the multitude of ways in which they have helped us to do our work.

*Dorothy Meyer, Convener
May 2010*