

TO: **Maria Elena Elverdin**  
President FIFCJ

FROM: **Denise Scott, Esq.**  
UN Representative NY, US, FIFCJ,

RE: **OCTOBER 2013 BOARD MEETING/UNITED NATIONS UPDATE,  
ETC**

DATE: August 20, 2013

Introduction

As previously communicated, I send regrets in not being able to personally attend the Board Meeting in Rome. It is impossible for me to leave NY at this time.

I give my proxy to you, Madame President, to vote in my absence. Please know that my wish is for you to have productive discussions. I hope to participate through writing by providing a UN NY update and by submitting some recommendations for future action for your consideration.

**Key UN News/Past Activities**

**UN WOMEN**

The important news is that Michele Bachelet resigned as UN Women Director at the end of March and the SG appointed a new Director, from South Africa, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka. She was Deputy President of South Africa from 2005 and 2008 and prior to that was a Member of Parliament for many years. It will be interesting to see what priorities of work she pursues for the agency and what kind of contact she has with NGOs.

**UN SC Resolution 2106**

The UN Security Council held an open session where **UN SC Resolution 2106 was adopted**. This resolution built upon the previous UN SC Resolutions relating to women and children in armed conflict—1325, 1820 etc. Resolution 2106 calls on member states to investigate and prosecute more rigorously conflict related sexual crimes and for full implementation of prior UN SC Resolutions that concern children and women in circumstances of armed conflict.

**FIFCJ ACTION**

I recommend that each organization check to see if their government has drafted a **National Action Plan** in conformity with 1325 and its progeny. If not, I call upon each organization to make this a priority issue and advocate with other groups to hold the government accountable and to establish a National Action Plan. The USA has already formulated one last year and it is currently being debated within the Senate.

### CSocD

Regularly scheduled is the UN Commission on Social Development, February 2013. As in past years, I applied for space to organize a parallel event inside the UN Building on behalf of FIFCJ and FIDA which was granted. I moderated this panel which included a speaker from UN Women, Mr. Pablo Castillo Diaz and one from the Women's Refugee Commission. The subject was employment and entrepreneurship of women in post conflict peace building. It should be noted that at this time, there still is no fee to hold events inside the building however this policy may change. Johanna Sterbin also attended this event and agreed that it was quite well attended with women from Africa and other places in conflict.

I attended portions of the CSocD and activities arranged by NGOs during the session.

### CSW

As you are aware, FIFCJ was visible during the session by placing an advertisement in the NGO Committee on the Status of Women NY handbook, at the UN CSW sessions through sending a delegation of women, providing a statement and by holding a parallel event. We have a big delegation of members from Argentina who provided significant input into our work and panel at the UN. FIFCJ Secretary provided an important legal update of the well known **Trimarco** case relating to human trafficking.

I also organized and moderated a panel inside the UN Building sponsored by the UN NY Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, FIFCJ, FIDA and WUNRN that discussed the Universal Periodic Review and the importance of including issues related to violations of women's human rights.

Significantly, the CSW adopted agreed conclusions at the end of the session which was a major achievement given the topic violence against women and given that in prior years it was unable to reach any agreement and did not issue any agreed conclusions on this critical issue.

### CSD

The important news is that there is major change to the approach of the UN relating to Sustainable Development. According to the recently passed UN GA Resolution of June 2013, the Commission on Sustainable Development will be eliminated with the last session being held in 2015. The CSD will be replaced with a high level political forum held every 4 years by the GA starting in 2016. This means that there is less opportunity for NGOs to participate in the work of the agenda for sustainable development and to provide inputs into UN documents or to lobby representatives of member states.

### CEDAW

It is with regret that I write that this year there were no CEDAW Committee session held in NY. It was determined at the very last minute that last year's summer session was the last one held in NY Headquarters. I attended a special farewell reception for the

Committee members but more importantly I was invited to provide a briefing to the experts about their role in advancing the elimination of human trafficking.

My particular point of intervention was that the experts should be asking government representatives about whether there are laws and policies in place that target the private and corporate sector on the subject on human trafficking. Certain industries are easier to target laws on this matter and include the travel, hospitality and sporting industries. Airlines, hotels and organizers of big sporting events such as the soccer World Cup are in the position to take positive action to reduce this heinous crime.

#### NGO CSTIP

I have been a member of the recently formed NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons since last year when it was established on behalf of FICJ. I joined the Business Ethics sub committee because in my opinion engagement of the private/corporate sector is critical to make any kind of reduction in human trafficking. Late last year, November 2012, I organized a special meeting for the Committee where a staff person from the NY Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the group and discussed greater accountability of the private/sector in light of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These Guidelines were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council back in June 2011 and were drafted by the UN Special Representative Professor John Ruggie.

#### **FIFCJ ACTION**

Promote the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

#### COSP CRPD

July 2013, the UN held the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I was able to attend some of the parallel events which were conveniently held at lunch. One noteworthy event discussed the complementarity of the CRPD, CEDAW and CRC, something that FIFCJ has been promoting now for many years.

#### International Justice Day

Every year the UN holds a special event on the theme to celebrate International Justice Day. This year I was able to attend and report that the topic was the continuing conflict and genocide in the Sudan. The panel discussed how it is going on 10 yrs of the Rwandan genocide and we seem to have not made any progress in ending genocide. While I would like to report something hopeful, I'm unable to write anything that is positive.

#### UNODC

Early August 2013, UNODC held a high level event which included a film screening on the topic of baby trafficking. I participated on behalf of FIFCJ and renewed acquaintances with the UNODC Director, Simone Monasabien, who is also a lawyer. The film highlighted how trafficking in babies is big business and brings in millions of

dollars for the traffickers who traffick the babies from India, Brasil, Mexico and other parts of the world.

### **Important Upcoming UN events and Issues**

#### **Civil Society Development Forum (CSDF)**

In September the new GA session begins. There are several important meetings being held at that time that include: High Level Meetings on Culture of Peace, Disability, Migration and Development, MDGs, outcomes of Rio +20 and sustainable development. To the extent that I can attend due to my work schedule, I will go and report back.

#### **CSoc D**

The CSocD will be held 11-21 February with the theme being the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. As in keeping with prior years, I will request space to hold a parallel event during the CSocD session, February 2014. As soon as activity starts for the preparation, I will keep you updated on those developments.

#### **CSW 2014**

CSW 2014 is a critical one because it examines challenges to implementation of the MDGs which are set to expire in 2015. It will bring up impediments as well as other critical areas not covered by the MDGs which affect women and girls. It will also discuss the post 2015 UN goals, the Social Development Goals and the way forward for sustainable and social development.

Another important aspect of CSW 2014 is that is a preparatory session for the 2015 CSW session which is Beijing +20. As in prior years, I'm sure that UN will hold a special session of review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2015 so that will be a high level segment which will draw a multitude of people who don't normally attend the UN CSW session to the UN. What this means is that CSW 2014 will have a lot of women working together on inputs from various regions and on various issues to present to the UN in 2015. It is important to decide the role that FIFCJ wants to have in this process. I urge our members in Europe to get involved with the NGO CSW Geneva and/or the European Women's Lobby to be part of the process and input information and positions there. I also urge our members in Africa and South America to do the same.

I have already been in communication with the Chair of the NGO CSW NY to provide some of my insight, experience and concerns delivering them in writing to her. She suggested that I become part of the editing team for North America so I am trying to be in contact with the head of this committee to see what is possible. The Chair also asked if I would be a speaker for one of their meetings in the fall.

**It is critical to have women's voices heard at the this time at the UN to create the world we want.** I recommended that more attention to a world-wide long term campaign on the issue of violence against women be undertaken. We know too well the various forms of violence that women and girls all over the world endure. FIFCJ should advocate

for reservations to CEDAW be removed, discriminatory law toward women be repealed or amended, governments implement their obligations under CEDAW, regional conventions and their own domestic law. New laws to hold the private/corporate/business sector accountable for financial crimes as well as some of the newer labor abuses such as human trafficking are necessary to be drafted and adopted.

Another aspect of FIFCJ's work is to advocate for each country to establish a National Action Plan and to implement that thereby advancing women in the status of the military, international peacekeeping troops and missions, and within their own domestic Departments of Defense and in National Security.

Promoting women in positions of power and influence including within the private/corporate/business sector and on Board of Directors of For Profit Corporations is another important point of advocacy.

Another long term world-wide campaign that is essential is one that shifts the focus of GDP/GNP to one that recognizes the caring economy. Women's care giving work is the backbone of productivity and economic stability and growth. CEDAW notes that this work should be valued and monetized by being factored into the way we determine a country's GDP/GNP.

### **Important Dates**

CSW session 10-21 March

11 November, pre-registration of names of NGO reps

25 October, submission of written statement

16 January, registration for oral intervention before the CSW formal session

I will again request space to hold a parallel event for FIFCJ and try for Thursday, 13 March as we discussed. Will let you know as soon as I get any response about our request. The topic should discuss MDGs but also prepare for B+20 and action that is needed for making the women's agenda advance further. I will send the exact title as I submit the space request to our President and Secretary.

I will also request space for an ad in the NGO CSW NY Handbook as we discussed and send a draft ad to our President for her approval.

FIFCJ will be holding a special reception for CSW attendees and will be conducting a Bureau Meeting Friday and Saturday, 14, 15 March. \_\_

### **Future Projects**

#### **FIFCJ Booklet**

A proposal that I've written about in the past that is even more important now is for **FIFCJ to publish a small booklet** which could be called, *Stories from the FIFCJ*. This booklet would be a collection—a one page description—with each country chapter providing a summary of achievements of the FIFCJ chapter in that country. So it would have one page from the group in Argentina, one page from Mozambique, one page from

Spain, one page on UN Activity, etc. It could describe an accomplishment or best practice in law reform, policy development, women's access to justice, women's equality before the law, gender sensitivity training, or even advancing women in the legal and judicial professions. It would provide a UN summary highlighting UN advocacy and some of the UN parallel events that have been organized throughout the years. It would also contain a Presidential Introduction and a short history of the organization.

The time is now as we need to focus on the upcoming Beijing +20 Review and Appraisal process which will take place in 2015. We have a good amount of time to get this project finished in time for Beijing +20 celebration. It would raise the organization profile at a time when high level diplomats are coming to town.

Generally, a booklet of this kind would be an **invaluable tool for FIFCJ** to help showcase the varied work of FIFCJ members, to raise the organization's profile, to recruit new members and to assist in fundraising. It will also give more credibility to the organization at the various UN Offices. I have wished to have something like this these years in meeting with UN staff and in proposing a joint UN-FIFCJ program/event. It would enhance the credibility of FIFCJ when we meet with UN independent experts such as those on the CEDAW Committee or the special rapportuers as well as those UN Mission delegates.

While it may seem a daunting task at first, I believe it doesn't require that much work because the summary is short and could be drafted from already existing data. The work is in getting a high quality publisher that is able to provide a professional product at a reasonable cost. I have a lead contact on one that was used by the NGO Committee on Social Development.

#### Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to participate with you and our FIFCJ colleagues at this time. I look forward to hearing about the meeting and moving forward. I also look forward to seeing everyone in the future.