

IFHE at 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference 2014 “2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda” *Submitted by Carol Warren, IFHE President*

The United Nations Department of Public Information Non-Governmental Organisations (DPI/NGO) held its 65th Annual Conference from 27th – 29th August 2014, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, New York.

Further to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the post-2015 development agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015 was recognised as a once-in-a-generation opportunity for transformational change. The purpose of the conference was to *“harness the strategies, expertise and resources across the broadest spectrum of civil society to move poverty eradication, sustainability, human rights and climate justice into the mainstream discourse, and spark sustained public demand for lasting political action in support of an ambitious outcome from the post-2015 sustainable development process.”*

IFHE, as an accredited agency with both DPI and ECOSOC was able to send representatives to attend in addition to presenting a workshop as a sponsor organisation.



IFHE President Carol WARREN



IFHE Representatives at the UN
DPI/NGO Conference in New York

After discussion and decision by the IFHE Executive Committee (EC), there was a **“Call for Expressions of Interest”** from IFHE President Carol WARREN to present as part of the workshop. There were 12 expressions of interest with five members selected following a peer review process undertaken by an Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee of the IFHE EC. This Ad-Hoc Committee, consisting of Gail BODDY, Joanne PEARSON, Nishi SURANA, Anne v. LAUFENBERG-BEERMANN, Carol WARREN and Tony WORSLEY also developed the workshop proposal.

The workshop theme was “**Focus on Families to improve sustainable development and eradicate poverty by providing basic conditions and empowerment**”. Given the important theme and the fact that the conference was oversubscribed with more than 2.000 delegates, it was an excellent outcome for IFHE to have our workshop proposal accepted. Held on 27th August at the first workshop session following the opening session, our workshop was very well received and the room (capacity 30) was “full to the brim” with close on 50 people. A huge thank you to our excellent presenters who did IFHE and themselves proud.

They were:

Janice MAISON, former Director, Food Policy, Ministry of Health, Guyana

Dr Janine DUNCAN Ph.D., Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, Fontbonne University St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Dr June MATTHEWS Ph.D., RD, PHEc Associate Professor, Food & Nutritional Sciences, Brescia University College at Western University, London Ontario, Canada

Daniel BALDWIN, graduate teacher St. Bernard's College, Melbourne Australia, member of IFHE Young Professionals Network

Dr Valencia BROWNING-KEEN Ph.D., RD, LD, DPD Director - Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics-accredited program, Sam Houston State University, Texas, USA

Also in attendance to support our presenters were: IFHE President Carol WARREN, Gail BODDY, Anita FERRON, Miriam O'DONOGHUE and our two permanent representatives to the UN in New York, Mary COVINGTON and Eileen GALLAGHER LABINER. A special thank you to Anita FERRON for providing a laptop and data projector and for overseeing the technical requirements for the workshop.



Workshop Presenters (from left):
Valencia BROWNING-KEEN, Daniel BALDWIN, June MATTHEWS, Janine DUNCAN, Janice MAISON

For more information including the conference declaration go to <http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference-2014/> and #UNNGO2014.

Reflections and impressions from the workshop presenters:

The IFHE Workshop was an exhilarating experience. Group dynamics at its best began with our “virtual” preparation. One participant stated that the information was so well presented and clear that everything was understood, to which the entire room applauded. Further validation came during the remainder of the afternoon into the reception when several persons approached us as individuals and continued to commend the workshop and engage in discourse on specific aspects. One participant said that “she had never imagined some of the issues relating to family life discussed at the workshop would have anything to do with Home Economics.” It was a great opportunity to bring awareness to the existence of IFHE as well as its close association with the UN. (Janice MAISON)

First, I want to express my sincere appreciation to President Carol WARREN for opening up this amazing opportunity to the IFHE Membership. Second, thank you to our IFHE Colleagues around the world who participated in the peer review of the submitted proposals. I am in awe of the work my co-presenters are doing with the Navajo people, young males in Australia, under-privileged residents of Guyana, and American students in university family studies programs. Last, but definitely not least, this experience has been nothing short of transformational. Quite literally, it resurrected my intention to continue as an IFHE Member. It has re-ignited my passion for Home Economics and will continue to inspire me as I encourage our students to join this dynamic professional association. (June MATTHEWS)

What I was reminded of throughout this conference was the significant need to collaborate with other like-minded organisations, significant because Home Economics professionals tend to talk to themselves (a drawback to most disciplines). We must resist and we must reach out in the spirit of the 2008 IFHE Position Statement, which proclaims the trans-disciplinary purposes of the field. As a profession we advocate strongly for the right (access and quality) to food, shelter, clothing, health, relationships, culture/identity, and vocation/work. We understand that these rights are inherently connected to poverty and that working to eradicate poverty by promoting citizen engagement will support the rights of individuals and families. “In today’s global society, no one can do everything, but everyone can do something.” (Janine DUNCAN)

I found the whole experience incredibly rewarding. Although daunting to be speaking in a “Doctor sandwich” as I like to call it, it was great to be on a panel of such experienced Home Economists doing such great work. The workshop feedback was great and I felt the audience was truly engaged with each speaker.



I had people congratulate me and the other presenters over the next two days saying they loved our work and the workshop. To be able to connect with and share with other Home Economics colleagues was great. It was even better to share our profession with the wider community and other NGOs. Having the support of other IFHE Members was a great help and meant the workshop ran really smoothly. (Daniel BALDWIN)

IFHE YPN Member Daniel BALDWIN
(Source all Photos: Carol WARREN, Australia)

I am walking away from the conference with 17 - 20 new contacts I would probably never have met otherwise. By far the most inspiring person I heard speak was Cecile ALVAREZ and in her words with some paraphrasing, *“poverty is not only financial means but one can be impoverished in spirit with no hope or faith.”* IFHE has the skill sets in many if not all of its members to be used in the media more often; If we are going to influence more, we must continue to self-reflect (not too long) but continue to advocate for the family (like we always have) crafting our image with velvet and steel (men and women), brand more, look at the power of our word selection to always be inclusive (in my career, I have worked with people who do not know what a family is or means) do more bridge building globally in our interventions and programs and begin by understanding the culture (which is a huge responsibility and endeavour) before we craft our messages and programs. We have never needed a name change. I believe our founders recognised this from the beginning. I don't know however if they realised how the megatrends of abundance and globalization were going to create so many pockets of disparities. (Valencia BROWNING-KEEN)

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