

ISC/WSA Executive External Relations Report to World Congress 2010 September 2008 until December 2009

Brief

Amalia Rasheed joined the ISC/WSA executive in September 2008 for a four year term, to coordinate work of external relations and to build a team to support this work. Within this brief are five areas which although specific, also have overlaps as the report will show. (In no particular order of priority)

1. Inter-spiritual relations
2. United Nations
3. WSA Forum
4. Our culture and image
5. PR, communications, website information

Team Members

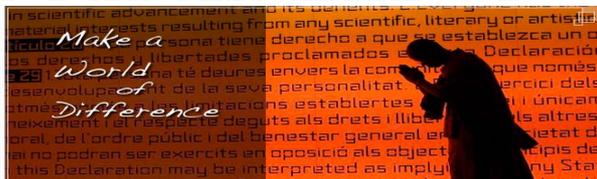
Katherine Carré – UN consultant

Victor Margolin – Coordinator of WSA Forum programme preparations for world congress and discussion group on Sustainability and possible participation in UN Earth Summit planned for 2012.

Stefan Freedman – coordinator of the initiative to reflect on our image and culture advises on general issues of public relations.

Rohana Fraval – assisted in preparations for participation in the Parliament of World Religions

1. INTER-SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE



Sometimes referred to as 'interfaith' - however the term 'inter-spiritual' is considered more suitable for our use considering that it is wider in reference including all faiths and spiritual traditions.

Parliament of World Religions, Melbourne, Australia 3rd – 9th Dec 2009.

After collecting input from members, in February 2009 the WSA executive submitted proposals for participation in the programme of the *Parliament of World Religions* (POWR) held in Melbourne from the 3rd – 9th December 2009. The theme of the conference was '**Hearing each other and Healing the Earth**'. Proposals included a panel presentation of Subud, on Education and spirituality (GHFP), Gardens of Forgiveness presentation, and workshop on 'What is my responsibility for Peace'. One proposal to present Subud was accepted, and aspects of all the others were integrated in the 90 minute time slot given, titled: **Spiritual experience for the development of Human Potential – a presentation by the World Subud Association (WSA)**. Moderated by Murray Clapham, with presenters Osanna Vaughn, Sharif and Tuti Horthy, Simon Guerrand-Hermes, Sharifin Gardiner and Alexandra Asseily, the presentation was made to about 70 participants. Altogether 17 Subud members participated in the weeks conference which covered many subjects, including education, sustainable development, indigenous heritage, interfaith understanding and peace building, forgiveness, sacred music, inter-religious and intercultural cooperation with the UN and more.

A detailed report is available, but in general it is felt that WSA could do more to contribute to such conferences in cooperation with other organisations.

In July 2009 Osanna Vaughn and Amalia Rasheed were nominated by the Council's Executive Director, Dirk Ficca as Ambassadors, based on their WSA roles, which are seen as their '*interfaith involvement and significant contribution to the interfaith movement*'. Amalia has agreed to continue as Ambassador to raise awareness for this work until the next conference planned in 2014.

2. UNITED NATIONS



Discussions have been underway with SDIA concerning the work that had been pending since the last council term; i.e. to develop a policy for a coordinated approach to support involvement in the work of the United Nations. A preliminary draft of a WSA UN Policy Framework was prepared as a result of discussions held with SDIA, with a working group co-chaired by Sharifin Gardiner and Frederic Richard (on behalf of Osanna). It is still incomplete, as work in progress. More input will be collected during congress, in the course of examining the potential of WSA's role as a member of civil society. The process revealed the need for a broader review of the relationship between WSA and its affiliates as the association's 'windows' to the world with the aim to reach affiliate agreements. See *Annex for full WSA UN Policy Draft*

For day-to-day work, Osanna for WSA and Sharifin Gardiner for SDIA have carried decisions together, as was decided at the last congress, and have been advised by a working group consisting of Frederic, Katherine and Amalia for WSA, Virginia, Solen and Rosanna for SDIA. This work has included support of UN NGO committee work, yearly appointment of UN representatives in New York, Geneva and Vienna, applications and fundraising for training in the Human Rights mechanisms of the UN.

WSA was invited to join the NGO coalition "**Initiative for a UN Decade for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace**". The vision is based mainly on: equitable societies, respect for human rights and all manifestations of life, justice, economics of sharing rather than economics of excess, the appreciation of cultural and spiritual diversity, care for the Earth and sustainable development.

Osanna Vaughn and Amalia Rasheed attended the second meeting held in Melbourne from the 1st – 3rd December 2009 and contributed to working groups on the mission and vision statements, and proposals for further engagement with UN agencies.

Participation in other meetings:

Geneva - Katherine Carré, our main Geneva representative, attended the 10th, 11th and 12th Human Rights Councils and the 3rd session of the Advisory Committee and continued to take part in meetings of the two NGO committees which we are members of through SDIA: *Committee on Spiritual Values and Global Concerns* and the *Committee on freedom of Religion or Belief*. Katherine also attended the Durban Review Conference, (a review of the conference against racism), a panel discussion on human rights and climate change and a

conference on the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the rights of the child.

- Solen Gratiot, representative and appointed last summer as UN administrative coordinator in the SDIA secretariat, took the Advanced Geneva Training Course for NGOs in the Human Rights mechanisms of the UN, in March.

- Frederic and Amalia joined as representatives in Geneva this year and also attended part of the 10th Human Rights Council session in March. During that week the main themes covered were *Implementing the Rights of the Child, The Right to Food and Freedom of Religions and Belief*.

New York - Myra Margolin attended the 47th UN Session of the Commission on Social Development. Alexandra Woodward attended a meeting of the UNICEF NGO Committee in New York in February, where she had a chance to present the work that SD members carry out with children.

Copenhagen - Lizzie Gawen with the UK Youth Climate Coalition and Sophia Campbell participated in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2009, among around 500 youth. 'We have a saying among the international youth that while there may be the 'United Nations', young people can show that we are the ones uniting nations.'

Detailed reports are available on request.



3. WSA FORUM

In line with the aim to support members in their worldly expression of spiritual experience in Subud, this programme is being developed and is as yet in a seeding process.

A Forum programme has been prepared for the World Congress to identify members interested in reflecting on specific themes relating to human development in the world community such as *A New World Economy, Sustainable Development (in preparation also for the UN Earth Summit 2012), New Technology and Societal Impact, Rights based Development, Subud – a global interfaith and intercultural player, Subud and the UN, A new Economic Order*. We are looking for other ideas and people to develop the Forum further.

4. OUR CULTURE AND IMAGE

Stefan Freedman has been asking Subud members worldwide how well our current organisation, culture and image reflect their aspirations for Subud. See separate report 'Our Organisation and Culture'.

5. PR, COMMUNICATIONS, WEBSITE INFORMATION

The team has contributed to drafting texts for publication of information about the WSA on the websites, the annual report and a WSA brochure, as well as assisting Julia (secretary) in communications responding to questions concerning information about Subud.

We have begun to examine how visible WSA is through the affiliate publications and websites as our 'windows' to the world, showing activities relating to our aims. By the same token we are reviewing to what extent WSA websites show projects and members' activities.