

NGO CSW GENEVA

2020

BUREAU REPORTS



Annual General Meeting
21 April 2021, 1-3pm
Zoom

2020 PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT

**The 2020 President's Annual Report to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women,
Geneva Annual General Assembly**

21 April 2021

Submitted by Stacy Dry Lara, President



Dear NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva Members:

I want to thank the Bureau and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva (Committee) members, for the trust placed in me during this 2018-2020 term. In this, my final President report, I respectfully acknowledge the Presidents who led the Committee before me. I have learned from them, and I will always be humbly grateful for the pathway paved before my Presidency.

In 2018, you appointed me as your President, and I knew immediately that the theme, Back to Growth, would be most fitting for the term. With this in mind, I set out to 1) grow membership and increase member participation; 2) revitalize the Committee's presence in International Geneva; and 3) increase collaboration with the other NGO CSW Committees worldwide. Despite the COVID 19 challenges encountered, I leave my Presidency pleased to achieve these goals successfully and leave the path ready for future achievements.

I am grateful to have worked alongside Vice President, Carolyn Handschin (Women's Federation for World Peace Foundation, WFWPF), Treasurer, Anne Riz (FAWCO), Secretary, Clémence Mathiaud (Graduate Women International GWI), and Parliamentarian Advisor Paula Daeppen (Biovision). I immensely enjoyed working with them. Together we modernized the Committee's bylaws by acknowledging online meetings as valid forms of meetings; requiring the Bureau is wholly comprised with a president, minimum of one vice-president and maximum of three, a secretary and treasurer; and acknowledging that the Bureau members represent the Committee in their own capacity.

As promised, communication has improved significantly and inclusively during this term. The website offers a fresh look, improved functionality, and up-to-date Committee information. The Bureau increased communications directly with the membership. And, pleasingly, communications from and between our membership have increased – confirmation that the channels have opened up. My thanks to all for continuing to share your information for dissemination.

**NGO Committee on the
Status of Women,
Geneva
Bureau**

President

Graduate Women
International represented
by
Stacy Dry Lara

**Vice President
Membership**

Women's Federation for
World Peace
International
represented by
Carolyn Handschin

Secretary

Graduate Women
International
represented by
Clémence Mathiaud

Treasurer

FAWCO
represented by
Anne Riz

**Committee
Parliamentarian**

Biovision
represented by
Paula Daeppen

Simple yet comprehensive financial reports have become the norm. I thank Anne for her attention to financial statements throughout our term. We worked together to create a line-item budget for which the Bureau can effectively allocate funds and manage expenses. As mandated by our bylaws, an internal auditor was appointed. I thank Kristin Reynishottir (Soroptimist International) and Dr. Sibylle Von Heydebrand (International Alliance of Women) for generously volunteering to audit the Committee's financial reports. We also gained an additional CHF 6000 annually by relinquishing the underutilized Varembe office (2019). The additional capital aids our philanthropic mission to support a local, Geneva organization. In 2020, the Committee voted to contribute CHF 2000 to the Les Vernets D'Arve organization who will help women find affordable housing in Geneva, which is particularly important during this COVID 19 period. The new 2021 Bureau inherits a financial surplus. Under their guidance, the Committee can use this surplus to expand its philanthropic work, membership development, international exposure, and relationships with local Geneva leadership.

Collectively, the Committee's advocacy has become much more relevant in the world as Committee member organizations set out COVID 19 response and recovery plans. This means that instead of merely noting the pandemic, Committee members reacted to COVID 19's disproportional effect on women and girls and quickly contributed to helping:

Biovision adapted programs to reach to the rural communities and teach protective measures to those communities; Make Mothers Matter produced COVID 19 knowledge-based video resources; GWI distributed letters with local helplines and hotlines for violence against women; LDS Charities taught groups how to make homemade masks, provided medical supplies, PPE and meals culminating in the most extensive humanitarian effort the organization's history; Soroptimist International launched hashtag #MaskforEquality campaign to collect information about what Soroptimist members; WFWPF started a series of professional training seminars for the chapter leaders to share in their local situations on healing trauma, building resilience; World Federation for Mental Health appealed to national governments to place mental health at the forefront of advocacy and health management strategies; Zonta International provided PPE and food to front liners, medical staff, and workers by giving sanitizer in the field, cash donations.

During the 2018-2020 term, I was pleased that the Committee co-sponsored numerous of each other's written and oral statements delivered to the Human Rights Council, CEDAW, and the Commission on the Status of Women High-Level Political Forum. The increased international exposure falls into the 2018-2020 goals and adds to the Committee's relevancy yet it is no longer enough to call on UN Member States to advance the rights of women and girls. Country governments are no longer exclusively responsible for decisions that impact human rights within their borders. In a global economy effected by the COVID 19 pandemic, many of these decisions are driven by global policies that effect nations. Collectively, we demand that national governments re-prioritize the provision of "public goods" like healthcare, quality education, water and food security, safety for their citizens over a race to the bottom to attract foreign investments that additionally create gender, social and economic disparities.

The Committee's Women's Mosaic of Lived Experiences video produced for the opening segment of the UNECE Beijing +25 Review and Civil Society Forum (October 2019) is achieving a legacy beyond our expectations because of the video's relevance and professional composition. The video has been broadcast at various venues such as the NGO CSW New York Forum opening session and Joyful Disruption Rally.

The video project was an exceptional experience for those on the Committee who participated. Additionally, for the UNECE Civil Society Forum, Valerie Bichelmeier (Make Mothers Matter) and Anne succeeded in obtaining a grant of CHF 29050 from the Canton of Geneva for the attendance sponsorship of some 20 participants from Eastern Europe, which was administered through NGO CSW Geneva. The aforementioned are impactful examples of how our Committee aims to shape national and international policies and have a more significant impact on women and girls' lives.

As President, two of my primary goals were to increase our Committee's exposure within International Geneva while, at the same time, enhance our collaboration with the other NGO CSW Regional Committees. Our consistent presence and performance during the last three years has earned us a seat at high-level meetings and I am pleased for progressing the Committee's seat at these decision-making tables for more impactful advocacy in the future. I am encouraged for women and girls worldwide by the progress gained in both of these spaces during the past three years.

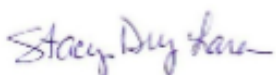
In my final President report, I voice my overwhelming gratitude for the opportunity to lead NGO CSW Geneva in its first-ever Global Consultation Day as the kick-off to the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65) and the NGO CSW New York Forum. Through outstanding commitment and teamwork, we produced the inaugural Women's Rights Advocates in International Geneva: The Heart of Human Rights and Service to Humanity Global Consultation Day. From opening remarks by United Nations of Geneva (UNOG) Director General Tatiana Valovaya and UNECE Executive Secretary Olga Algayerová to participation from UN Women Geneva, Ambassador of Mexico, Mme Flores Liera, Ambassador Delphine O, Secretary General, Generation Equality Forum France, to WHO, ILO, UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls to notable, heartfelt musical contributions our program was impactful and well-received by thousands.

I offer my tremendous gratitude to Valerie, Paula, Zarin Hainsworth (Widows Rights International) Carolyn, Clémence, Carol McConkie (LDS Charities), Brigitte Polonovski (International Council of Women), and Anne. Additionally, as President, I proudly represented our Committee on the CSW65 Global Planning Committee and the Advocacy Research Group, who contributed significantly to the CSW65 Zero Draft document.

The CSW65 parallel event Women and Girl's Human Rights: United Nations Language and Terminology was referenced as the "best parallel event of the day." This emerging and sometimes controversial topic was boldly organized by Committee members Berthe de Vos (Sorooptimist International), Carolyn, Zarin, Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango (WFWPF) Carol, Brigitte, and Laetitia van Haren (Smart Access to Health For All).

In 2020, we were all watching our world face an unprecedented public health challenge in the fight against COVID 19. Our Committee stood in solidarity, adapted to virtual settings, continued meeting, and advanced our Committee more effectively than in recent decades despite the global tension caused by COVID 19. Through this unprecedented period, we continued doing what we do best: representing and raising women's voices worldwide and working for the preservation and improvement of women's and girls' lives around the world. I will miss tremendously leading our Committee and wish all organizations and members the utmost success.

Most sincerely and respectfully,



**NGO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, GENEVA, PRESIDENT,
GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



2020 VICE-PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT

The 2020 Vice- President's Annual Report to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva Annual General Assembly

21 April 2021

Submitted by Carolyn Handschin, Vice-President

2020 has been a year of unexpected challenge, and accomplishment for the NGOCSW Geneva, as it has probably been for each committee member and their organizations due to Covid 19. Following on the heels of the remarkable contributions that were made in late 2019 to the UN ECE Beijing +25 Prep Com as task force leaders, strong voices in the debates, and our very own Video of "Women's Lived Experiences", the momentum was high coming into 2020.

The pandemic with its lockdowns and new rules cut the rhythm. The UN closed and did not seem to be in a hurry to open to NGO's. Our in-person (and preferable) strategy meetings and advocacy caucuses were no longer possible but, we quickly learned a new conferencing technology, and found ourselves quite resilient. We even found some benefits in early UN -organized Zoom meetings that allowed more opportunities for civil society to speak, and we were empowered to meet other committee members on those screens. All told, it has been a productive and rewarding year to work with our Committee President, Stay Dry Lara; Secretary, Clémence Mathiaud; Treasurer, Anne Riz and Paula Daepfen, our Rules Advisor. Sincerely, thank you.

In April, it was suggested that we revisit to the Vice President's 1919 Members Development Survey with the idea to reflect about our self- declared recommendations and priorities. With hopes that it would be a catalyst to relaunch after the initial lockdowns, I presented that report and included a graphic version of the survey results prepared by our committee secretary and compressed everything into three basic categories: collective action, promotion and visibility; communication, advocacy and awareness building; knowledge sharing and expertise building. Each of these areas has been a defining element of NGOCSW's profile development in 2020 which I'd like to briefly touch.

1. Collective action, promotion and visibility

As was done in 2019 for Beijing +25 when our Geneva NGOCSW profile became more recognizable internationally, the engagement of committee members, the VP included, in various international fora again escalated in 2020 through shared issues with UNECE, Women's Major Group (WMG), Generation Equality(GE) and UN Women, and especially in preparations for CSW65. The new tool of Zoom enhanced the opportunities for the global network of women's Civil Society Organizations (CSO), most notably, the NGO CSW's to work more closely and to share some of the burden / and benefit with New York in preparing the annual Commission on the Status of Women.

As Vice President, I attended many of the bi-weekly meetings of the global “NGO CSW’s” with the President and noted that each participating committee president /vice president had not only different expertise and issues beyond the broader commitment to women’s human rights and their empowerment, but were also differently shaped by culture, issues and temperaments. It was very good to meet and listen, although I sensed reticence sometimes on the part of newer members who were not yet known and well-integrated. But as the focus of the meetings shifted to the CSW65, there was more initiative from the regions. The NGO CSW New York office still undoubtedly had the lion’s share of tasks and responsibilities and appreciation has to go to that team, and Houry Geudelekian and Ivy Koek’s leadership.

Although we do not know how these gatherings and collaboration will continue post Covid, it is mutually beneficial for the global network of committees to be inclusive and to house a safe environment for differing opinions, a point that I mentioned in a letter to the leadership in New York. Their reply was quick and positive. Each of the seven NGOCSW offices brings something unique and important to the network, and it was very educational for our work to listen to reports. It was importantly pointed out by our President in discussions on creating an accurate name for the network that UN Geneva and Vienna offices are not a regional centre of advocacy and presence, but, like New York, a global United Nations hub.

2. Communication, advocacy and awareness building

Communication has increased exponentially among CSO’s with new Zoom technology. Our shared concerns related to decisions being taken on Beijing, CSW, the Human Rights Council / Universal Periodic Review, Generation Equality, or the 17 areas covered by the SDG’s has committee members spread out in different networks while representing NGOCSW Geneva at the same time. This new and positive phenomenon of collective advocacy can only strengthen us as we rub against different cultures and perspectives and polish our messages to become more and more accurate and universal. Strengthened, collaborative and focused advocacy is the best way to break down any resistance to our concerns.

A great highlight with probable long-term repercussions for the committee and for Geneva was through the collective decision to hold a “Geneva Consultation Day” just before the opening of the CSW65. This was something previously fully in the hands of New York’s NGO CSW and UN Women Headquarters. It was suggested at one of the global meetings that others could hold their own consultation day. At the time no one jumped at the offer. Knowing it was a serious commitment and came with risks, we both united with the idea of what benefit and exposure it could bring to our work and to Geneva. When it was proposed to the bureau and members, there was a similar enthusiasm, and that was so empowering and unifying.

With that came a mandate to engage prominent UN and governments figures as speakers using the “NGOCSW Geneva” brand. My experience preparing the session on “Government and UN” found serious interest in all those I approached for its issue-focus and promotion of the resources of International Geneva. Each government mission or UN entity that accepted to speak agreed to meet us again after the events to discuss more substantive issues. Speakers in this session included HE Mme. Delphine O, Secretary General of the Generation Equality Forum, the Ambassador of Mexico, Mme Flores Liera whose government would be hosting the upcoming Generation Equality events, and who days before was sworn in as the newest judge at the Hague Criminal Court, and the First female “Chief Scientist” of the World Health Organization, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan. These connections and the many other very prominent speakers in the event are relevant for our future advocacy and partnership- building.

3. Knowledge sharing and expertise building

Each of these three categories is overlapping. This one in particular is significant and is what will hold a committee together, generate incentive and commitment, and strengthen impact. The inter- personal relations among members built upon mutual respect and appreciation for each other's work is the core of a vibrant coalition. Each of our committee members is an expert in their field, a leader in their own right, or they wouldn't be representing their international organization at the United Nations. Such strong and serious women need a very important reason to devote their time and energies and it has been very encouraging to see exactly that happening.

Shrinking space for women and girls due to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of UN terminology on gender was being discussed among several committee members which lead to a proposal I made for the creation of a new task force. The group was mandated to create a set of agreed definitions of gender and sex to ensure that all UN translations uphold these definitions, but on the way to the goal, there have been many new developments. It is a longer-term project involving a team of six women representing different and diverse international NGO's, including one bright young UN intern of WFWPI. The team has met dozens of times since November and with each meeting, new knowledge, talent and appreciation of the other are being discovered. Ideas for related events and new partners propagate easily. No one is complaining about very frequent meetings and the series of events being planned in the process of publishing the study, including a Parallel Event at the CSW65, has brought much interest to the work of the larger NGOCSW. Such a collaborative, result-based work ethic can be very attractive to a broad spectrum of civil society and especially to new younger committee members. Looking back at the three goals mentioned earlier, the "Terminology" project, a real NGOCSW team effort brings substance to each of those categories.



VICE-PRESIDENT, NGO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, GENEVA





NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva
Comité ONG de la Condition de la Femme, Genève

Annual Report/Annual Financial Statement 2020

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NGO CSW Geneva
Statement of Accounts on 31.12.2020
 In CHF

<u>Assets</u>	31.12.2019	31.12.2020
Current Assets:		
Cash	1'935.60	650.78
NGO CSW Current Account UBS ¹	38'002.49	38'337.08
Paypal Account	996.75	991.30
Total Assets	40'934.84	39'979.16
 <u>Liabilities & Own Capital</u>		
Foreign Capital		
US Mission Grant for Flashmob	1'550.53	1'550.53
Canton of Geneva Sponsorship B+95 Participants ²	2'690.60	00.00
Total Foreign Capital	4'241.13	1'550.53
Own Capital		
Retained Earnings (Loss)	(4'000.55)	1'732.47
General Reserves	40'694.26	36'696.16
Total Liabilities & Capital	40'934.84	39'979.16

¹ Includes Balance Flashmob & Canton

² Remaining Balance of CHF 2'205.78 on 28.02.2020 returned to Canton

Statement of Income and Expenses
01.01.2020 – 31.12.2020
in Swiss Francs

	<u>Budget 2020</u>	<u>Actual 2020</u>	<u>Proposed Budget 2021</u>
Income			
Income from Regular Activities			
Membership Dues ³	2'500.00	2'006.12	2'500.00
Sub-let Office Varembe	00.00	00.00	00.00
Total Regular Income	2'500.00	2006.12	2'500.00
Fundraising	500.00	00.00	500.00
Total Income	3'000.00	2006.12	3'000.00
<u>Expenses</u>			
Expenses attributable to Regular Activities			
International Advocacy ⁴	1'800.00	00.00	1'800.00
Membership Development:			
-Website	00.00	00.00	00.00
Membership Appreciation, Holiday Gathering	500.00	00.00	500.00
Rental Meeting Rms (WCC, Varembe)	00.00	00.00	00.00
Insurance	190.00	182.70	190.00
Website ⁵	145.00	00.00	145.00
Accounting Software	00.00	00.00	00.00
Postal costs & misc. admin.	20.00	00.00	20.00
Bank Fees	125.00	87.00	125.00
Paypal Fees	20.00	3.95	20.00
Misc.	200.00	00.00	200.00
Total Regular Operating Expense	3'000.00	273.65	3'000.00
Total Expense_	3'000.00	273.65	3'000.00
Net Operating Profit (Loss)	00.00	1'732.47	00.00

³ Maintenance, plus domain name and site hosting expense

Financial Report for the Year 1.1.2020 to 31.12.2020

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the NGO CSW Geneva as it did for the rest of the world

In terms of the finances this meant that although membership remained stable at 20, creating income of CHF 2006.12, no in-person meetings or events were held. There were no expenses for hosting or international advocacy. The only operating expenses for the year were the annual insurance fee CHF 182.70, CHF 87 for bank fees and a PayPal charge of CHF 3.95.

The negative decline in Net Worth, despite retained earnings of CHF 1'732.47, arose primarily from the repayment of the remaining funds of the Canton of Geneva for the Beijing +25 UNECE Forum. The remaining two expenses from that position were made in January and the balance of CHF 2205.78 was repaid on the 28th of February.

The NGO CSW Geneva ended the Financial Year 2020 with a Net Worth of CHF 39'980.66.

As this is my final year as Treasurer, I would like to thank the Board and the Committee for its trust in me and to wish my successor all the best.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Riz-Sandweiss".

Anne Riz-Sandweiss
Treasurer
NGO CSW Geneva

Dr. iur. Sibylle von Heydebrand
International Alliance of Women
Im Wiesenacker 10
4144 Arlesheim

For the attention of the General Assembly

NGO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN GENEVA
Financial Audit Report for 2020 business year and Proposal to the General Assembly

Based on the documents submitted to me (bank statements, original invoices, receipts) by NGO Committee on the Status of Women Treasurer Anne Riz, Bern, Switzerland, I carried out the audit on March 2, 2021, using various random checks and documented evidence to the best of my ability.

Assets

Bank Balances

The bank balances for the following accounts are consistent with the bank statements as at 31.12.2020. The inspected documents could be matched with the bank statements up to the accounts:

UBS	CHF 38'337.08
Paypal	CHF 991.30

Cash

The Cash amount of CHF 650.78 is plausible.

Income and Expenses

The statement of income and expenses was checked through analyzing random samples. All the checked positions could be proven by Ms. Anne Riz. The annual accounts closed with expenses of CHF 273.65 and an income of CHF 2'006.12 and a profit of CHF 1'732.47.

Regularity

I confirm that the accounting for 2020 was carried out properly. The balance sheet and the statement of income and expenses correspond with the provided documents as mentioned above. The reported assets exist. Ms. Anne Riz keeps her accounts correctly, with supporting documents.

The executive board is responsible for the annual financial statements. My task is to audit them. I confirm that I meet the requirements for competence and independence.

Proposal to the General Assembly

I therefore propose the General Assembly that the financial statement for 2020 be approved and that the executive board be discharged.

Recommendation to the General Assembly

Additionally, I warmly recommend to carry out the financial audit every year and to fill the position of the alternate auditor. According to Swiss law this association would not be obliged to have a financial internal audit. But once the statutes of the association dictate a financial audit (see Art. 7 of the Statutes) it has to take place and the General Assembly has to take note of the financial audit report and its proposal. Contrary decisions of the General Assembly are invalid.

Yours sincerely


Dr. iur. Sibylle von Heydebrand

Arlesheim / Berne (Switzerland), 2 March 2021