



CONGO Committee on Ageing, NY

Activities

Florence L. Denmark, Chair

Fall 2008 Activities

The Congo Committee on Ageing had a busy, exciting year. This report will cover the last six months period.

On July 1, 2008 we held our annual retreat meeting at past chair, Helen Hamlin's summer home. We planned our program for the 2008-2009 year in keeping with United Nations' initiatives.

In addition to the retreat meeting, the Executive Committee of the COA met every third Wednesday of each month beginning in September.

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Our first open meeting in October celebrated the International Day of Older Persons which took place on October 2nd 2008. A message from the Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, was read and the Cehf de Cabinet, H.E. Mr. Norman Miranda read a message from the President of the General Assembly. Following these messages we heard from two keynote Speakers, Mr. Sergei Zelenev, Chief, Social Integration Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN and Minister Paulo de Tarso Vannuchi from Brazil. Mr. Eric Fault from DPI introduced the keynote speakers. Following the keynote addresses, we heard from the speakers that came from the UN 5 regions: Professor Nana Apt from Ghana; Dr. Nabil Kronfol from Lebanon; Dr. Lia Daichman from Argentina; Manohar Upreti from Nepal; and Her Excellency, Minister Stehlikova from the Czech Republic.

The morning session of IDOP attracted close to 300 people to the Conference Room in the UN building. The theme was “A Call for A Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.” The fund-raising luncheon attracted 81 people. In the afternoon, over 100 people came to the workshops and the afternoon panel. The speakers addressed the idea of the Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Our next monthly meeting was November 6, 2008. In this meeting we had a follow-up discussion of IDOP and then an interactive dialogue led by Susanne Paul, Founder and CEO Global Action on Ageing and Alexandre Siderenko, Head of the Un Programme on Ageing, DESA to discuss the

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movement towards a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. In sum, working towards a convention is a long hall taken in small steps.

On December 4, 2008 we held a meeting with guest speakers from the Office of Disabilities. The major speaker was Akiko Ito, Chief, Secretariat for the convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities/UN Focal Point on Disability, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs along with two other people from her office. This December meeting was held in memory of Ruth Begun, a lifelong advocate and activist for persons with disabilities and dedicated member of the NGO Committee on Ageing. This meeting followed the International Day of Persons with Disabilities held on Wednesday 3 December 2008. We learned how the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was developed and looked for ways that the Committee on Ageing could learn from that experience.

Our next meeting was held on January 8, 2009. It served as a Briefing on the February UN Commission for Social Development. The speakers were Mr. Yao Ngoran, Chief, NGO Unit, UN Division for Social Policy and Development and Mr. Maxwell Haywood, NGO Unit, UN Division for Social Policy and Development. This meeting provided information to members in ways in which they could

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participate in the UN Commission for Social Development and further advocate on issues pertaining to ageing populations.

On January 27, 2009 a small group from the Executive Committee of the COA met with Mr. Liberato Bautista. We found this meeting very informative in terms of how the committees relate to CONGO as well as the activities of CONGO.