

RELATIONS BETWEEN ISS AND

OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

I. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

1.1 Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)

ISS has been in consultative status, Category II with this organization since 1947. This status has been granted to ISS by a formal decision.

According to Resolution 1296 of ECOSOC (1968) and application rules established in 1984 NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC have the right to:

- receive all available information on the activities of ECOSOC;
- attend meetings held in the framework of ECOSOC and its commissions and committees;
- present written declarations addressed to ECOSOC or subsidiary bodies;
- use UN meeting rooms for NGO work regarding issues handled by ECOSOC.

NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC have the obligation to submit a report every four years on the activities they have carried out in implementation of United Nations resolutions, statements and attendance at meetings, consultations and cooperation with U.N. programmes and bodies and specialized agencies, etc.

ISS has representatives in New York and Geneva.

ISS is a member of the **Conference of nongovernmental organizations in consultative relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)**.

1.2 UNICEF

ISS has been in consultative status with UNICEF since 1956 and is represented at UNICEF meetings both in New York and Geneva.

UNICEF has sponsored a number of projects conducted by ISS: Consultation on adoption in Romania (1992-1994), Seminar organized in Sofia (Bulgaria) on “Seeking family-based alternatives for children who are abandoned or at risk of abandonment” (1992), mission on adoption in Albania (1993), mission on the protection of children deprived of family care in Armenia (1998), consultation solicited by UNICEF/East Timor (2000), ISS program “A child, a family” in Rwanda (1995-2000), mission on the protection of abandoned/orphaned children

in Rwanda (2002) . The UNICEF Institute on Child Development in Florence has solicited the expertise of ISS on unaccompanied minors and international adoption on several occasions.

ISS was a Board member of the **NGO Committee on UNICEF** until the restructuring at the end of last year (2001).

1.3 UNHCR

In the framework of its consultative status with ECOSOC ISS is invited to attend UNHCR statutory meetings as an observer, as well as briefing meetings and seminars on refugee issues. Until recent years ISS used to share its concerns with the Executive Committee of UNHCR through the statement presented by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). ISS is no longer a member of ICVA, but its voice may still be heard through the NGO Sub-Group on refugee children and children in armed conflict.

In addition ISS General Secretariat has cooperated with UNHCR in the framework of contracts for the provision of social services to refugees financed by UNHCR. ISS branches in France, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Switzerland and Venezuela have (had) cooperation agreements with UNHCR.

1.4 ILO

ISS's name has been on the "Special list of non governmental organizations" of ILO since 1960. Thanks to personal contacts at high level in the past, ISS is still allowed to use ILO meeting rooms for its statutory meetings at a very low price.

1.5 UNESCO

Up to 1996 ISS has been in consultative status, category C (limited to exchanges of information). In 1996 UNESCO decided that its relationship with ISS should be maintained on an informal basis only.

2. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

ISS has been in consultative status with the Council of Europe since 1962. The SSAE (ISS/France) has shared the representation occasionally.

ISS is invited to participate as an observer in the meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee on migration, refugees and demography, the Committee of Experts on Family Law and in many other meetings on intercommunity relations, migration, human rights and social issues.

ISS/Germany represents ISS at the Committee of Experts on Family Law.

ISS is also a member of the Conference of NGOs in consultative status with the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe has participated in the financing and sent a representative to the Seminar on family-based alternatives for abandoned children or children at risk of

abandonment held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1992. The IRC/ISS was solicited by the Council of Europe to answer the questions of a working committee on intercountry adoption at its September 1998 meeting in Paris.

3. EUROPEAN UNION

ISS has no formal cooperation agreement with the EU. ISS Branches in Greece and Italy have been mandated by the European Union to implement specific programs for migrants and refugees.

4. HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW

ISS has participated in the preparation of several conventions established by the Hague Conference, in particular:

- Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction (1980)
- Convention on intercountry adoption (1993)
- Convention on the protection of children (1996).

ISS has been invited to the special sessions to evaluate the application of these Conventions and each time a paper summing up the comments from Branches and Affiliated Bureaus was circulated to participants.

5. ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

A formal cooperation agreement was signed between the OAS and ISS in 1957. However relations with this organization are very limited due to the fact that ISS network in Latin America is still weak.

II. NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WELFARE (ICSW)

ISS is one of the very few international members of ICSW. ICSW holds a world conference every other year, each time in a different country. On that occasion ISS organizes workshops for participants on issues relating to child welfare.

2. INTER-AMERICAN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE (IIN)

A cooperation agreement has been signed between this organization and ISS in 1985. As for the OAS, contacts between ISS and the Institute are very irregular due to the weak presence of ISS in Latin America. In March 1999 Chantal Saclier, IRC/ISS Coordinator was invited as an international expert to a regional seminar on international adoption organized in Chile by the Inter-American Children's Institute.

3. NGO GROUP FOR THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ISS is a member of that Group, as well as the **Sub-Group on refugee children and children in armed conflict**. In the framework of these groups ISS advocates the protection of the rights of separated, abandoned and orphaned children. The NGO Group cooperates mainly with UNICEF, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNHCR.

4. NGO/UNICEF COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN IN CEE/CIS AND THE BALTIC STATES

ISS is a member of that group, with a special focus on family-based alternatives for abandoned children and children at risk.

The IRC/ISS is in charge of relations with the two above NGO Groups.