



IFWEA IVA FIAET

**IFWEA 20th General Conference
Final Minute**

**1-5 December 2007
Ahmedabad, India**

Introducing the minute

The 20th IFWEA General Conference took place from the 1-5 December 2007 in Ahmedabad, India.

The Conference was of historic importance for a number of reasons. Not only was it the first IFWEA General Conference to take place in the Global South, but it was also the 60th anniversary of IFWEA's foundation in 1947. As expressed by Dave Spooner, outgoing General Secretary in his welcome note to conference, the decision to hold the Conference in India is a powerful symbol of the changing nature of IFWEA itself. Further he stated that the celebration of 60 years of IFWEA was a significant achievement, a testament to successive generations of workers' education leaders, practitioners and activists who have given their energy and commitment to the international labour movement.

The General Conference was designed to maximise participation in discussions and decision-making. In order to do this we spent the first two days of Conference participating in an International Seminar and Workshops on Workers' Education in the Informal Economy. Shortly after the start of the formal Conference proceedings on Saturday, 1 December 2007 we adjourned to enable all delegates to participate in the seminar and workshop discussions. The formal Conference proceedings resumed on Monday, 3 December 2007.

In order to take account of the distinct Conference design, the overall report has been written in two parts.

1. The report of the International Seminar and Workshops on workers' education in support of informal economy workers' organisation.
2. The minute of the General Conference.

We are thankful to Promila Rocha who played a support role in the collation of both reports. Her work in putting together the first drafts helped in the production of these final reports.

Agenda of formal conference proceedings

Saturday 1st December

Morning

- Election of Credentials and Election Committee
- Election of Resolutions Committee
- Adoption of General Conference agenda
- Adoption of General Conference standing orders

Adjournment of General Conference

Tuesday 4th December

Morning

Conference Plenary

- Report of Credentials Committee
- Minutes of GC 2003
- Matters Arising
- Report of the General Secretary
- Report of the Regional Secretaries and Co-ordinators
- Financial Report

Afternoon

- Report from Resolutions Committee
- Motions for debate
- Action Programme 2008-2011
- Budget and Affiliation Fees 2008-2011
- Elections

A full and comprehensive General Conference programme is included as appendix 1 of this report.

Saturday, 1 December 2007

General Conference Opening

The General Conference was opened by the President, João Proença, on Saturday 1 December at 9.00am. Conference commenced with a traditional Indian lighting of a lamp and the singing of Indian inspirational songs.

The President thanked SEWA for their traditional welcome and acknowledged their outstanding activities in informal economy organising, praising them for the example they have set in the world in their fight against social exclusion and poverty. He highlighted the role played by SEWA both internationally and

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regionally, and expressed recognition for the work of IFWEA's Vice President, Namrata Bali.

The rest of his address focused on the current global economy and levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality and social deregulation. He emphasized the need for workers' education to promote decent work, solidarity, equality, peace and democracy along with economic growth and outlined the importance of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), alliances of trade unions, civil society organizations, NGO's and all local, regional and international forces in promoting a fairer society, decent work and decent life.

He concluded his address by recognising the efforts of the General Secretary, Dave Spooner, and his team.

Following the President's address the Vice President of IFWEA and one of the hosts, Namrata Bali, addressed Conference. She too welcomed everyone and provided a special thanks to Conference guests Oxfam International, Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), SOLIDAR and guests from SEWA.

In her address she highlighted the plight of workers in the informal economy pointing to a study in seven African cities which revealed that 76% of the workforce were in the informal economy with these figures rising in rural areas. These workers have to constantly fight for minimal survival, face impoverished working conditions and seasonal and occasional work. They are neither recognized nor protected by law. They are not able to enjoy their rights and generally have no access to social protection. She concluded by saying that the education provided to informal economy workers and their families by IFWEA and its member organisations helps them to strengthen defence of their rights and helps them to organise themselves. While it would be a new task for some, it would also be a privilege for us all to learn from the Conference seminar on workers' education in the informal economy, adding value to our work and helping us in accomplishing our goals.

Proceedings of General Conference

The IFWEA General Secretary, Dave Spooner, addressed Conference on the agenda and proceedings for the next few days. He explained that Conference plenary would continue until 10am, following which it would be adjourned for two days to allow for the seminar. Formal Conference proceedings would reconvene on the Monday.

He proposed the following three committees for election:

Credentials and Election Committee

Károly György (Chair), MSZOSZ-Hungary
Björn Wall, ABF-Sweden
Alana Dave, ITF-London

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Mike Chungu, WEA-Zambia

Resolutions Committee

Sahra Ryklief (Chair), LRS-South Africa
Susan Schurman, AFL-CIO-USA
Anders Selin, ABF-Sweden
Rey Resing, LEARN-Philippines
Paula Borges, UGT-Portugal

Standing Orders Committee

Elizabeth Tang (Chair), HKCTU-Hong Kong
Stefan Svensson, ABF-Sweden
Namrata Bali, SEWA-India
Hasan Barghouthi, DWRC-Palestine

The proposal was adopted unanimously.

After the election of the various Conference committees the General Conference was adjourned until Monday morning to give time for the Seminar on Workers' Education in the Informal Economy.

(A full report of the seminar is available as a separate report.)

Monday, 3 December 2007

General Conference resumed with prayers by the SEWA choir.

Following prayers Susan Schurman addressed Conference. She welcomed all delegates on the 60th anniversary of IFWEA, reflecting on a time when she was younger and how new challenges have emerged. She concluded by saying that today there is a greater need for organisations like IFWEA, before handing over the floor to Sahra Ryklief.

Introducing the Strategy Paper

Sahra Ryklief introduced a discussion paper setting out some of the key challenges for IFWEA and some thoughts on the future of the Federation.

Key points made include:

- IFWEA is currently a weak organisation. Its institutional capacity has declined, and the income base of IFWEA, derived mostly from affiliate fees and grants for project activities, is extremely fragile.
- IFWEA has still not managed to attain many of the strategic goals set at the 2003 conference in Portugal, including supporting a full-time, independent secretariat.

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- At this 20th conference of IFWEA, there are however some positive elements. These include nominees for an executive who are prepared to offer their time and energies to explore possibilities to strengthen IFWEA; a consultation grant raised by the incoming President which secures support for a half-time General Secretary and full-time administrator in the first year (2008); an offer by the LRS (the organisation of the incoming General Secretary) to host the IFWEA office on its premises for a year (2008) at cost; an offer from IFWEA affiliates located in South Africa to provide a hospitable environment for IFWEA to operate in South Africa, and to collaborate towards the development of longer term project activity for IFWEA in the future.
- In the immediate term, we need to firstly, function as cost-effectively as is possible and secondly, to utilise the IFWEA membership as a resource base which adds value to our members particularly, and the labour movement more generally.

As part of the strategy paper, the following two core recommendations were made:

- To stop the current erosion of the IFWEA asset base through effectively administering, stabilising and increasing membership.
- To put in place a programme that will create the environment for existing IFWEA networks to function, and to facilitate the mergence of longer term projects through joint efforts with/of IFWEA's affiliates.

Further detail and a 2008-2009/10 phased approach to achieving these recommendations were presented.

A summary of these recommendations are included here. A full copy of the discussion paper is included as appendix 2.

Membership

- Stabilise affiliate fees.
- Move the office to South Africa and set up an effective administration system and ongoing web-based communication.
- Explore a dual membership system.
- Explore solidarity and individual membership.
- On the basis of recommendations above, suggest future changes to membership.

Programme

- Facilitate autonomously co-ordinated networks within IFWEA. These are/could perhaps be:
 - Regional Networks
 - Decent Work Network
 - International Labour Media Network
 - Informal Economy Network
 - Workers' Colleges Network
 - Workplace Skills Training Network

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- Establish whether there are member organisations or consortiums that could/would raise funds to develop modules for an IFWEA Online University. Suggestions for courses:
 - Educating labour educators
 - Educating labour researchers
 - Educating union negotiators
 - Using media in labour education
 - Education for organisational development
- Raise funds through the Secretariat in partnership with interested IFWEA affiliates for developing online resources through a much expanded and re-designed IFWEA website.
- Explore possibilities for annual global conferences.

It was agreed that this should become the mandate of the executive, and that they will report to the next conference on their performance in this regard.

Following the presentation by Sue and Sahra the following plenary contributions were made:

- Dan Gallin from the Global Labour Institute expressed concern about the role of the global network and about suggestions on structure and procedure which are prompted by the references in the discussion paper submitted to Conference. As regards the Global Network he felt that there was great potential for a partnership between IFWEA and Solidar if based on reciprocity. His concern is that this has not been the case largely because IFWEA, in the last two conference periods, has found itself in a weak position and as a result, the global network, since its inception, has reflected the priorities of Solidar, as defined 7 or 8 years ago.

Dan also expressed concern about the networks proposed in the discussion paper. He felt that while networks have many advantages they do not ensure democratic control and accountability. He felt that functional networks are appropriate for specific tasks, whereas regional structures, on the other hand, require democratic accountability.

Finally he pointed to potential dangers in establishing a dual membership system, with the likelihood of many organisations opting for the cheapest possible variant and ended by stressing the importance of urgently redesigning and expanding the IFWEA website as it represents the public face of IFWEA.

- Rodney Bickerstaffe from Solidar expressed the central role the Global Network has played in building IFWEA membership organisations and profiling IFWEA activity in Africa, Latin America and Asia Pacific. Referring to the Africa and Asia-Pacific regional reports presented to Conference he expressed disagreement with the earlier analysis and concerns raised around the Global Network, pointing out that the two IFWEA Regional Coordinators

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have highlighted just how central Global Network activity has been in sustaining an IFWEA presence in their respective regions.

- Sahra Ryklief pointed out that financially and human resource wise IFWEA does not have sufficient resources. She however felt that we had the means to build IFWEA strength in the immediate future and over the longer term. She reemphasised the grant raised by Susan Schurman to support partial funding and pointed to the need to emerge with a solid framework that can lay the foundations for a strategic programme along with an implementation plan and a realistic budget.

She concluded by saying that IFWEA was a big and amazing family that has been built with very little resources. To support that we need a modest and achievable plan and if affiliation fees amount to \$100 000 a year this plan has to be developed accordingly.

Following the plenary discussion Dave Spooner and Crystal Dicks outlined the programme for the rest of the day, pointing out that the planned session on vision and objectives would now be integrated into the Regional Commissions that were to follow.

Regional Commissions and International Organisations Meet

The next Conference session allowed for meetings of IFWEA regional structures. Each Regional Commission was required to review regional development and activities since the last General Conference, reflect and discuss the vision and objectives for IFWEA, discuss the needs of the workers' education movement within the region, and formulate strategic priorities for 2008-2011.

Given the absence of Latin American participants at Conference there was no commission for the Americas.

Since there were a few international organisation participants present a commission of international organisations was formed with the focus of their discussions centred on IFWEA partnerships and networks into the future.

Reports from these commissions were not presented to the Conference plenary, the work of these commissions were fed into the afternoon session at conference. We have however included a brief synopsis of commission discussions in this final Conference report.

Africa Regional Commission, Led by Mike Chungu

During the Africa Commission several Africa based projects were briefly discussed. These included work undertaken by StreetNet International, WIEGO, the African Labour Radio Broadcast, the IFWEA led DFID funded project on informal economy organising and a project in Cape Verde supported by UGT Portugal looking at the agricultural and transport sectors, migrant workers and women in the informal economy.

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The following future recommendations were made:

- To reinforce reflection on existing areas of work and reinforce the approaches which have already been successful.
- To find synergies and maximize and reinforce the work already done.
- To deepen the initiatives already begun.
- To encourage a new form of leadership in Africa.
- To overcome the lack of information and knowledge barrier especially as regards the Lusophone countries.
- To create an information bank about regional organisations.
- To have documents and information translated from/into Portuguese with the help of UGT Portugal.
- To launch a network of informal economy educators.
- To contribute to the establishment of a global international network of workers' educators.
- To establish a communication plan.
- To create a small group that, through the Internet, can shape information and ideas.

IFWEA in the Arab Countries Commission, Led by Hasan Barghouthi

(Please note that IFWEA-AC conducted a full Regional Conference at the conclusion of the IFWEA General Conference. A report from the IFWEA-AC Conference is available on request.)

During the IFWEA-AC Commission Arab delegates discussed the strategies and approaches for IFWEA in the region for 2008-2011. These discussions were concluded during the IFWEA-AC Conference, with an opportunity for delegates to further enrich the regional strategy through written submissions up to one week after the Conference ends.

This regional strategy document will be submitted to the first post Conference Executive Committee.

Asia-Pacific Regional Commission, Led by Elizabeth Tang

During the Asia-Pacific Commission the focus was on developing practical suggestions and ensuring that these related to the strategy paper presented. It was noted that many of the issues raised within the paper had already been discussed at an Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Peru in September 2007. Much of the Commission discussion reinforced the earlier discussion held. These included a programme for the region focusing on 4 components: policy research, education and training, media and campaign advocacy.

- Policy Research: Formulate policy research on specific and relevant topics such as:

1. Monitoring changes on labour laws in partner countries of GN, KLSI
2. Monitoring of FTAs in the region in various stages, LEARN

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3. Research/case studies of privatisation in the region, LEF
 4. Research on trade
 5. Case studies of organizing strategies in the informal sector
- Education and Training: Formulate framework for the education program in cooperation with IFWEA that can be undertaken in the region such as:
 1. Political education
 2. Strategies for trade union organising in the informal sector
 - Media: Become involved in the ILMN and possibly strengthen the labour film festival in the Asia region.
 - Campaign advocacy: Campaigns need to be designed around the research outputs in order not to duplicate work. Focus on issues engaged in by partners such as ratification of ILO conventions for union organizing, trade/bilateral agreements, or privatization.

The Commission further agreed that the current 11 affiliates should be maintained and that they should be encouraged to recruit other like minded organizations in each of their respective countries.

Finally the Commission discussed the possibilities of establishing a formal regional structure and felt that this was a possibility, but given the current membership situation the present set-up should be maintained, however processes for setting up a regional structure should be explored.

European Regional Commission, Led by Björn Wall

The European discussion focused on the ABF Sweden motion concerning Europe that was tabled for debate at Conference. This motion (a full copy of the motion as adopted by Conference appears later in this report) emerges from the fact that European affiliates are weak and that cross-Europe activities are non-existent. In addition Euro-WEA no longer employs anyone and since 2004 no European members have been prepared to host a Secretariat.

It was felt that given the immense changes since the founding of EURO-WEA in January 1993, it was not realistic to organize EURO-WEA in the same way as previously. Instead it is proposed that a European workers' education/cultural forum be established, based on a network model. There is the possibility for the Network to be Brussels based and close cooperation with Solidar will be required.

Within this model it would be important to establish priorities, noting that many members value the exchanging of experiences. Ultimately priorities for the European network will be shaped by the outcomes and priorities from the General Conference.

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At the end of the regional discussions Conference broke for lunch. Immediately after lunch we reconvened for an introduction to the afternoon session. The after lunch session was focused on developing IFWEA's strategy for 2008-2011.

Strategic Development Commissions

Drawing on the strategy paper presented in the morning and the discussion that took place during the Regional Commissions Conference was randomly divided into the following 3 'strategic development commissions':

Commission 1: Membership, Leadership, Governance and Regional Development, led by Károly György

Commission 2: Programmes and activities, led by Pat Horn

Commission 3: Partnerships, Networks and Alliances, led by Rodney Bickerstaffe

Each commission was required to work through relevant sections of the strategy paper and then to emerge with an agreed strategy that can feed into IFWEA's strategic plan for 2008-2011.

The full reports of each commission are included in the following section of this report:

Membership, Leadership, Governance and Regional Development

The Commission noted that regional conditions have changed over the last four years. These changes include:

- The launch of the ITUC regional formations
- IFWEA networks are also operating in regions, along with various other networks, many of which are coordinated by IFWEA affiliates.

The work undertaken in this period will help consolidate IFWEA in the coming four years.

The need to constitute formal IFWEA regional structures varied; with the Arab countries saying that a regional formation was needed, for the African countries probably not, while in Asia-Pacific an in principle agreement to establish a regional structure's been reached, but not until after March 2008, and in Europe the regional structure will be dismantled to make way for a European network. It was noted that both network and regional structures work and that perhaps no one structural set up/model can apply to all regions.

While different initiatives will have different needs, overall programmes developed should strengthen IFWEA. Developing IFWEA at the regional level, with a focus on workers' education was seen as important. With many members working in the informal economy, efforts should be made for this work in the new IFWEA strategy. There is a need to develop a concrete programme. We

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should also explore regional conferences linked to this programme. This will require funds.

Concerns were raised around the decrease in membership and questions emerging from some affiliates around what it is they get out of IFWEA, coupled with an inability to pay fees. It was felt that special concern should be paid to affiliates in this regard.

Regular e-mail contact was noted as being important for coordinating our efforts, as would an information based website. These will help develop integrated systems and networks. The new Secretariat should take up the task of renewal of member organisations and ensure that a database of membership is included on the website.

Programmes and activities

The primary goal of all programs and activities must include the promotion of democratic organisations for women as well as informal workers in the labor movement.

IFWEA program priorities to be as follows

- 1) Using workers education to promote democratic unions/workers organizations specially
 - ⇒ In strategically selected areas where independent unions are not freely operating
 - ⇒ In the informal economy, migrating informal workers
- 2) Establishment of a informal economy workers' educational forum
 - ⇒ To meet on annual basis
 - ⇒ To facilitate regular exchange of experience
 - ⇒ With ongoing networking between forum meetings
- 3) Media and IT
 - ⇒ Improved media strategy (including use of radio/video)
 - ⇒ Improved use of IT and introduce IT literacy among workers
 - ⇒ Online resource database to be established
 - ⇒ Implement 1996 resolution on distributing information (including by putting on web list of educators and educational material)
 - ⇒ To implement in 5 languages English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Arabic
 - ⇒ Certain new affiliates need study circles and distant learning
- 4) Materials developed for use in all regions and both formal and informal workers. Suggested topics to include:
 - ⇒ Organisational building
 - ⇒ Negotiations skills
 - ⇒ Economic issues
 - ⇒ Political economy

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- ⇒ Political education
 - ⇒ Alternative economic systems
 - ⇒ Privatisation (and possible responses)
 - ⇒ World trade issues (affects on workers)
 - ⇒ Human rights and worker rights
 - ⇒ HIV/AIDS and health issues
 - ⇒ Use of case studies
 - ⇒ Life long learning (including literacy skills)
- 5) Develop participatory methodologies and methodologies appropriate to different levels of literacy.
 - 6) Train the trainer worker education in all regions. IFWEA to distribute list of trainers and their contact details.
 - 7) IFWEA to provide support for all the regions for above priority programs and activities.
 - 8) Principals to apply to all activities
 - ⇒ Independence
 - ⇒ Democracy
 - ⇒ Equality and citizenship (broadest meaning)
 - ⇒ Gender equality at each level in each activity
 - ⇒ Bring in enough youth and migrants (formal and informal)

Partnerships, Networks and Alliances

The report from commission 3 appears in this resolution tabled at Conference:

Conference (therefore) requests the Board to:

1. Begin a strategic planning process of IFWEA's role, mission and structure in a changed, modern context, with a broad strategic debate to include members and partners.
2. Raise the profile of IFWEA globally, not least through more publicizing of the current major work of member organizations.
3. Advocate the issue of worker education in as many institutions as possible at all levels through monitoring their programs and statements; viz.:
 - Strengthen communication with the ITUC and GUF's, whilst continuing our long term work with trade unions at international and regional level
 - Reestablish the relationship with Solidar so that the success of the global network further builds the identities of both organizations
 - At a later stage review old and explore possibilities of new partners and alliances in the light of our conclusion from the strategic debate

Tuesday, 4 December 2007

João Proença opened the next morning's conference proceedings, outlining the programme for the day.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Károly György presented the report from the Credentials Committee. 46 affiliated organisations were present, representing 46 delegates. In addition, there were 47 observers present.

The report was unanimously adopted.

(See appendix 3 for a list of Conference attendees.)

Report of the Standing Orders Committee

Elizabeth Tang presented the Standing Orders for adoption. A copy of the standing orders is included as appendix 4 of this report.

Martin Jansen from Workers' World Media Productions (WWMP) raised objection to points 14 and 15 of the standing orders which referred to the confinement of emergency resolutions to 100 words or less. He suggested that there should be greater flexibility on amendments.

The standing orders were adopted with only 3 delegates voting against them.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

Sahra Ryklief presented the report of the Resolutions Committee. There were 4 resolutions accepted by the Committee.

A resolution of Palestine submitted by WWMP was declined as it had missed the deadline for the submission of resolutions and did not conform with the emergency resolutions regulation as outlined in the IFWEA constitution.

Debate and adoption of resolutions took place later on the same day.

Minutes of the 2003 General Conference

João Proença introduced the minutes of the 2003 General Conference for adoption. A copy of the previous Conference minutes is included as appendix 5 of this report.

The minutes were adopted without amendments.

Report of the General Secretary: 2004 – 2007

Dave Spooner presented his report to Conference. The full report is included as appendix 6. Key points Dave highlighted include:

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- The major successes of IFWEA during the period have included the development of substantial programmes in support of workers' organisation in the informal economy, the launch of a new regional organisation for workers' education in Arab countries (IFWEA-AC), the continuing development of the Global Network in partnership with Solidar, major preparatory work for the new global curriculum for 'organising in the global economy', and the launch of the international media project for workers' education.
- He noted his disappointment at the failure to develop a substantial global core programme of regional-based capacity-building for affiliates to improve the quality and scope of workers' education.
- While we can celebrate success with the formally constituted IFWEA in the Arab Countries (IFWEA-AC) regional organisation, Euro-WEA has faced major crises over the period, and in reality was no longer effectively functioning as a regional organisation by 2006.

Dave proceeded to outline the work of the Executive Committee, Secretariat communications, co-operation with sister organisations and international institutions, and the good relationships developed with the Global Union Federations.

He then outlined key IFWEA Programmes and Projects, some of which were externally-managed but which provided vital additional income to the Secretariat. Programme initiatives include the:

- Global Organising Education Programme
- Southern and East Africa Organising in the Informal Economy
- Informal Economy Workers' Rights
- Support to Workers' Education in the Arab-speaking countries
- International Labour Media Network

Financially, it's been a tough four years and despite strenuous attempts, the financial model adopted at the 2003 General Conference failed.

Finally Dave provided an outline of the staff employed at the Secretariat over the last period and thanked those organisations and individuals who provided voluntary support through translation of the IFWEA documents and materials.

Report of the Regional Coordinators

The following regional reports were presented:

Africa:	Mike Chungu
Arab Countries:	Hasan Barghouthi
Asia-Pacific:	Elizabeth Tang
Europe:	Björn Wall

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The regional reports for Africa, the Arab Countries and the Asia-Pacific are included in appendix 7. For the Europe report please refer to the discussion on Conference motions and resolutions.

Brief summaries of reports presented are included here:

Africa

The challenges present at the 2003 Conference in Portugal have not really changed. These include dwindling membership and resources, very little cooperation between NGOs and the trade union movement, the gap between the access to resources between and among the affiliates, and little co-ordination to promote organisational profile and coherence.

Despite, over the last four years, affiliates have been making interventions ranging from campaigns, research, and the provision of diverse workers education programmes.

Three key programmes that provided a regional focus and identity for IFWEA in Africa include:

- The Global Network
- The Southern & East Africa Project on Organising Workers in the Informal Economy
- The International Labour Media Network

Arab Countries

The years 2004-2007 witnessed great developments for IFWEA in the Arab region. The International Federation of Workers' Education Association in the Arab Countries (IFWEA-AC) was established in September 2004, in Amman Jordan. This was followed by the opening up of an IFWEA-AC office in Amman in 2006.

Key achievements include:

- Increasing affiliations to 12 member organisations
- The launch of two new centers for workers' education in Morocco and Iraq
- Several meetings of the IFWEA-AC regional executive committee
- The development of a regional strategic plan and projects to match this.
- Workshops on:
 - HIV/Aids
 - Fair trade
 - Migrant workers' rights
 - "Fighting poverty within the framework of the Lebanese trade union movement's program for rights-based demands"
- Participation in the Global Campaign Against Poverty and the launch of a "Mobilization Against Poverty in the Arab Region" project in 2005.
- The launch of a one year project on "Empowering the most marginalized workers in the Arab region".
- A training of trainers programme to build the capacity of worker educators in the Arab region.

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- Participation in the 2005 and 2007 World Social Forums.

Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific has experienced some of the most significant challenges in the period under review. The labour movement as a whole has been under attack poised by neo-liberal corporate strategies and repressive political development. At a national level IFWEA has continued to support trade unions to develop strategies in organizing and capacity-building, despite regional coordination becoming very difficult with limited resources rendering plans and proposals unimplemented. Further, there has been a significant decrease in membership.

Key activities include:

- Three regional meetings (all held in conjunction with Global Network Regional Seminars) discussing affiliate updates, IFWEA strategy, finances, the future direction of IFWEA Asia
- Global Network Asia with key discussions on trade agreements

Europe

Björn Wall presented the ABF paper on the restructuring of the European Region into a network structure. This is further discussed in the resolutions section that follows.

Following the General Secretary and Regional Coordinators reports a brief plenary discussion ensued with questions focussed on the decline of IFWEA in Europe and the limited participation of affiliates at Conference.

Financial Report

David Brookes, the Finance Officer presented the financial report.

His report is included as appendix 8.

Björn Wall, internal auditor was presented with the opportunity to make a contribution. He pointed out that the internal auditors have a very important role, with the responsibility to follow financial developments, but without an auditors report as in the case of public agencies.

He outlined how the Portugal Conference decided to change from honorary to internal auditors. Since then Joe Holly has followed the financial developments within the IFWEA secretariat, while from Stockholm he kept in touch with Joe. They also managed to meet once or twice a year.

He strongly recommended that IFWEA contracts a public accounts agency in 2008, but as an internal auditor he saw no reason as to why the financial report cannot be adopted.

Finally as an outgoing auditor, he wished IFWEA and the new leadership success.

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The financial report was unanimously adopted.

Conference Motions and Debates

The four conference resolutions accepted by the Resolutions Committee, along with amendments were presented to the plenary for debate and discussion.

The following motions were unanimously adopted:

1. Motion on European Cooperation, as proposed by the outgoing Executive Committee (For the full motion see appendix 9.)
2. Motion on the constitutional implications of the transfer of the Secretariat (For the full motion see appendix 10.)
3. Emergency motion on Kamal Abbas, as proposed by Solidar (For the full motion see appendix 11.)

The following motion, with amendments, was unanimously adopted:

4. Holding Motion, as proposed by the outgoing Executive Committee (For the full motion adopted see appendix 12.)

Action Programme 2008-2011

The Conference mandated the first Executive Committee to formulate an action programme for 2008-2011, based on the outcomes of this Conference and building on the strategy paper presented.

Budget and Affiliation Fees 2008-2009

Sahra Ryklief presented a proposed budget for 2008-2009.

A copy of the budget is included as appendix 13.

Sahra commented that affiliation fees would NOT be able to cover full time salaries for the General Secretary and an Administrator, hence the General Secretary would need to be part time. Susan Schurman has raised the grant to subsidise 50% of the Secretariat costs. The office for the 1st year would be hosted by the LRS in South Africa and by 2009 a separate office at Community house in Cape Town.

It was further suggested that membership fees remain unchanged It is suggested that the current member's pay the fee in full which will remain same as per last 4 years. She said that, Pat Horn suggested that the translation fee be added in the administration costs.

The proposed budget and affiliation fee structure with amendments were unanimously adopted.

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Elections

The list of proposed candidates for the new Executive committee was read out. The full list of nominees and the nominating affiliates is included as appendix 14.

Susan Schurman from the AFL-CIO and Rutgers University was unanimously elected President.

Sahra Ryklief from LRS was unanimously elected General Secretary.

The following Vice Presidents were unanimously elected:

Juan Carlos Vargas, PLADES
Hasan Barghouthi, DWRC
Károly György, MSZOSZ
Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, ABF
Namrata Bali, SEWA

The following candidates were unanimously elected as members of the Executive Committee

Paula Borges, ISET
Mike Bradley, GFTU
Mike Chungu, WEA Zambia
Alana Dave, ITF
Herbert Jauch, LARRI
Khalid Mahmood, LEF
Amina Majthoub, CDG
Rey Rasing, LEARN
Rahma Refaat, CTUWS
Conny Reuter, Solidar
Jorma Turunen, TSL
Elizabeth Tang, HKCTU (alternate)

Annika Nilsson from ABF was unanimously elected internal auditor.

Closing Speeches

João Proença made a final speech to conference. A copy of his closing speech is included as appendix 15.

The final closing speech was made by the newly elected General Secretary, Sahra Ryklief.

Vote of Thanks

The conference concluded with a vote of thanks by the newly elected President, Susan Schurman. Sue congratulated entire newly elected executive member's and mentioned that the position of 2nd internal auditor and alternates would be agreed upon by the new Executive.

Minute of the IFWEA 20th General Conference 2007

Thanks were presented to:

- Pooja from SEWA – for preparatory work in Ahmedabad
- Hasan and the staff at DWRC in Palestine and the IFWEA Amman office.
- Joao and the staff at UGT Portugal
- Promila Rocha – for taking notes and minutes.
- WEA UK & ABF Sweden – for sponsoring the celebration evening
- Crystal Dicks – for all the work in preparing the programme
- Libby Brookes – Conference Organiser - for organising the whole event from IFWEA's Secretariat
- David Brookes – IFWEA's Finance Officer
- Sam and Josie Brookes – for looking after their parents

The conference ended with all the newly elected and former members of the Executive being invited on stage. They were all presented with garlands as per Gujarati tradition.

Conference was closed at 1.15pm.