

## A new path towards unity and cooperation

“Our common and global strategic objectives are a new path towards greater unity and better cooperation within our network. Sharing, participating, respecting and harmonizing are key words to make that strategy happen!” declared Jean Ayoub, the ISS Secretary General during the last International Council meeting in Cape Town.

The International Council is the General Assembly of the organization and meets every three years. It is composed of some 80 members of the International Social Service international network. For the first time on the African continent, this statutory meeting held in Cape Town between 26 and 29 May 2009, gathered representatives from 16 Branches, Affiliated Bureaus and Correspondents.

Among the highlights of the meeting, the unanimous approval of the new ISS strategic objectives as presented by the Secretary General should be noted. Furthermore, Mr Jean Ayoub’s emphasis on the organization’s unique capabilities (or added value) to make significant contribution to the area of unaccompanied minors and international family mediation was welcomed by the audience. He strongly believes that these issues might become part of ISS core businesses in the near future.

One of the main items of the agenda was the revision of ISS Statutes that will enable the further strengthening of ISS operational capacity in the South and modernize the governance. The Working group on the revision of Statutes presented its proposal and facilitated an in-depth discussion on how to go forward. It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting will be held in May 2010 in Geneva after a one year consultation process with all the network members.

Branches and Affiliated Bureaus also reminded the valuable contribution of ISS Correspondents to the network. Brief presentations of Mrs Bilge Bol from Turkey and Mrs Virginia Tapià from Spain offered the representatives the opportunity to learn more about the essential roles played by the correspondents in different part of the world by providing reliable ISS services to the families and children who have become separated from their families as a consequence of international migration or displacement.

In their closing remarks, the participants expressed their satisfaction in participating to this International Council meeting, as they felt it will lead ISS on a new level of global repositioning.