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*At the UN: ARC's Co-Directors
Kim Vance & John Fisher*

ARC UPDATE

“Towards a Strategic International LGBT Human Rights Agenda”

- August 2005

ARC: The Year in Review

2005 has been another busy and productive year for ARC!

ARC's global listserv continues to grow, linking activists from around the world in support of our common goals.

In January 2005, we participated for the first time in the World Social Forum, the largest gathering of social justice activists in the world, which took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil. We were able to attend and participate in workshops, panels and discussion groups on a broad array of social justice, women's, labour and other issues, and strengthen our connections across movements. We co-presented a workshop on international organizing, sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and John Fisher was invited to speak on a panel titled “Breaking barriers, building bridges: a Dialogue between Movements”, which brought together representatives from labour, race/ethnocultural, feminist and LGBT movements for a spirited and positive dialogue on successes and challenges in working together to advance a progressive social justice agenda.



John presents at World Social Forum

Following the World Social Forum, we attended the annual Foreign Affairs Canada-NGO consultation in preparation for the 2005 Commission on Human Rights, where we participated in a number of thematic consultations on sexual orientation, gender identity, racism, violence against women and other issues, as well as country-specific consultations on human rights concerns in Nepal, China and Zimbabwe.

ARC Co-Director Kim Vance attended the Commission on the Status of Women and the Beijing +10 Review in March 2005, where the Commission reaffirmed its support for the Beijing Platform for Action despite attempts by the United States delegation to introduce an amendment to limit the human rights scope of the Declaration and explicitly exclude a right to abortion as a women's human rights issue.



Kim presents in Geneva

ARC was active throughout the 2005 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which took place in Geneva from March 14 to April 22, where we worked with activists from around the world to put LGBT issues on the Commission's agenda. ARC Co-Directors Kim Vance and John Fisher lobbied governments, made oral statements to the UN Commission, met with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs, co-organized a day of visibility, supported progressive resolutions, chaired NGO panels, and worked to strengthen global networks. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew affirmed Canada's support for both sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and New

Zealand delivered a statement in support of sexual orientation equality on behalf of 32 States from 4 of the 5 CHR regions, including, for the first time, an Asian country (South Korea).

Although a great deal has been accomplished, it is also apparent that much remains to be done. In a world where some countries still have the death penalty for homosexuality, and our human rights are often abused with impunity, the task ahead seems daunting. In the year ahead, we will work in collaboration with participants from the Global South to strengthen an international network, with a particular focus on building upon the leadership demonstrated by South Korea at the recent CHR, we will identify and implement strategies for advancing gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS issues internationally, we are seeking to establish a Geneva Secretariat, which will prove essential to the advancement of our work, and we will develop much-needed resource materials to facilitate broad NGO participation in UN processes.