



**GLOBAL AGENDA FOR SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TOWARDS AN ENGAGEMENT AGENDA**

Mobilisation of Social Workers, Social Work Educators &
Policy Practitioners and Developers for Global Social Change



BACKGROUND

Over three thousand Social Work Practitioners, Educators, and Development Workers meeting in Hong Kong in June 2010 have decided to launch a global movement that addresses the major challenges of our societies. The delegates agreed that our three organisations should speak out clearly from our experience of issues relevant to the larger community. The delegates reaffirmed the need to organise around major and relevant social issues that connect within and across our profession.

A number of issues of global relevance were agreed for further deliberations and development. The mobilization that we call for is aimed at producing an articulated and internationally concerted Global Agenda document that will serve as the global foundation for professional education, research and action: for clarifying future directions for the profession; for supporting advocacy and other campaigns to realize our cherished values; and for engaging the entire profession and those beyond.

Based on the decision reached at the Hong Kong conference, the leadership of the three international organizations (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)) representing the entire spectre of Social Work Practice, Social Work Education and Social Development Work globally, wish to involve all our members in the development of this joint Global Agenda.

The Hong Kong deliberations demonstrated strong support for re-stating the important role that the social work profession should play in promoting a humane and just world. The process which began in Hong Kong in June 2010 aims at developing multiple platforms to foster the emergence of a Global Agenda for the profession through the shared, collective voice of its members.

A Global Agenda developed in this fashion is expected to engage members of the entire profession actively over the next decade.

Since the Hong Kong conference in June 2010, numerous initiatives have taken place across the globe. These initiatives are part of the first consultation process following the development of the draft document in Hong Kong. The initiatives encouraged the leadership of the three organisations to reaffirm their commitment to the process by dedicating more resources to the development of the Global Agenda. All over the world, social work practitioners, educators and policy and development workers are organizing conferences, discussion forums, and other platforms to enrich the first document, which was produced during the Hong Kong Conference. The three organisations, therefore, recognise the existence of overwhelming support for the process.

The feedback from the first consultation demonstrates that issues identified in the draft Global Agenda document are endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the members who provided feedback.

However, from the consultation and continuous debates new themes and issues have emerged which were not covered by the first draft agenda document. Some respondents proposed additional strategies. Some of the recommendations included:

- Developing links with other “like minded organizations”, “building alliances” and “developing a more unified professional voice around the world.”
- “to be present where things happen and in relevant agencies”, and
- “to create mechanisms that give enough space during the Global Agenda building process for “participation by service users and community groups”.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all colleagues around the world for their effort and their responses to the first consultation process. We would like also to encourage all of you to participate actively in the mobilization and engagement processes in the days and months to come. Your participation will enable the social work community to elaborate a coherent and collective agenda for the future of our profession.

The process of elaborating a collective Agenda for the entire profession and beyond is nevertheless only at its beginning stages. Additional critical tasks must be completed in order to achieve the ambitious objectives that we collectively have decided to pursue. Growing mobilization and continuing debates among members of the profession (and beyond) are necessary to build a critical mass of actors that can become a force able to transform our aims into action.

GLOBAL AGENDA INITIATIVES

The three organisations (IASSW, IFSW and ICSW) have set up a common platform to help steer the process and support colleagues around the world towards their deliberations and mobilisation initiatives in relation to the Global Agenda. National and Regional associations of social workers, social work educators and policy practitioners have been encouraged to dedicate time and resources during their conferences and meetings to give priority to The Global Agenda building process.

Many of these bodies continue to be engaged with the process. We have requested that Global Social Work Day 2011, celebrated on 15 March 2011, should be used as an important occasion to stimulate deliberations and discussions. It is hoped that during this year's celebration of Social Work Day, Schools of Social Work, Social Work organizations and Development Agencies all over the world will organize discussion forums, workshops, and conferences in order to discuss the Global Agenda document and articulate their voices, linking local issues to the global agenda.

The Agenda Steering Committee of the three organizations will incorporate these multiple views in moving the Agenda document to the next level. A major global rendez-vous for the Global Agenda process will take place at the UN Head Quarters, in New York during UN Social Work Day (March 28, 2011). The day's agenda includes an important panel session on the Global Agenda.

In addition to these initiatives, a website dedicated to the Global Agenda has been created by the three organizations. It is intended to encourage debates and discussions and will serve as a means for collecting feedback from all those engaged in this important process for the profession. The Journal, International Social Work will dedicate a special issue to articles on issues and themes of the Global Agenda, as well as the process of mobilisation. Finally, the three organisations are using their websites, bulletins, posters and other means of communications as part of the Agenda-building campaign and for reaching a large part of our constituency.

HOW YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN PARTICIPATE

We are requesting all social work practitioner organisations, schools of social work and social policy and development workers to organise workshops, debates and/or discussion forums around the Global Social Work Day (15 March 2011) to discuss the issues articulated in the Draft Agenda document (attached) and to send us your feedback by 30 April 2011.

It is important that voices of social work practitioners, educators and policy and development workers from all parts of the world are taken into account in this important initiative. Our commitment is to incorporate as many of the diverse voices as possible into the final Global Agenda document.

Your deliberations around the Global Agenda, provide opportunities for each local, national and regional association or group to articulate specific and localized issues that can help mobilize stakeholders at National, Regional, and/or global levels. We trust that all of you will seize this unique opportunity to elaborate your specific agenda issues and contribute to the articulation of the Global Agenda Internationally.

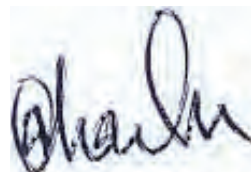
We enclose with this letter:

- 1)The first draft of the Global Agenda as discussed during the Hong Kong meeting;
- 2)Major issues raised during the first consultation process; and
- 3)A document that you may use to guide future discussion and deliberations of the Draft Agenda Document during your Social Work Day (or week) activities .
- 4)Possible strategies for campaigning



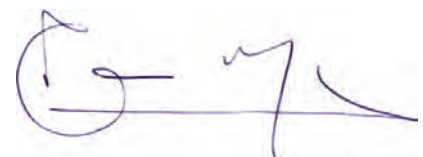
Tasse Abye

Chair for the Global Agenda IASSW



Charles Abbey

Chair for the Global Agenda ICSW



David N. Jones

Chair for the Global Agenda IFSW

Draft Global Agenda (adopted during the Hong Kong Conference)

- 1) To claim/reclaim the priority of 'political' action, develop a collective voice for social development, social work practitioners and social work educators
- 2) To start a collective process of elaborating and setting a common agenda for years to come that can unite those involved in social work and social development
- 3) To strategise around mechanisms for the implementation of common actions and the development of modalities for monitoring our effort

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) initiated a discussion to develop a Global Agenda for social work and social development in Hong Kong, China in June 2010. From our previous consultations, and the discussions during the Hong Kong conference, we propose the following four areas as a framework for the first draft of the Global Agenda, to be developed and articulated following further consultation:

Social and economic inequalities within countries and between regions

The recent and continuing economic crises and the modalities chosen by world leaders to deal with them (e.g. using resources to support the financial systems while cutting resources for social support and social development) have led to:

- Growing inequalities and their implications
- The worsening marginalisation of populations and of the working poor
- Increased vulnerability of poor people in countries which do not have an adequate social protection floor
- Community disintegration

Dignity and worth of the person

- Human right issues in relation to social, economic, cultural and political situations
- Respect for diversity and different belief systems, especially indigenous and first people's voices
- Political instabilities, violence, dominations, and the erosion of peace building processes
- Terrorism and modes of response by states and the modalities of handling global conflicts
- Migration, refugees, trafficking, immigrants, immigration and ways of handling these issues
- The role for social work practice, education and social development

Environmental Sustainability

- Disasters of natural and human origin, management and prevention
- Involvement of local communities in developing responses
- Implications for sustainable social development
- Protecting the physical environment
- Proactive engagement with social, human and ecological development

Importance of human relationships

Family and relationship issues and challenges across the lifespan emerge as a major concern in relation to the transformation of the world. For example the needs of:

- Children and families
- People with Disabilities
- People needing health and mental health services
- People who are ageing
- People with drugs and substance abuse problems
- People suffering from violence within domestic and intimate relationships

Issues that emerged from the first consultation:

Topics proposed to be added by the first consultation

- Improving access to social work education
- Health issues (physical and mental) – interface between social wellbeing and health (see also below)
- Recognition of differing local and regional agendas
- Social protection mechanism for all
- Indigenous Peoples and UN Declaration
- Intergenerational Equity
- Area “Social and economic inequalities”:
 - geographical/environmental precariousness; conflictual and post-conflictual situations; vulnerability of people in low income countries to global pressures
 - at individual and community levels
 - “social, health and economic inequalities within countries and between regions”
 - health consequences
- Area “Dignity and worth of the person”:
 - Religion over which human rights issues arise
 - “Human rights issues in relation to social, health, economic, cultural and political situations
- Area “Environmental sustainability”
 - critical importance of natural resources to healthy communities
 - social, economical and environmental factors
 - Environmental sustainability for health
- Gender
- All forms of Discrimination
- Knowledge generation and sharing – including use of indigenous knowledge

APPENDIX 3

Some question to stimulate discussion about the draft Agenda for Social Work and Social Development

Please see below a list of tentative questions that you may use to guide your discussions of the Global Agenda around the World Social Work Day (Mar 15). We have also provided some general ideas for a process to guide your deliberations - if you choose a workshop format.

At the end of your process, please send a brief report outlining your findings and any specific changes that you would recommend in the document. This report is to be sent to at:

International Association of Schools of Social Work - iassw.globalagenda@gmail.com

International Council on Socail Welfare - globalagenda@icsw.org

International Federation of Social Workers - globalagenda@ifsw.org

a) Suggested Questions

1. What are the priority social problems/issues/challenges experienced locally/nationally?
2. How do these issues and challenges fit with themes of the Global Agenda document?
3. What specific actions should the following bodies take to address these priorities?
 - a. Social work education programs (NOTE: This question will be different depending on the organization)
 - b. Social work practice associations
 - c. Other related organizations
4. How can we work together and build capacity – both within the profession, and in collaboration with other groups, organizations, institutions, etc – to address these priorities?

b) Suggested Process

Please feel free to choose whatever process you see as appropriate. These may include workshops, panel discussions, etc. If you choose a workshop format, some ideas are presented below.

Conducting one or more sessions (e.g. workshops) with stakeholders

- Present the draft Agenda Document
- Discuss the document in relation to the questions listed above and to the suggestions raised in the first consultation. If the group is large, breakout groups may be created, each addressing all of the questions
- Bring all participants together and discuss the findings of the individual groups. The deliberations should emphasize the following:
 - Themes in the Agenda document that reflect our common voice globally
 - Unique local social issues and challenges that are not reflected in the themes of the Agenda document
 - Any recommendations regarding the themes and the action strategies. For example:
 - Roles that the social work/social development profession should perform in addressing these issues? – e.g. influencing policies and practices?
 - How we work together and build capacity – both within the profession, and in collaboration with other groups, organizations, institutions, etc – in pursuit of the agenda

**Possible strategies for campaigning to influence
International and Regional Agencies,
National and local Governments,
Social Work community and Stakeholders**

Aiming to have a representative from every country around the world at the UNSWD in New York March 2012, handing over to the UN General Secretary the Global Agenda document;

Aiming to have a representative from every country in each region at the UNSWD in Africa, In Europe, in Asia, in Latin America, 20 March 2012, handing over the Global Agenda document to the President of Regional Bodies (African Union, European Union, Mercosur, ASEAN etc) ;

Aiming to hand over to every National Government Head in the world, the Global Agenda and the national Agenda document;

Aiming to hand over the Global Agenda, the national Agenda and (when possible) the Local Agenda document to every Local Government head in each country;

Organise several campaigns, using all forms of communication to advocate the Agenda issues that are developed by the profession and stakeholders at local, national, regional and international levels;

Promote scientific and academic research and publications that analyse the development and the transformation of the issues raised by the Global Agenda;

Identify potential organized networks and organisation working on the same areas for partnership (for example participation as an organised body during the world social forum); etc...