



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-fifth session

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to  
achieve sustainable development for all**

### **Statement submitted by International Federation of Social Workers, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) is a global organisation supported by 116 country members that work towards achieving social justice, human rights, and social development through the promotion of social work, best practice models, and the facilitation of international cooperation. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) supports the 55th session of the Commission for Social Development, and the development of strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.

IFSW is an international partner to The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, a ten year programme that collects evidence from social workers around the world to inform our policies as we work towards building inclusive sustainable communities.

Through harmonious collaboration for the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (hereafter referred to simply as the “Global Agenda”), the International Federation of Social Workers strives to promote social and economic equalities by focusing on major causes that constrain individual opportunity, human development, and care of the earth’s ecosystem (Global Agenda, 2014).

On the ground practitioners have been particularly concerned about the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in many countries and between countries. In particular where there is severe austerity or there have been significant changes in demographics through people being displaced from their homelands, through war, climate change or natural disaster like floods and earthquakes. IFSW recently adopted a new global policy paper on The Role of Social Workers in Social Protection Systems and in particular the role that social workers can take in helping transform societies to be more responsive, inclusive and fair to all community members. The profession of social work advocates for a change in strategy in social protection systems that currently address individual need and perpetuate poverty to moving forward to creating transformational social protection systems that build community capacity and create more equal and just societies.

### Challenges around the eradication of poverty

The International Federation of Social Workers recognizes the widening social and economic inequality that exists in most countries through international reports and research studies that emphasize constraints on the eradication of poverty. Additionally, the International Federation of Social Workers and its partners commit to focusing on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Furthermore, emphasizing strategies that work towards advancement of the social protection floor, decent work and international labour standards will be of great benefit to all people.

Since the 1980s, financial turbulence has become a permanent fixture of the world economy; resulting in further consequences such as unemployment, homelessness and insecurity, family distress, loss of educational opportunities for children and increase of death rates (Global Agenda, 2014). The Post-2015 UN Development Agenda states that 80 percent of the global population has no access to comprehensive social protection. Social Protection Systems (SPS) are a vital component for tackling poverty and inequality. It is considered a necessary political

step towards universal, transformational and comprehensive social protection for all. Stringent labour regulation, informal employment, and restrictive labour laws have adverse impacts towards infrastructure projects and a moral hazard for entering unemployment in developing countries (Making Globalization Socially Sustainable, 2011). Furthermore, social safeguards are essential to fostering demographic change, global health risks, and food price volatility (Social Protection Floor, 2011). The International Federation of Social Workers commits to efforts to eradicating poverty through the promotion of social protection systems.

There were four conclusions in the Second Global Agenda Report, published in 2016 that illustrate the complex situation in attempting to eradicate poverty:

- Displacement of people from their homes by war, climate change, and natural disasters perpetuates economic inequalities. This needs international intervention at diplomatic level to support what people are trying to achieve at the front line of mending the damage to people.
- Poverty needs to be addressed through Social Protection Systems that are effective and lead towards social inclusion and cohesion.
- Political education of the interdependence of social development and economic development in creating sustained community development needs promoting internationally. This means funding and promoting long term research into best practices in this area.
- Effective work is achieved by co-production between experts by experience, professional expertise and community support.

#### Working Toward Environmental and Climatic Sustainability

The next theme of the Global Agenda is the promotion of environmental and climatic sustainability to strengthen local, national and global partnerships to grow social capital that underpins economic health.

The promotion of environmental sustainability strengthens and establishes local, national and global partnerships that aim to protect the natural environment, and integrate human capacity. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and key stakeholders uphold the Global Agenda to promote environmental sustainability, encourage and facilitate research into the social work role in relation to disasters and environmental challenges, and foster the facilitation of sustainable social development outcomes (Global Agenda, 2012). Moreover, the International Federation of Social Workers promotes the proactive engagement of local communities in developing disaster responses. Collaboration is key to finding solutions for environmental sustainability, and protecting our planet.

#### Strengthening Human Relationships

Our final agenda theme will be on strengthening human relationships that are critical to all our other objectives. All information so far has confirmed that working with people in co-production to achieve positive change is the best way of building social capital. It is empowering and inclusive and combats the inequality perpetuated by the “them and us” paradigm.

The International Federation of Social Workers commits to empowering communities through collaborative efforts to promote inclusion and well-being for all, enabling all members to participate and belong; including vulnerable populations such as, children and families, people with disabilities, people needing health and mental health services, people who are ageing, people with drugs and substance abuse problems, and people suffering from violence within domestic and intimate relationships (Global Agenda, 2010). It is in hopes that this practice will foster diverse community stakeholders who are invested in benefiting their own communities, and interrelated systems. Moreover, the organization recognizes and encourages the importance of sustainable, interdependent communities to achieve social development and well-being for all while advocating for methodologies which support further community empowerment (Global Agenda, 2012).

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

Social and economic development is an integral component that requires the engagement and enhancement of relationships amongst local, national, regional and global stakeholders and most importantly including the people who are the experts through experience. Having a collaborative effort further facilitates an action plan using a democratic process towards the elimination of poverty while empowering people with equitable and fair opportunities. Further, it is essential that communities are given a stable, well-resourced and educated platform to strengthen social development and economic growth. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) makes the following recommendations:

- Advocate for new forms of Social Protection Systems in communities across the globe, working to prevent and alleviate poverty through collective efforts that utilize indigenous knowledge to support transformational change.
- Promote social and economic equalities through improving the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities in a conducive, just and fair environment.
- To work toward environmental and climatic sustainability in all parts of the world so that people are not forced into becoming displaced from their homes and communities.
- Promote the inclusion and enhancement of all voices in the community as a means of cultivating investment in social and economic development for all.