

Statement of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) HLPF 2021

Guiding questions (found on HLPF website)

- *How can the ECOSOC be better equipped to ensure that it continues to support the peoples of the world in peace, dignity and equality, building on the recent reforms introduced by the General Assembly?*
- *What mechanisms are needed to make multilateralism more inclusive and more conducive to the policy coordination, international solidarity and delivery of global public goods?*
- *What should the multilateral architecture, including ECOSOC, look like to advance transformative actions for a more resilient, greener and sustainable recovery and for long-term sustainable development?*

As the global professional body for social work the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) acts as an inclusive and democratic facilitator of global standards, policies and ethical principles. Each of the Federation's 146 national associations both contribute to the formulation of these standards and are also bound by them, resulting in globally shared values, and standards that bind the profession together. Consequently, today there are over 5 million social work practitioners that share the values of human rights, self-determination and social justice.

IFSW has been granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

To succeed, the SDGs will require a better distribution of resources, political will, transparency, and global collaboration. COVID 19 has underscored the inequities in communities and countries – be it access to food and shelter or healthcare – that continue to be exacerbated by the lack of a cohesive global response to public health pandemics. To achieve an *“Inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”*, there must be a commitment by member states to resourcing public health systems that are accessible and rights-based. In support of the ECOSOC reaffirmation of *“the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, without distinction of any kind”*, we must formally commit to meet the SDG target of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Strong Social Protection System

Social protection builds the basic layer of safety for the whole society. As has been highlighted at the HLPF 2021, in 2020 global extreme poverty rose for the first time in over 20 years, and up to 124 million people were pushed into extreme poverty.

ISWF recommends that governments invest in social protection, as a comprehensive system contributes to the reduction of poverty, reduces inequalities, contributes to social cohesion, and lays the base for a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable future.

Social protection systems will be most effective if they are guided by collaboration and cooperation, and grounded in structural and systemic reforms.

Reducing harmful Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges that we face and as social workers we are united in our call for immediate action from every actor in the region, and across the world. The changes confronting our environment because of global warming are already profound and extensive, making climate policy an urgent responsibility for Member States.

As [recent analysis](#) points out, only a relatively small set of fossil fuel producers may hold the key to systemic change on carbon emissions with 100 companies being the source of more than 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988. We need Member States to act and better regulate the sector to ensure we have a healthy and sustainable environment. Climate action requires a whole of society approach and Member States must be willing to develop meaningful partnerships and networks.

Inclusive Partnership / Multilateralism

Ubuntu is the guiding theme for Social workers along with our constant upholding of the dignity and worth of each person and the importance of collective responsibility and the power of collaboration. Multilateralism works by ensuring a meaningful involvement of key stakeholders and civil society (including those with lived experience) not only in raising awareness on their view, but mostly in program development, regulatory and and policy making, the delivery of services, and all steps on the path to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Social workers work for equity, social justice and honoring human rights. The way forward must include civil society on every political level to ensure that policies and programs are inclusive, account for the needs of all and ensure that those persons and communities often left out (due to laws, discrimination, and/or systemic oppression) are leading efforts and defining solutions.

Multilateral Architecture - recommendation of IFSW

While the world currently sees some governments establishing more equal policies, too many authorities still remain top-town-oriented and oppressing systems. Brutal blockages of civil society movements by governments and military are shocking the world. On the contrary, the societies increasingly show their respectable knowledge and will to co-build a system that contains a fair balance of rights and obligations for its citizens. Unfortunately, a small group of aggressive people do disturb the large group of non-violent movements.

IFSW recommends the ECOSOC and its member states

- a) to deepen the discussion on best practices for the involvement of the society.
- b) shall utilise participatory working models and integrate various stakeholders.
- c) to be aware that participatory processes need several approaches to be successful.
- d) shall give professionals, such as social workers, the role to (co-) lead and moderate community and stakeholders in such processes.

Most of all, governments avoid any structure that hinders the contribution of civil society in policy making.

IFSW believes that, a constant involvement of the people

- a) will sharply increase the social peace within a society (not only good for the people but also necessary for doing business and economic development).
- b) will help people to understand not only their rights but also their obligations towards their community and society (and government).
- c) is the operationalisation of a transformation and the comprehensive Agenda 2030 (SGDs); the various stakeholders (civil society and professionals, environment protectors, politicians and business and others) with their various backgrounds will input different thinking. Well guided, it leads to holistic eco-social solutions containing sustainable planning models.

As social workers we are committed to working with the United Nations on every level to ensure that every individual, group and community is provided human rights protections and the support to meet their full potential. (IFSW,2021)

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