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International Council on Social Welfare

January 2021

President's Message: ICSW in 2021



*Prof. Sang-Mok Suh,
President, ICSW.*

The New Year 2021 has come. I extend my best wishes for a happy new year to all of ICSW members.

Due to COVID-19, 2020 was a year when we realized the importance of normal life, and there have been many changes in our society. We have endured a tougher time than ever before.

However, various social problems have also emerged in the era of COVID-19. The most prominent issue is the rising inequality problem. Social polarization will intensify in the coming months due to the economic recession caused by the COVID-19, and we will face a more unequal society than ever before.

In developing countries, widening poverty issue also rises rapidly as economic activities get sluggish. Many such as the World Bank Poverty Report predict that recent achievements made during last 20 years under the MDGs and SDGs will be wiped out completely in just one year.

I believe it is our duty, as an international NGO specializing in social welfare and social development, to take concrete measures and actions, including setting agendas on social problems raised in the new COVID-19 era.

Accordingly, ICSW global office intends to discuss and argue the important role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the social welfare field during the first half of this year. It is widely expected that the outbreak of COVID-19 will trigger digitalization boom around the world. However, because the application of digitalization is relatively late in the social welfare field compared to other sectors, more discussions and actions are needed in this regard.

Recently, the 59th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development chose

“Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all” as its priority theme this year.

In line with this movement, we are also planning to hold a side event along with the UN Commission for Social Development on the theme of “Social inclusion through digital inclusion in the context of sustainable development: trends and challenges” in early February to begin our discussions on digitalization of social welfare sector.

ICSW global office will also host another more extensive conference in May on the same topic.

In the second half of the year, we are planning to hold another international conference with the title; **“Food insecurity in Africa and the quest for child-sensitive social protection: what civil society can do?”**

Furthermore, ICSW global office is also working on hosting another conference at the end of this year with the title; **“Preparing for the post COVID-19 era: Towards universal social protection”** to discuss the ways for the social welfare community to respond and take actions in the new era of COVID-19.

Through these discussions and activities, we will devise various measures to resolve many challenges that the international social welfare community is facing in the changing

era of COVID-19.

I am confident that social welfare community will change and adapt successfully in the rapidly changing era of COVID-19.

In this context, ICSW will do our best and take the lead in creating fields for global discussion and fields for exchange and cooperation to achieve our common goals in close cooperation with various international organizations.

Our members’ support is needed to successfully implement above action plans this year.

I look forward to your participation and interest in the conferences that ICSW will host in the future.

Stay Safe!

International Social Work Education and Development Online Conference ISWED 2021



P.K. Shajahan Ph.D/Dean Academics/Professor of Social Work/TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, Mumbai, India, and Vice-President of ICSW. Co-chair ISWED 2021



With more than 1400 abstracts received, confirmation of eminent scholars and thought leaders as Keynote speakers and with many social initiatives planned in the city of Rimini, Italy; we were poised for a very successful conference. Due to the worldwide disruption caused by the Covid19 pandemic, we were forced to cancel the Rimini conference (SWESD 2020).

Though the cancellation of the conference was inevitable, members of both ICSW and IASSW decided to make best use of the preparations for the Rimini Conference by rebranding it in online mode.

IASSW Treasurer, Professor Ngoh Tiong TAN, along with ICSW Vice President, Professor P.K Shajahan, took the lead in organizing the International Social Work and Development Online Conference ISWED 2021 with the theme: **“Human Relationships, Keys to Remaking Social Work for the Future”** in an attempt to bring together social workers,

social development organizations and social policy practitioners to make an impact on the lives of people and societies in the midst of incredible changes that besets us.

We believe that human relationships not only bring joy and meaning to human existence, they are the primary basis for survival of the human race. Social Work education, research and practice as well as social policy needs to respond proactively to promote human well-being, so as to foster positive social change and social integration. Social relationship is vital for both the individual and society to thrive.

For ISWED 2021, all the abstracts accepted for Rimini Conference were considered and are organised into oral presentations, symposiums, workshops and poster sessions. All the keynote and plenary speakers of the Rimini Conference are expected to deliver their addresses at ISWED 2021 too.

In addition to this, regional forums and round tables as well as several networking sessions are planned as part of the conference spread over January, March and April 2021. The conference is organised with the following axes:

- **Axis 1:** Promoting human relationships, a global context and sustainable development.

- **Axis 2:** Sustainable Development Goals in fostering human relationships.
- **Axis 3:** Social Policy to enhance human relationships.
- **Axis 4:** Gender and minority issues, micro enterprise, and social inclusion and integration.
- **Axis 5:** Challenges and capacities of Social Work Education and Research in promoting human relationships and future development.

The entire conference is organized in three segments as below;

1. Kick-off sessions - January 15-16, 2021

Welcome addresses were delivered by Presidents of IASSW and ICSW Prof. Annamaria Campanini and Dr. Sang-mok Suh followed by Eileen Younghusband Award Lecture by Prof. Angelina Yuen and a Keynote address by Prof. Walter Lorenz on both the days respectively. The recordings of both the addresses can be accessed at

<https://www.iasw-aiets.org/iswed2021/6165-iswed-2021-recording-of-kickoff-plenary-sessions-jan-15-16-2021/>

2. Symposiums, Workshops, Regional Sessions – March 16-19, 2021

A series of symposiums and regional sessions will be organized by regions and interest groups including deliberations on Global Agenda and Global Standards. In addition to interesting keynote addresses, celebration of World Social Work Day will be part of this segment.

3. Main Conference Presentation of Accepted abstracts – April 14-17, 2021

Oral presentations by the participants whose abstracts have been accepted will be the focus of this segment. Keynote addresses, Katherine Kendel Award Lecture, several networking sessions and Closing plenaries will be part of this segment.

Conference Registration and Participation

There is a nominal registration fee for participating and accessing all the conference materials, including the recorded videos of the presentations.

Participation certificate will be issued to all the registered participants. Members of ICSW will get a discounted price of registration.

The registration fees is as follows:

Participants who are neither members of ICSW or IASSW:	US \$50
ICSW / IASSW members:	US\$ 20
Student participants:	US\$ 10

For registrations please visit: <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/iswed> registration/

Sponsorship and Publications

We are hoping to have institutional sponsorship from organizations and members. Sponsors can advertise on the program and banners and organize networking sessions. Tentatively the rates are:

Platinum Sponsor	: US \$3000 and above
Gold Sponsor	: US \$2000 and above
Silver Sponsor	: US \$1000 and above
General Sponsor	: US \$500 to 999.
Individual Sponsor	: Any amount from US \$ 10 – US \$500.

Sponsorship could also be in kind such as collaborating with different organizations to run parallel events or co-host sessions.

A series of the publications in the form of edited volumes are planned around themes of the different axes, including the

presentations, keynote addresses and invited articles.

For any queries related to ISWED 2021 please write to iswedonline2021@gmail.com

Implementing ICSW Global Agenda



Prof. Sergei Zelenev - ICSW Special Representative to the United Nations, and Advisor to the ICSW President

The adoption of Global Program every four years is a welcome opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved, and what needs to be done. The 2020-2024 Global Program adopted by the General Assembly in November 2020 is no exception.

It is particularly significant as its adoption coincided with the election of a new ICSW President Dr Suh Sang Mok and the changes in the ICSW global management team. The new priorities outlined by the President is a new hope and are a clear way out of the intellectual impasse where ICSW found itself recently.

The present situation is complicated given the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic many of the members are facing. The cancellation of the 2020 Joint World Conference in Rimini has not only inflicted substantial financial damage on the ICSW but also clouded cooperation with its partners. Much effort is required to restore this cooperation and to move it further. Some steps in this direction have already been made.

The vision of ICSW purpose is evolving. The agenda setting and capacity-building dimensions in its proposed activities are most important for the knowledge-based organization such as ICSW. At the same time, it is strongly connected to our memberships and expectations of our national committees vis-a vis global office. These expectations might be somewhat different compared to the 80's, 90's or early 2000's.

First and foremost, and quite naturally, the national member organizations expect support from the global office, but on the other hand, the global office cannot function at its full capacity in the absence of strong national members. In other words, this is a two-way street.

We urgently need to discuss a range of issues that ICSW could adopt as priorities for action in the first quarter of the 21st century. These priorities need to be ICSW-specific reflecting our traditional values and features specified in the new 2020-2024 Global Program. At the same time, they should be also innovative in concept, appealing to the

members and capable of attracting new members and stakeholders. The global organization needs to stay "ahead of the curve" when it considers its outgoing messages to the national and global audiences, putting it differently it should capture the attention of potential supporters and make it clear that it is unique in its advocacy and capacity development efforts. It should be appealing NOW to those who would like to make our world a better place in the future.

Some of the new ideas were already discussed during the celebration of the ICSW 90th anniversary in Dublin. What is presented below are some points for additional consideration when implementation of the new Global Program is considered.

Globally our organization embraces countries at very different levels of development, with very different national priorities. We are united in an effort to speak for the less fortunate and underprivileged, we are keen to give them voice they might be deprived elsewhere. Ensuring funding for the universal provision of basic amenities—access to housing, water, sanitation and electricity, as well as essential social services such as nutrition, health care and education—is crucial to the reduction of poverty and the promotion of equality of opportunity. The fact that ICSW is a non-sectarian and non-political organization dealing with a broad range of social welfare issues is our asset, but these issues should be addressed in a

nuanced way, making sense to all members on the ground.

Common themes

Some current trends and respective themes are seen in most countries and could be considered of a common significance. Their analysis could inform and shape the implementation of the new Global Program.

After a discussion they could be adopted as key priorities for the future. Despite a range of important issues on the global agenda it might be sufficient to mention here only four that could be seen as most important for our path forward. Apart from their programmatic significance global activities aligned with these themes could definitely generate donor support for ICSW, particularly if they are accompanied by action-oriented and appealing projects. They could also facilitate our engagement with established and new partners.

A. **Climate change** is a widely-recognized global challenge. Its harmful impacts affect millions of people now and may affect many more in the future. The natural disasters have increased in frequency and intensity and such hazards are likely to intersect with COVID-19 outbreak and public-health response, depleting both emergency-response resources and social funding generally. They will exacerbate and are likely be exacerbated by both the unfolding economic crisis and long-standing socioeconomic disparities. Social workers

and social development practitioners have to cope with consequences of climate change. It is a global problem with a lot on unclear repercussions. Climate change should never be overlooked when we formulate a new vision. Agenda 2030 of the United Nations provides a lot of useful entry points for any specific problem our organization might wish to consider. Our actions needs to be both national and global.

B. **Inequality** is an entrenched problem

affecting key aspects of well-being in all countries. Its significance is well-recognized and is a course of constant concern in most countries. Disparities across and within countries are visible in numerous dimensions of well-being such as life expectancy at birth, child mortality and nutrition, provision of health care and educational attainment. The magnitude of income disparities varies across countries, but it also trickles down to individuals. Poverty, a multidimensional issue, is one of key priorities in this context. Concentration of income at the very top of the distribution ladder affects social groups such as youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants or indigenous peoples. In other words, it strongly affects social groups that used to be a focus of attention of ICSW through the years.

C. **Social inclusion** remains a paramount

challenge in most countries. It is closely intertwined with poverty, inequality and deficits of well-paid employment. Attributes such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, and disability or migration status often lead to denial of opportunities and uneven participation on political or civic life. On the other hand, improvements in basic infrastructure and provision of universal social services have positive cumulative effect on well-being, promoting social inclusion and “society for all”. Solidarity dimension, social citizenship and social rights could be also considered here as they represent an important subset of issues that may shape the new vision of purpose.

D. Importance of universal, holistic and coherent social policies has proven its significance in many countries. ICSW has consistently advocated for such policies in its statements to the UN and beyond.

We should continue our advocacy for integrating economic and social policies when macroeconomic package always has a social dimension. This is an important and widely recognized theme. These aspects should be also taken on board in our consideration. Social protection--supported and promoted by ICSW-- belongs to one of the ICSW core policy measures that could address several important social goals at once. We should continue our advocacy for

universal social protection, in the content of SPF and beyond.

Ways and means

Historically, ICSW gained its prominence proving a space for discussions, networking and subsequent social action. Since 2010 the tripartite conferences organized in cooperation with IASSW and IFSW became a common hallmark, pooling financial and organizational resources of three sister organizations. The global conferences are also a source of income for ICSW so its importance cannot be exaggerated.

Giving dues to this global activity we may also wish to consider ICSW-specific conferences organized in rotation between the regions and taking place between the joint global Conferences. The initiatives outlined by the President regarding three ICSW-sponsored conferences go in that direction. Such conferences have been already convened in some ICSW regions but they are not convened yet in every region.

We could try to bridge this gap. Not necessarily as big as tripartite conferences they nevertheless could give a new visibility to ICSW and promote capacity development crucial for our members. Such conferences could be complemented with pertinent seminars if and when it is feasible; sometimes seminars or workshops could become an alternative to full-fledged conferences.

Consideration of capacity-development activities must be done in every region. We should recognize, however, that while the tools are important they cannot replace the content of our activities.

Strengthening civil society throughout the world to achieve ICSW objectives is one of our Constitutional obligations. ICSW used to be very active in this field organizing training seminars and workshops.

Capacity-development seminars aimed at training civil society organizations dealing with social issues could again become a hallmark of ICSW activities regionally. It would be highly desirable for ICSW to establish new partnerships with national and international "think tanks", particularly those dealing with social development issues. Such cooperation would reinforce our knowledge-based credentials.

Finally, the profile of national member organizations should be strengthened. Our national leaders should be well known to policy making community in their countries, recognized nationally and seen as pioneers at the forefront of social development efforts. ICSW should remain a brand name and every effort should be made to strengthen its appeal.

ICSW and Social Welfare in 2021: Moving forward together in the face of COVID-19



Professor Antonio López Peláez, Executive Director of ICSW and Professor of Social Work and Social Services at the National Distance Education University (UNED) (Spain)

I am honoured to serve ICSW as Executive Director, effective November 2020. Throughout my career as a social work and social services researcher and professor, the ICSW has been an institution of reference for me. If there is one thing we need in the field of social welfare, it is to get on the public agenda to debate the challenges we face and share good practices in the very diverse fields that make up social welfare. From the ICSW, you can count on the best of my efforts and experience to contribute to the reconstruction of social welfare in the midst of a pandemic such as the one caused by COVID-19.

The first step is to bring back our monthly Newsletter. Starting with this January 2021 issue, our goal is to turn the Newsletter into a global speaker for the ICSW. To achieve this, we need the collaboration of all ICSW members. The strategy is to organize the

Newsletter issues around topics of regional importance to give voice to key players selected from each region, and address cross-cutting issues such as the Sustainable Development Goals, digitalization or food crises for which it is important to establish clear diagnoses and disseminate results and good practices.

This will allow us to get to know each other better, share experiences, make visible the advantages of being a member of such a relevant community as the ICSW and contribute to the collective welfare.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to change our priorities, and in a global organization such as the ICSW, digitalization offers us an opportunity to work as a team, to disseminate our proposals, and to improve the services we provide to our members and to the entire global society.

Skimming over the daily debates on the pandemic, I would like to turn the gaze in this first contribution to the ICSW Newsletter to a key phenomenon that has been accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis: **the digitalization of our societies**. And also one of its effects: the need to design inclusive social policies in a digital environment.

Without digitalization there can be no inclusion, and the digitalization model we are implementing in our welfare systems will have lasting consequences. Digitalization represents a collective, global challenge that

will redefine the relationships between users, professionals and the administrations or companies that provide welfare services.

The importance of this issue has led the United Nations Commission for Social Development to organize its 59th session around the theme "Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all."

As in the past 90 years, all of us at ICSW need to bring our perspective to the social welfare debate. In the field of digital inclusion, some key issues are as follows:

✓ Firstly, **the protection of citizens'**

rights, which are increasingly being decided in the digital sphere. Our institutions are becoming digitized, and more and more services and benefits have a digital gateway. Therefore, the digital skills of professionals working in the field of social welfare (including social workers) and of citizens are essential. The digital divide is not only about access. It also entails a gap of use, of skills, of life trajectories.

✓ Secondly, **the services we provide.**

Our users are citizens, although in many places across the world they are confined. How can we develop new ways of interviewing, visiting homes, making diagnoses and intervening using new

technologies and the Internet? How can we turn digitalization into an opportunity to improve citizens' care, the public administration, the welfare state and social services?

✓ Thirdly, **digital rights, digital**

intervention and digital skills have to form part of the curricula in universities.

We have to be trained to intervene in an environment with its own particular characteristics. We are not going to lay aside face-to-face communication, but it is true that the digital world requires specific training in digital skills.

✓ Fourthly, **the need to value the**

scientific and expert knowledge of scientists, including social scientists, and of course of social workers.

In a context marked by the existence of a populist wave, radicalization, fake news and the questioning of scientists and experts, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the right to rigorous information, to a professional evaluation based on expert knowledge and science, including social sciences.

As a leading organization in the field of social welfare for the past 90 years, the ICSW has always collaborated in building a society of rights and for citizens, in and from all walks of life. In the third decade of the 21st century, ICSW continues, through our collective

efforts, to be an effective tool to put social welfare back on the public agenda, including the digital challenge. As the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted, we are saved by science based on cooperation and technical competence. And we are saved by our collective ability to bond, recognize, respect and pursue common goals.

Contributing the best we have to contribute to a better future is, beyond doubt, a worthwhile endeavour. In this sense, I encourage you to participate in the ICSW, which belongs to all of us, and I, personally, promise you my most steadfast dedication.

I wish you all a happy and, above all, a healthy 2021.

Please take care of yourselves in this time of pandemic.

Coming Up!! - ICSW Activity – Please Save the Dates

**Online side event 12 February
08.30-09.45 am EST**

Title: **Building Roofs and Raising Floors Through Inclusive Digital Technologies and A Global Fund for Social Protection**

Co-Sponsored by: **Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF), Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) and International Council on Social Welfare**

The Global Coalition of Social Protection Floors (GCSPF), Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) cosponsor a 75-minute side event during the 59th Session of the Commission for Social Development with speakers from Governments, United Nations, Civil Society and the Academia.

The event aims at tackling the diverse and interconnecting perspectives on social protection and homelessness, and consider why the Global Fund for Social Protection is necessary to deliver to all the right to social protection.

Another dimension is a look at how digital technology can extend social protection floors to those who are living without roofs.

<http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/>

Side-event: **Social inclusion through digital inclusion in the context of sustainable development: trends and challenges.**

Commission for Social Development, 59th Session, United Nations, 9 February 2021, 10-11.15 am, online

The purpose of the present side-event organized by the ICSW in cooperation with other partners is to explore the pre-requisites and core activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities,

including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and are fully capable of improving the terms of their participation in society through wider opportunities and access to resources, including digital resources.

The presenters will address the existing challenges, as well as good practices that contribute to shaping the most appropriate models of digitalization focused on social well-being and welfare promotion.

<https://www.fundacion.uned.es/actividad/idactividad/23963>

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome!