

International Council on Social Welfare Global Programme 2016 to 2020¹

THE CONTEXT OF THE 2016-2020 GLOBAL PROGRAMME

The Global Programme for 2016-2020 is shaped by four considerations:

- a) The founding objectives of the ICSW,
- b) Continuing what is seen to be of value in the ICSW Global Programme for 2012- 2016,
- c) The *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: The Commitment to Action* agreed to in 2012 by ICSW and its partner organizations, the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW),
- d) The new global economic and policy circumstances in the upcoming period dominated at a global policy level by the implementation of the new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as adopted by the UN in September 2015.

A. The objectives of the ICSW are to:

1. Promote forms of social and economic development which aim to improve human well-being, reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability, and build up effective empowerment and resilience, especially amongst disadvantaged sectors of the population;
2. Strive, in a spirit of solidarity and dignity, for recognition and realization of all human rights, including fundamental rights to employment, income, food, shelter, education, health care and security;
3. Promote equality of opportunity, freedom of expression, freedom of association, participation and access to human services, and oppose discrimination, stigmatization and prejudice of any kind;
4. Promote policies and programmes which strike an appropriate balance between social and economic goals, embrace human resource development and institutional building, and which are geared at socio-economic inclusion and upholding the principle of “leaving no one behind”;
5. Strengthen civil society throughout the world to achieve these objects;
6. Seek implementation of these objects by governments, international and intergovernmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations in cooperation with its global networks, partners and alliances.

B. Evaluation of the 2012-2016 Global Programme.

¹ The 2016-2020 Programme was adopted by the ICSW General Assembly on 30 June 2016

The evaluation of the current ICSW Global Programme 2012-2016 has been undertaken in stages, first by the Management Committee and the Board at the annual meeting in Dublin in January 2016, and second, at the General Assembly meetings 2016 after thorough preceding discussion with member organizations. The conclusions of the above are as follows:

- The Global Programme 2012-2016 has been an important policy document, clearly presenting the core ICSW objectives and functions;
- The above Programme provided guideposts to the member organizations and facilitated the work of ICSW on the reduction of hardship, vulnerability, insecurity and injustice;
- Adopting its new Global Programme for 2016-2020 the ICSW should take into consideration the new global economic and policy landscape, international efforts to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth and end poverty; the ICSW should continue its efforts to act as a connector, convener and knowledge broker, binding together issues and regions, and mobilizing partners along shared priorities that will shape progressive social and economic policies across the global village.

C. The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development

This joint Global Agenda expresses the intention that during the period 2012-2016 the priority efforts of the ICSW, the IASSW and IFSW will be focused on the following areas:

- Promoting social and economic equalities
- Promoting the dignity and worth of people
- Working toward environmental sustainability
- Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships

In the vein of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, and reflecting its commitment to promote social and economic equalities and the dignity and worth of people, ICSW commits to support, influence and promote global initiatives aimed at achieving social and economic equality. This goal will be implemented by using and strengthening our established relationships with the UN system and other international agencies. Our major focus is to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes, for example, implementation of adequate and universal social protection coverage, including the social protection floor initiative, implementation of decent work and international labour standards, and for universal health coverage and education for all. Social protection for the elderly—an increasingly significant population group in society—is a crucial concern for ICSW.

ICSW will strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women of all ages, seeing this goal as a crucial contribution to progress across all objectives.

D. The new global economic and policy circumstances.

The adoption of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015-- with its call to end poverty and to transform the world to better meet human needs-- is of a paramount importance for ICSW. Priority concerns and themes outlined in this document can help ICSW in its quest for appropriate and effective policy responses pertinent to the role of civil society in the changing circumstances. It can also facilitate understanding of both the causes and the social consequences of contemporary uncertain and troublesome developments in economic and environmental sphere, as well as help promoting comprehensive and coherent actions linked to global and regional governance.

The 2030 Agenda has created a policy space for all stakeholders to concentrate on transformational approach to development. We completely agree with the approach outlined by the UN Secretary-General in his Synthesis Report called "The Road to Dignity by 2030": "we need inclusive growth, built on decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods and raising real income for all, measured in ways that go beyond GDP and account for human well-being, sustainability and equity. Ensuring that all people, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, the aged and migrants have decent employment, social protection and access to financial service, will be a hallmark of our economic success".²

ICSW shares a conviction that promoting human development through a set of social policies is an important determinant of economic development, which, in turn, facilitates achievements in social welfare. We recognize that human dignity—the quintessential core of human rights—is an essential element for delivering on the sustainable development goals, while social protection figures prominently among the SDGs. We see social protection not only as one of the best ways to reduce poverty, insecurity and inequality in the world, but also as an effective means to achieve sustainability. We consider social protection as an investment in the present and in the future of societies and as a proven contributor to development.

The *UN Social Protection Floor Initiative* has grown in importance and prominence and involves a steering group (SPIAC-B) including ICSW and other INGOs as well as ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, World Bank etc in its membership. At the same time it was expected that in June 2012 the ILO would recommend all countries develop Social Protection Floors that would guarantee: a) access to health care, b) access of children to a minimum income, c) access of people of working age to minimum income, d) access of elderly to minimum income. The ILO recommendation would leave it to countries to choose how they defined and secured these guarantees, whether through, assistance in cash or kind, whether through insurance or other means but the income had to ensure that recipients could access education, water and other services. It is important therefore that the ICSW continues to support critically the development and implementation of the SPF, stressing the importance of a universal approach to social protection which covers all social groups across the life span. Such a universal approach would encourage the raising of

² A/69/700, 4 December 2014

revenues nationally to support a SPF in ways which an approach targeted on the poor does not. On a political level in its activities at the UN the ICSW should support elaboration of the dedicated ECOSOC resolution on SPF, and seek partners among the Member States who share our vision and approaches.

Among the *global social governance changes* are a) the decline in ODA combined with the wish of governments to move away from project based aid dependency by raising their own revenues, b) the coincidental renewed calls for global taxes for global public goods and c) the shift in power from the UN to the G20 Development Working Group and the increased role of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in global policy formation. The ICSW needs to be sensitive to these changes in its global policy and in its search for global funding.

An issue is how the ICSW chooses to respond to the inter-related issue of *climate change, the food availability and cost crisis and the new process of land grabbing and purchase*. Each issue has in common the threat to livelihoods and the displacement of peoples within borders and across borders. The ICSW should therefore stress the social consequences of these changes and press the argument that a good SPF would go some way to alleviate the social consequences. Moreover, when new monies become available for climate change mitigation, the point would be made that these should be spent in part on the SPF, including SPF for migrants not usually resident in countries.

THE 2016-2020 GLOBAL PROGRAMME.

To achieve greater efficiency the organisation activities and policies pursued should be focussed. The core functions of the ICSW global network are: advocacy, knowledge-building, raising awareness, working in partnerships on technical assistance projects, and communicating with our stakeholders.

(1) Global advocacy and knowledge- building

At global level the ICSW will use its UN ECOSOC NGO general consultative status to advocate for its policies within the Commission for Social Development, within the Commission on the Status of Women and other organs under the auspices of ECOSOC or the General Assembly of the UN, as well as in other global policy spaces both within the UN system, and if desirable and possible, within the G20 Development Group processes.

Pursuing our mandate, ICSW will continue to influence international and national policy debates through substantial policy statements to international organisations and other fora. We should use our constitutional mandate as a general guideline for our policy statements, providing at the same time voice to our members. Some of these messages go beyond neoliberal approaches and might challenge institutions like the World Bank and the IMF; hence they need to be well researched by volunteer experts. Through the collection of

policy statements the body of core policy messages that the organisation stands for will gradually build up. ICSW needs to tap better into the knowledge base and expertise of volunteer experts and our member organisations. We should tap on high level expertise and knowledge within our own ranks, striving to become a recognized innovator and “think-tank” on crucial social issues within the remit of ICSW activities, particularly on social protection matters, within the NGO community and beyond. We should also seek to influence national policy debates by supporting national member organisations through policy and technical advice which we will provide through volunteer experts who subscribe to our vision and values.

Successful advocacy requires **improved visibility**. We have improved our *website* and will continue our efforts to make it an effective contemporary medium of communication, user-friendly and preferably interactive. It should serve as a constant reminder of the disgrace of global injustice, insecurity and poverty and its various manifestations. We need Newsletters published globally and regionally that are a real source of information for our members and eventually, we may need one flagship publication on social justice. The Journal that we own with IASSW and IFSW could play a stronger role to promote our mandate. Stronger engagement with the Journal of Global Social Policy will also be pursued.

Successful advocacy always implies the **building and maintaining of strategic partnerships**. Our partnership with IASSW and IFSW leads to a biannual high profile global conference. It has to be maintained. The membership in the Social Protection Interagency Board (SPIAC-B) makes us a respected player in the global Social Protection world, we need to maintain and intensify it. The membership in the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors provides us with a voice in the NGO community. We need to continue to play an active role in the Coalition. It gives us a forum where we can advance the SPF as – so far – the only global policy issue that we have concretely committed to.

In order to fulfil our advocacy role, the ICSW should recruit a strong group of volunteer policy and technical experts for our members and other like-minded institutions. We have already created a new membership category through which we hope to create a loyal group of individual expert members.

(2) Strengthening member organisations

We need to provide training to our member organisations on global social policy issues, notably the Social Protection Floor, the monitoring of the implementation of the new SDGs and their ability to undertake well-researched and well-argued national advocacy campaigns in order to influence national policies.

a) We can issue policy briefs on critical issues that emerge in global social policy (SDGs, SPFs, inequality, etc.). And make the available to all our members,

b) We focus our global training activities on one academy per year where we will bring staff of our institutions together to be briefed on global social policy issues and civil society strategies. ICSW could team up with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin (and its annual Global social security academy) the United Nations University's Graduate School of Governance in Maastricht. External funding for that exercise has to be sought.

c) The Global ICSW will continue to work with regions on joint projects. At the same time it might be desirable to limit our regional distribution return of 50 per cent to only those regional organizations who contribute \$2000 or more; otherwise the transaction costs of return wires on small contributions may exceed the financial benefits of the contributions. This decision may require a Constitutional amendment.

d) ICSW shall promote winning arrangements between member organisations. We should support some of our more experienced members to offer technical support to sister organisations.

(3) *Streamlining and reorienting the organisation*

Our organisational structure needs to reflect the fact that with our budgetary situation we can only operate as a volunteer run organisation. In this light we should be realistic, and try to achieve the goals and objectives that are within our reach. In fact, the first question we need to ask before embarking on any project is what our resources permit us to achieve, what kind of strategic partnerships we need to establish to achieve certain desired objectives, and how we can better monitor the outcomes.

Regional level cooperation

ICSW- affiliated organizations operate in all regions of the world. Some have an established reputation and name recognition, some are smaller but are growing fast. ICSW should strive to continue its activities for the benefit of the members, giving them "voice" and providing opportunities to present their views at the regional and global levels more effectively compared to what they could do exclusively on their own. The Global office should facilitate establishing links among regional organizations to create synergies and expedite exchange of best practices.

Regional offices of ICSW, alone or in cooperation with other partners, should strive to organize at least one conference or two seminars/expert meetings in a given year on socio-economic issues of regional importance. However, the quantitative target is only tentative while the emphasis should be made on the practical significance of the proposed activities.

The introduction of sustainable universal social protection floor policies should become a major agenda item in all advocacy campaigns and in all regions.

The plight of marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of the population, and policy measures aimed at improvement of their situation should be another important dimension of regional activities. The *vulnerable groups approach* makes sense for social development practitioners and social workers alike, and increases the likelihood for ICSW gaining support from potential partners at global, regional and national levels. This approach makes it easier to establish and measure indicators of progress when dealing with monitoring and evaluation.

All regions should publish regional Newsletters with periodicity that depends on and is determined by their resources. Such Newsletters would help to build alliances within civil society organizations, create visibility and improve horizontal links within the organization.

National level

At national level wherever ICSW has membership, National Committees or Organizations should endeavor to become a leading force advocating for empowerment, resilience and social protection. They should promote building national social protection floors in accordance with ILO recommendation 202. Among other policy goals the following deserve our attention:

- Contribute to building national social protection floor coalitions,
- Mount a SPF-I awareness raising campaign,
- Contribute to national dialogues on the SPF,
- Undertake with other organizations stock-taking of existing social protection provisions,
- Help countries develop SPF plans with budgets to fund them and global financial support where needed,
- Monitor progress using the knowledge provided by the several knowledge hubs referred to earlier.

At the level of North-South, and South-South Activities

- The ICSW will continue to link northern members involved in defending social services in richer countries to also work with their country development ministries to foster effective collaborations between the North and South to help develop social protection policies. It will use this process to argue for better quality capacity-development efforts, including North-South transfers either by means of Official Development Assistance (ODA) delivered to government social budgets or by means of advocacy for global forms of taxation,
- The ICSW will continue to link its membership across regions in the Global South to learn lessons of policy development.
