

Preamble

To ensure that the expectations on social development and the voices of the social work profession can be heard, the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) kick off an international discussion, involving social workers and social development advocates of different levels from different countries, through organizing the Joint World Conference. The discussion is expected to identify important agenda of common concern and to address the social challenges or risks that we will be facing in the 21st century. Hopefully, it will help to make a plan of actions for the next decade. Locally, this conference of social work and social development is a joint effort of 8 local schools of social work, Social Welfare Department of the HKSAR government, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the Hong Kong Social Workers’ Association, and the Hong Kong Social Workers’ General Union. Through this conference, we hope to identify major issues of social work and social development in three main aspects, namely professional practice, social policy and social work education, for the next decade. We also hope to leverage this opportunity to produce a Local Agenda. Our goals are:

- To foster rational discussion within the sector for an action agenda for the next decade
- To raise public as well as the policy makers’ awareness and concern of the Local Agenda
- To mobilize members of our sector and other social partners in the society to put the Local Agenda into practice

Our Situation:

- Globalization has produced inequalities and encouraged short-term behaviors in the course of international and regional socio-economic development. In every corner of the world, people’s livelihood has become increasingly uncertain and insecure. This pattern of development is considered unsustainable that we must change.
- Rapid development of China and regional integration have brought about many expected and unexpected changes in social development. This may provide as much new opportunities to local social development as new challenges which are unprecedented.
- Uncertainties abound in the path of local development. Although there is economic growth, hidden undesirable development problems are still with us. In the course of social development, social conflicts emerge more prominently. Our society is increasingly divisive. Collectively, we lack confidence and get lost.
- In recent years, the turnover rate of social workers stands at a very high level, and the problem of professional succession has already emerged. On the other hand, the effectiveness of social work and professional accountability as well as the commitment and future direction of our social welfare system are issues that the social welfare sector and the entire society have to address.

How to ensure our professional inheritance and its sustainable development has become a pressing issue to be dealt with.

Towards Our Vision:

Under the aforesaid environmental challenges, we affirm our vision as “promoting a balanced and sustainable social and economic development and creating an inclusive, equal, just and caring society.”

To realize this vision, we need strong committee and confidence. More importantly, we need to reinstate that each and every sector in the society have their unique and indispensable roles to play:

- Firstly, we firmly believe that social workers are pioneers and advocates of social development. Social work and social welfare are important means and elements in fostering social development. In realizing the above vision, their roles are indispensable.
- Secondly, we believe that our society needs common core values and solidarity.
- We also firmly believe that solely relying on individual or family effort is insufficient in this complex and ever-changing social environment. The government, the market, and the civil society will have to share their responsibility and take part in realizing the vision.

Ideal of Social Work:

We reinstate the inherent value and dignity of human beings, and the inseparable rights extending from the premise. We seek to defend and protect the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual health and well-being of every individual, respect his or her self-determination, advocate his or her rights to participate. We also reinstate that human rights, dignity and social justice are the basic value premises of social work and social development.

We call upon our fellow social workers to strengthen our own confidence to transcend all obstacles. We also ask our fellow colleagues to take action to organize ourselves for solidarity and consensus and to identify methods and strategies to face the challenges ahead on the bases of diversity, equality and mutual help.