

Agenda item 3 IFSW

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and fellow advocates. I represent the International Federation of Social Workers. With over 143 member countries representing over 3 million social workers globally, we are on the front lines of human rights and social protection with a shared commitment to human rights, self-determination and social and environmental justice.

We commend the UN, ESCAP and the Committee for recognising social protection as one of the core strategies for addressing inequality and also achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals.

As social workers we are committed to working with the United Nations to ensure that every individual, group and community has the supports they need to meet their full potential.

The region is facing unparalleled levels of social and environmental crises; climate change, pandemics, persistent inequality, displacement and increased conflict. These crises are intertwined and have profound effects on people and their communities through the dramatic increase in economic, social, emotional, and ecological challenges.

The IFSW recognises that Social Protection Systems are an essential component in eradicating poverty and addressing these pressing issues. From the profession's direct experience, we express deep concern with the failure of the current social protection systems which often maintain people in poverty rather working with them for transformational change.

Social protection systems in many countries are sparse and fail to provide populations with opportunities to realise their rights and potential. State social infrastructure, welfare policies and models are often designed to provide a minimal safety-net of support after a social crisis has taken place, rather than working with communities to prevent these happening in the first place.

Transformative social protection systems are one of the essential building blocks to eradicating poverty. We need to transform systems from reactive to preventative that assure everyone's fundamental human rights. The world needs new policies, social contracts, and practices that foster relationships, cooperation and partnerships to build security and confidence for all people and the sustainability of the planet.

Every day across the Asia Pacific region there are hundreds of thousands of social workers working to assure that everyone's basic human rights are protected. Social workers are essential workers, and it is the key profession associated with the implementation of social protection systems. As social workers we are important partners for the successful implementation of the proposed Action Plan.

We see the devastating realities of support systems that discriminate and blame people for circumstances that are completely outside of their control. Social protection systems will only be

effective if they are guided by collaboration and cooperation, and grounded in structural and systemic reforms.

We commend the Committee for the continued commitment to the Action Plan and as social workers we renew our call for all countries in the region to commit to greater investment, collaboration, and immediate and significant action to assure that no one is left behind. Thank you