



Contribution to the

ESCAP Seventh Committee on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

29 November to 1 December 2022

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)

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Agenda item(s): 2

Organization profile

The IFSW is a non-governmental organization that has been granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). 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 along with the International Association of Schools of Social Work the profession's ethical principles. Each of the Federation's 143 country members 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 3 million social work practitioners that share the values of human rights, self-determination and social justice.

The IFSW's United Nations Commission supports IFSW representatives and IFSW members to act as facilitators and bridging the gaps between community's aspirations and UN agendas. In 2019, the IFSW established a regional commissioner and representatives for the Asia Pacific to work with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in relation to regional and global issues in order to strengthen the partnership between IFSW and ESCAP.

Please find more detailed information on the IFSW website.

<https://www.ifsw.org/>

Main messages, recommendations or points for consideration

IFSW's Asia Pacific Representatives to the United Nations welcome the opportunity to make this submission and look forward to working collaboratively with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Committee towards improving the wellbeing of all peoples.

The International Federation of Social Workers Asia Pacific UN Representatives recommend:

1. In line with the aims of Agenda Item 2, we call on all Member States to work in partnership and collaboration with communities, civil society, NGOs and professional groups to achieve meaningful and sustainable climate action, in line with [The People's Charter for an Eco-Social World](#).
2. The UN and Member States system can better utilise social workers as through applying the profession's principles and approaches we can collectively achieve climate action and social justice, and work with social workers on policy making in relation to climate action.

Background and main text

Our submission will focus on Agenda Item 2 and based on the IFSW's 2022 position statement "The Role of Social Workers In Advancing A New Eco-Social World"

<https://www.ifsw.org/the-role-of-social-workers-in-advancing-a-new-eco-social-world/> and The People's Charter for an Eco-Social World from the recent global People's Global Summit. <https://newecosocialworld.com/the-peoples-charter-for-an-eco-social-world/>

1. The need for urgent collaborative climate action

The changes confronting our environment because of global warming are already profound and extensive, making climate policy an urgent responsibility for Member States, especially in the Asia Pacific region. We are in dire need of a transformation of the political and economic systems from extractive and exploitative to inclusive and sustainable policies and practices at global and local levels that can halt environmental destruction and create wellbeing for all people. The world needs new policies, social contracts, and practices that foster relationships and partnerships that build security and confidence for all people and the sustainability of the planet.

As the 2022 Review of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific highlights, there is an urgent need to advance progress on environment and development challenges in the region. Central to this is focusing on the role of civil society, including social workers, in enhancing cooperation, supporting strengthened public collective action and providing a platform for listening to people's voices. Meaningful contributions of civil society movements are pivotal if we are to address these existential challenges.

[The People's Charter for an Eco-Social World is a clear example of this.](#) The People's Charter comes from the People's Global Summit, 'Co-Building a New Eco-Social World: Leaving No One Behind', held online on 29 June – 2 July 2022. The People's Global Summit was initiated by 26 diverse global organisations

representing hundreds of millions of people. Representing different faiths, philosophies, rights movements, workforces, generations, traditions and cultures. The Summit gathered with people from across the world, bridging movements for justice, to create new ways to work together for sustainability and quality of life for all. The People's Charter for an Eco-Social World was a result of this event proposes a new way forward with solutions to our joint challenges, so all people can live with confidence, security, and peace in a sustainable world and this can only be achieved through co-developing reciprocity and joint ownership of positive change, co-building peace, co-living with nature, co-creating social justice and co-realising equality.

We encourage member countries to read the Charter and work with civil society to achieve these aims. As a core part of our practice, social workers understand that meaningful social and environmental action can only be achieved if people's voices are heard and they have influence over their own lives. Climate action requires a whole of society approach and Member States must be willing to develop meaningful partnerships.

2. The Role of the Social Worker in Climate Action

The social work profession is an important stakeholder and partner for global action (including the SDGs) and other local, regional and global development strategies. As social workers, we work with communities who are hardest hit by climate change and we appreciate that while climate change is affecting the entire population, the social, health and economic burden is falling most heavily on already vulnerable people. A significant number of environmental disasters as a result of climate change are occurring in the Asia-Pacific region (especially Pacific island nations) and the burden on communities and the consequences of this make it very much an issue for social workers. The socioeconomic status of individuals, groups and communities is directly linked to their ability to adapt to increased extreme weather events like heat waves and floods. As we continue to see heat records being broken, increased electricity prices alone can further compound poverty and disadvantage.

The social work profession is a key partner for climate action, and the UN SDGs, with our shared commitment to 'transforming the world' and 'leaving no one behind'. Social workers consider global and national agendas with sensitivity towards the people and communities they work with and their environments. With a social work lens, we work with people to advocate for their needs (bottom-up approach) and for the transformation to a just, fair and sustainable world. Social workers facilitate and foster partnerships within communities and between various stakeholders towards collaborative action. The UN and Member States system can work with social workers in policy development and implementation as through applying the profession's principles and approaches we can collectively achieve climate action, social justice, inclusive participatory democracy, and social transformation for equality and rights.

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