

Annual Report by the IFSW-AP President and Member-at-Large (2015)

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Greetings from the President and the Member-at-Large

Since the two of us were elected to the positions of Regional President and Member at Large in July 2014, we have been fulfilling our duty at the Asia-Pacific Region of IFSW as a team. We sincerely thank for everyone's support, since we have been able to manage our work only with assistance from the Executive Committee and our member countries, as well as backup from the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership. We truly hope that 2016 will be a year in which the networks of social workers at IFSW-AP and IFSW itself grow stronger and social workers are empowered worldwide. Furthermore, we wish that it will also be a year for us to work for peace and equality all over the world and for the promotion of human dignity.

1. This year's main news

Unfortunately, many disasters hit our region this year too. The Asia-Pacific Region is frequently affected by disasters, so skill development for social work professionals and the establishment of an Asia-Pacific regional aid network is and stays a most important task for us.

2. Most recent news

(1) The Asia-Pacific Regional Joint Conference on Social Work hosted by APASWE and IFSW-AP was held in Bangkok at the Dusit Thani Hotel from October 22nd to 24th 2015.

(2) Preceding the conference, we organized a Pre-Conference Workshop on October 21st at the same venue by utilizing IFSW's Development Fund. Approximately one hundred people participated, mainly local social workers. We also had participants from Korea, Japan and the Philippines. The topic was Child Labor and Women's Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific and we invited guest speakers from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Thailand.

(3) Celebrating new IFSW member countries: In 2015, we were honored to welcome Nepal and India as IFSW members. With regard to India's admission, the IFSW Constitution states that membership can be granted to only one organization per country. Hence, in India, six professional social work associations agreed upon joining IFSW, formed a coordinating body, and applied to IFSW for full membership in August. Previously, a coordinating meeting was opened on August 26th in Bangalore

(now officially Bengaluru, according to pre-colonial traditional pronunciation). The participating organizations unanimously agreed on joining IFSW and submitted the application documents. Their membership was approved in early October.

Additionally, the South Asia Social Work Conference was organized between August 27th and 28th at Bangalore's Christ University. 387 people participated from all over India. The IFSW-AP President attended this conference and India's IFSW membership application was announced during the opening ceremony.

(4) A proposal for the regional amplification of the global social work definition was compiled through joint efforts by APASWE and IFSW-AP at the Bangkok conference. This version will undergo public review until February 15th 2016 and the proposal will be finalized.

(5) We constantly hear news about the flow of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers to Europe. Several governments, especially EU nations and other European states, as well as North American countries etc. are making statements about accepting these people. Social workers and refugee support organizations will probably be actively engaged in specific assistance in the future. At the same time, we have to watch humanitarian efforts and responses by national governments very carefully.

(6) The Hong Kong Association of Social Workers completed the Chinese version of the new Global Definition and it has already been uploaded to the IFSW website. It is worth noting that it will hopefully be of reference to many colleagues who have Chinese cultural origins all over the world. We want to thank the Hong Kong association for their most meaningful efforts.

(7) Due to limitations in financial resources at the global organizational level of IFSW, the provision of the Development Fund has been stopped. This fund is extremely important to the Asia-Pacific, since our region has a large number and a wide variety of social work organizations, while our members are on very different developmental levels facing very different circumstances. The Regional President made a request to the IFSW Steering Committee to restart the provision of this fund in the future. As a response to this plea, the Development Fund is scheduled to be included again in the 2016 budget.

(8) Project for Professional Training in the Asia-Pacific Region funded by the Japanese 'Foundation for Social Welfare Promotion': The Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership applied for grants to the Center of Social Welfare Promotion and National Examination in Japan for human development in Asia and the Pacific. We managed to secure funding to engage in these projects throughout the region for at least three years starting in 2015.

The first workshops to train disaster relief personnel are scheduled to take place in January and

March 2016 in Indonesia (January 12th to 14th, in Jakarta) and the Philippines (March 2nd to 4th). We are further planning a workshop in India for professionals on protection of children and their rights (August 2016) and a workshop in Malaysia on disaster relief (January 2017).

(9) Since the Global Agenda has entered its second phase, case study reports were made at the Bangkok conference on how social workers can influence people's lives and social change. These included country reports at the IFSW-AP Forum. 11 countries, over 30 people participated in this forum. We will collect these cases in our Global Agenda Report and make an appeal to IFSW, IASSW, ICSW, as well as the UN and NGOs about the social impact of social work practice! As a pre-conference program preceding the IFSW General Assembly in Korea, Global Agenda 2016 reports will be made by each region.

3. Location set for the 2017 Asia-Pacific Regional Joint Conference on Social Work

The decision was made to hold the 2017 Joint Social Work Conference by IFSW-AP and APASWE in Shenzhen, China. Both organizations agreed to joint hosting. The details will be made public soon and announced at the IFSW General Assembly and IFSW-AP Regional Meeting before the 2016 Joint World Conference in Korea.

4. IFSW-AP on Facebook

We launched our Facebook page to be able to engage more efficiently in global communication. Unfortunately, it does not take the form of free editing. Instead, you should send the information and pictures you would like to disclose to the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership and they will make the actual upload. We do this for proper information management purposes.

With new countries joined, IFSW-AP's diversity keeps on growing!

The President wishes to continue to attend as many events organized by member associations as possible, get to know to activities carried out by social workers and their organization as much as possible, and communicate the unique situation and the common themes to as many member nations as possible, and additionally make an appeal for our cause to the global organization!