International Federation of Social Workers
Fédération Internationale des Travailleurs Sociaux
Federación Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales

World Social Work Day is a celebration that aims to highlight the achievements of social work, to raise the visibility of social services for the future of societies, and to defend social justice and human rights. It is a celebration that has become a highpoint in the social work calendar with social workers all over the world celebrating and promoting the contributions of the profession to individuals, families, communities and wider society.

The first World Social Work Day was celebrated in 2007 under the theme "Social Work -Making a World of Difference". The initiative of celebrating Word Social Work Day was approved by the member organizations of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) at the General Meeting in Adelaide, 2004. The current date was agreed in the General Meeting in Brazil, 2008 and to be in place to 2020. However, we must look at the beginning of the1980s to find the origins of this world celebration.

In 1983, IFSW United Nations Representatives in New York, led by Jack A. Kamaiko proposed a project to bring social workers of the area into the UN Headquarters in New York. This was the beginning of an annual celebration called **Social Work Day at the United Nations.**

The original idea behind the Social Work Day was to organize an event that could be a way of interpreting the work of the United Nations to the social work profession and of alerting social workers to the means by which they can collaborate with the NGO´s on humanitarian issues.

Since this first Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations , the IFSW UN representatives continued to organise these days during either April or March.

Some remarks on these Annual Social Work events can be founded on IFSW archives

- **25 March 1986**. The Third Annual Social Work Day at **the United Nations.** was organized under the theme *Children and Youth can make the Difference: Revival and Development*, in cooperation with NASW´s Peace and Disarmed Committee. Read more here
- **28 April 1987.** The Fourth Annual Social Work Day at United Nations in New York used the Theme "international Perspectives on the Changing Family: Implications for Social Policy. Read more here
- **29 March 1989.** The Sixth Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations was organized with the theme "The impact of the Environment on the Human Condition: An International Human Rights Problem. Read more here
- **21 March 1990.** The Seventh Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations was hold under the theme "Empowerment through Literacy and Education: International Opportunities. The event was organized by IFSW team at the UN/New York and jointly sponsored by IFSW, National Association of Social Work-New York Chapter, Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament and other NASW related bodies. Read more here
- **19 March 1991.** The Eight Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations was held with the theme "Global Upheavals: Social Consequences for the Family**"** Read more here & here
- **24 March 1992.** The Ninth Annual Social Work Day at the UN was devoted to the subject of AIDS: An International Crisis. A Social Work Call to Action. Read more here
- **23 March 1993.** The 10th Anniversary of Social Work Day was hold under the theme "A Global Challenge: Ethnic conflict and Humanitarian Issues. Read more here
- Read more information on IFSW archives https://www.ifsw.org/about-ifsw/archives/

Along the years, this initiative that started in New York in 1983 has spread to other UN headquarters and IFSW UN representatives now organize events in Geneva and in Bangkok to celebrate Social Work Day in the United Nations,

However, we must wait until 2007 to find the first **World Social Work Day.**

Following the spirit of Social Work Day at the UN, the question of an international focused Global Social Work Day was part of IFSW General Meeting agenda for a number of years. In addition several members´ organisations started seeking the IFSW Secretariat's guidance about the existence of an international social work day and their desire to co-ordinate a national social work day with that date.

In 1997, IFSW members' organizations in Europe launched a pan-European Social Work Action Day which arose from the EU funded Social Inclusion Project. This initiative that was widely supported across Europe led to a global proposal about celebrating a World Social Work Day.

IFSW members debated about how to link to the Social Work Day at the UN and to the European Social Work Action Day. At the IFSW General Meeting 2004 in Adelaide, members organizations voted to establish an International Social Work Day Read more here

In 2006, in Munich, at IFSW General Meeting members agreed that the theme for WSWD 2008 would remain the same theme as the Jubilee year *"Social Work - Making a World of Difference"*. Background material available on the IFSW website https://www.ifsw.org/about-ifsw/archives/ Read more here

The first World Social Work Day was celebrated worldwide in 2007 under the theme "Social Work - Making a World of Difference", and on April 15, 2008 IFSW members organized the second World Social Work Day and continued the theme "Social Work - Making a World of Difference".

In 2008, at the IFSW General Meeting in Brazil, IFSW member organizations agreed that future World Social Work Days to be celebrated on the same day in March each year being the third Tuesday of March until 2020. Read more here

The general theme for the World Social Work Day 2009 was: Making human rights real – the Social Work Agenda, which was in focus for the World Conference 2010 in Hong Kong where it was discussed how social workers could build a social work and social development agenda for the upcoming decade that face the challenges the global society is confronted with and that makes sure that humanity can thrive despite the troubled times. Read more

After the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development was approved in Hong Kong 2010, the themes of WSWD and Social Work Day at the UN, were set for two years according to the goals of the Global Agenda

- 2012 - 2014: Promoting social and Economic Equality
- 2015 - 2016: Promoting the Dignity and Worth of Peoples.
- 2017 - 2018: Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability
- 2019 - 2020: Promoting the Importance of Human Relationships

WSWD is currently an event that has become so successful in recent years it is now generally considered as highlight of international solidarity and cooperation of social workers. Every year IFSW produces a poster announcing WSWD that it is translated to more than 70 languages, and presented to governments, political bodies posted on the notice boards of social services and in social work class rooms throughout the world.

You can read more on World Social Work Day and on International Federation Annual Social Work Day at U.N. on our website www.ifsw.org