Appendix

The following appendix provides more in-depth background information about the topics and statements mentioned above. Please consider that the sources are listed on the Policy Paper.

8.1 IFSW and the UN

The United Nations (UN) provides access to NGOs and civil societies to participate in the international community. IFSW has been accredited with special consultative status by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). With the Agenda 2030 of the UN and its aim to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social workers now have an essential function in realising these and furthermore, should continue to endorse social work as a human rights profession. Additionally, social workers need to build strong global networks that can provide support for IFSW members working towards social change by imparting the unique knowledge we have from the community level to a national and global level.

8.2 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)

The UN SDGs can be seen as an indivisible whole set of opportunities, with the intention that improvement in one of the three pillars (social, economic and ecological) will support progress in another pillar too. Bearing in mind that conflicts between countries, agencies and communities occur, the UN SDGs shall also be used as a means to actually measure and evaluate the impact of actions and their effect on change[1].

The Declaration's credo of 'leaving no one behind' implies a global will for equality, upholding dignity of people and aims to increase the capabilities especially of those with less capacities, less access to resources and vulnerable people generally. Hence, it speaks directly to the **common goal of social work** too. Sustainability requires holistic thinking, acting and evaluating with its true aim to transform the world. The implementation shall take place by top-down AND bottom-up-approaches that demand coordinated action at international, national and local levels[4].

The International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) stated that the business sector shall rename the UN SDGs to 'BDGs', which stands for Business Development Goals[2], emphasizing the possibility of more economic growth with no consideration of social nor ecological change. This is one more reason – and an obligation – for the social work profession to become even more active and balance this economic dominance with true and valuable input from social and environmental perspectives.

8.3 The future is now (SDG Report 2019)

The UN's Secretary-General has announced a group of independent scientists will report on the UN SDGs[3]. The first of these quadrennial reports gives a clear message: while positive development is noticeable, the

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[1] The Partnering Initiative and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). Maximising Value Guidebook.
[2] ICC (2017). Speech of the General Secretary on the HLPF.
[3] United Nations (2019). The future is now.

UN SDGs are facing many trade-offs. It is a call to action by saying 'the future is now'. Results show that there is an urgent need to take more radical and effective decisions in order to accelerate progress towards the set goals. The group of scientists identified **six entry points** for transformation that shall be implemented by the four levels which are governance; economy and finance; individual and collective action; and science and technology. These are:

1. Strengthening human wellbeing and capabilities,
2. Shifting towards sustainable and just economies,
3. Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns,
4. Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy,
5. Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development,
6. Securing the global environmental commons.

Most of the above-mentioned entry points – once again – correspond with social work's area of action and interest.

The six entry points to realize the UN SDGs describe a plan for action where governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action and science and technology shall work together. All are falling under the 'whole society approach', an approach that social workers endorse. Social workers understand their role as **connectors**, reaching out to an often-invisible population and people who face marginalization and who have had their human rights, or their natural environment violated. In this role, social workers gather experiences that they combine with their micro-meso-macro understanding that requires an analysis of the impact of global, national and local components on people's lives. Social workers are keenly engaged in addressing power differentials; by amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and ensuring their role in governance at every level, and through the inclusion of accountability mechanisms that can ensure socially, economically and environmentally just and inclusive development.

For example, we might look at the areas of energy production and food and nutrition. Decarbonisation and building on environmentally-friendly energy sources that are equally accessible for both urban and rural persons is critical. So, the needs of the rural person cooking on their stove or the suburban taxi driver should be taken into account when devising energy-efficient technology. Production and marketing of food and nutrition also go together with 'global environmental commons' and should attract just conditions of trade so that farmers and employees have fair income, natural resources are treated with respect and pollution and exploitation is diminished to a minimum.

These examples illustrate the similarity in language with the UN SDGs: social workers also support an holistic approach and welcome partnerships with various stakeholders in order to establish comprehensive solutions which lead to the building of effective policies that promote a people-centred development.

Social workers endorse a whole-society approach that involves people from every social and economic stratum, age, gender, indigenous and ethnic heritage, sexual orientation, people with disabilities or mental illnesses, homeless people, people incarcerated, people seeking refuge and many more (marginalized) groups. While addressing the common goal to achieve constructive social, economic and ecological change, it is important to recognize and incorporate the UN SDGs in social work measures.

8.4 A Social Work perspective on the basic 5 Ps of the UN SDGs

While the number of wars between states has constantly decreased since 1950, the amount of civil conflicts (one side usually being a government) tripled since 1950 and marks the highest number ever. This is especially true when adding the number of civilian wars with foreign states' intervention[4]. Furthermore, climate issues manifesting in exploitation of nature and resources, increasing (financial) inequality within and among countries, the rising concentration of wealth in the hands of billionaires, the financialization of essential services, the commercialization of natural resources, a loss of the middle class, and general discontent and distrust of the people with their governments, are a call for action[5].

The potential to leverage synergies between social work and the instrument of the UN SDGs is evident from the clear alignment of each other's intentions and principles. Taking the message of the UN SDGs and social work, several mutual values and areas of action can be identified:

People

- **Recognition of the inherent dignity of humanity** – this core ethical principle is essential in social work: "*Social workers recognize and respect the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings in attitude, word, and deed. We respect all persons, but we challenge beliefs and actions of those persons who devalue or stigmatize themselves or other persons*" Statement of Ethics, IFSW (2018).
- **Education** – as a lifelong process, social workers are asked to contribute to the education of all age groups to gain knowledge that increases students' capability to understand, influence and contribute to positive social change.

Partnership

- **Communication** – evident in every practice and partnership is to actively listen to each others' contributions.
- **Cooperation** – through cooperation with people and on the basis of mutual respect, we encourage participation and inclusion.
- **Facilitation** – as community facilitators, the UN SDGs should ensure that the aspirations of communities are no longer omitted, and empowered societies shall be given greater self-determination.

Planet

- **Climate crisis** – The climate crisis is directly connected to human activities and not merely due to normal patterns of nature. For example, people and ecosystems have endured water, land, and air contamination from industrial pollution and toxic agricultural practices, soil erosion, desertification, and species and habitat loss due to extensive deforestation, and an increase in frequency and intensity of disastrous weather patterns, such as typhoons. While the climate crisis impacts all of us, those who are marginalized or oppressed are experiencing it to an even greater extent, creating climate injustice[6] for people and our planet.
- **Climate justice** – Much of the burden of unsustainable consumption patterns has fallen disproportionately on the most vulnerable people in the world, who typically have the smallest

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[4] University of Oxford (2020). Our world in Data.
[5] Global Civil Society Report on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (2019). Spotlight report 2019.
[6] IFSW. Climate Justice Program.

consumption patterns. In addition, these vulnerable people receive fewer of the benefits of the environmental resources. These collective patterns of unsustainable consumption contribute to the climate crisis, making it a global justice issue for people and the planet.

- **Sustainability** – see definition above under 3.1.

Prosperity

- **Balanced power relations** – realising the UN SDGs at a local level and leaving no one behind aims to empower communities and helps to level-up the wellbeing of all and mostly those often invisible.

Peace

- **Equality** – the inherent value of every person and impartial and fair treatment of people and communities. Strengthening capabilities by facilitating access to opportunities.
- **Solidarity** – social workers challenging oppression and working towards socially inclusive societies.
- **Respect for diversity** – "*Social workers work toward strengthening inclusive communities that respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies, taking account of individual, family, group, and community differences.*" Statement on Ethics, IFSW 2018.