



International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Asia Pacific

Introduction

As we prepare this report for our General Meeting in 2020, we are mindful that the world we knew at the time of our last meeting in India during September 2019 is forever changed as we face unprecedented changes and challenges across the globe. We acknowledge those of you who have lost colleagues, friends or family as a result of the global pandemic the world is currently experiencing. For social workers today, these are the most significant times of change we have collectively faced and responded to globally in our recent history. We are in awe and immensely proud of the way our profession has united, faced and responded to the challenges be that adapting the way we work with the people in our communities, adapting the way we have used teaching modalities with our students or adapting the way social service providers have enabled social services to continue being delivered. We have embraced the use of digital technologies not only to enable services and education to continue at a local level but also used these to generously share with each other our practice wisdom nationally, regionally and globally. We are undoubtedly stronger and more united as a result and we now have the opportunity to further build this solidarity and strengthen our professional connections as we enter the post-pandemic era.

IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2019

Looking back over the time since our last General Meeting, the regional highlight was undoubtedly our regional conference in India. From 17 - 20 September 2019, members of the social work profession gathered in Bengaluru India to attend our 25th Asia Pacific Joint IFSW Asia Pacific and APASWE Regional Social Work Conference, for the first time ever in India. The day before the Conference delegates were able to attend two pre-conference workshops - 'Indigeneity in Asia and Pacific Social Work' and 'The Role of Social Workers working with Female Domestic Workers Crossing National Borders' held at CHRIST (Deemed to be University). Following the conclusion of the workshop's students from CHRIST (Deemed to be University) delivered a very scintillating cultural programme and the eventful day ended with a welcome dinner at the venue.

The Conference from 18 – 20 September was hosted by the India Network of Professional Social Workers' Associations (INPSWA) in collaboration with Dept. of Psychiatric Social Work, NIMHANS and Dept. of Sociology & Social Work, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) with the theme of 'Social Work Partnerships towards an Equal Society-Asia Pacific Perspective'. The Conference sub themes were formulated based on current global and local social scenarios of concern and which needed to be visualised within the framework of 'Inclusive Partnerships and Equality'. The 10 sub themes were : Social Work Partnerships, Social Development, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, Green Social Work, Cultural Diversity and Social Work, Social Policy – Programmes for Public Reach; Children, Youth, Women and Elderly, Correctional Social Work, Health & Wellbeing, and Corporate Social Responsibility & Industrial Social Work.

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The conference attended by 531 delegates (165 foreign delegates from 31 countries & 366 delegates from India) appreciated a number of inspirational keynote addresses, 213 oral presentations, 68 e-presentations and 57 poster presentations on the various sub themes. Delegates very much enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of our hosts, valued the many opportunities for engaging in the various professional development opportunities including the informal networking with colleagues from across our region and the globe. As we concluded our gathering, Dr Rory G Truell, Secretary General, IFSW facilitated a 'group selfie' to capture delegate's solidarity with social work colleagues across the world, in the collective action on climate change.



The APSWC 2019 event undoubtedly fulfilled the objective of enabling exchange and sharing of experiences, ideas, challenges, methods, and successful innovative social work interventions in addition to providing an ideal platform to network with peer professionals, experience the local culture & cuisine and hospitality, discern & live through a glimpse of 'Incredible India' from close quarters. A huge thanks to all presenters, speakers and participants at both the pre-conference workshops and the Conference for the sharing and learning that was provided. Very sincere thanks also for the enormous amount of work undertaken by the hosts, organisers and many volunteers involved in making this gathering such a success.

Whilst in India we also held a regional meeting to attend to our regular business. Included in this was an acknowledgement of our longstanding treasurer Michiko Hirata who not only expertly looked after our financial affairs but also very ably co-ordinated our pre-conference workshops for many years. A huge thanks to all the work Michiko has undertaken to enhance our region and a warm welcome to Machiko Ohara as our new treasurer. We also confirmed Teoh Ai Hua as our secretary following Irene Leung's election as our regional Vice-president.

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Linda Ford from Australia was confirmed as our regional representative for the global Indigenous Committee. Following a joint process with our APASWE colleagues we were also delighted to confirm that Brisbane Australia will host our next regional meeting in 2021 with Iran planning to host our 2023 regional event.



Global Agenda 2018-19

Whilst in India, a joint IFSW Asia Pacific and APASWE global agenda workshop was held showcasing how members across our region celebrated the fourth pillar “The Importance of Human Relationships”. A broad range of perspectives were presented demonstrating the myriad of ways this theme applied to the profession across Asia Pacific. Following on from this our regional vice-president, Irene Leung together with Viktor Virag from APASWE completed the Asia Pacific chapter for the global publication of this theme due to be released in July 2020. My thanks to all of you who contributed at this workshop and especially to Irene for collating these and co-producing our regional chapter.

Covid -19

Further to the above, we specifically acknowledge our colleagues in the China Association of Social Workers (CASW) for their early sharing of their experiences and strategies in dealing with Covid-19 from early 2020. As the rest of the world began experiencing the spread of the virus CASW was the first to provide information on how they had adapted their services. In the months since we acknowledge the many contributions from across all parts of our region that have been shared and posted on the IFSW website as we collectively grow our practice wisdom and share this with others in the spirit of supporting each other in these unprecedented times. Whilst the massive health and wellbeing impact of this virus has been devastating, the global financial impact continues to unfold and will undoubtedly be with us for many years to come. This is likely to pose significant challenges where some governments seek to reduce social International Federation of Social Workers Asia Pacific Regional President's Office

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protection systems and social service provision at the very time when the need for these is heightened. It is even more important that we maintain our connections and support of each other in the coming months and years.

We are also aware that many members have hosted a range of webinars and zoom meetings, education sessions and even national conferences in the months since 'lockdown', 'flattening the curve' and 'virtual meetings' have become part of our everyday language. Again, we acknowledge the way the social work profession has turned the challenging times into opportunities to utilise new technologies to enable essential services and new learnings to continue. Social work has led the way in progressing these alternative ways of working and IFSW Asia Pacific was the first region to use the IFSW Zoom platform for a regional executive committee meeting!



Black Lives Matter

As we write this report a second global movement – 'Black Lives Matter' – is gaining momentum. Again, members of our profession are taking a leading role speaking out against the injustice of racial discrimination and the atrocities of the killing of black citizens by Police in the United States of America. It is very disturbing to witness and be a part of these global movements but at the same time heartening to use these as a catalyst to examine what institutional, personal and professional, conscious or unconscious biases occur in our own countries and contexts in order that they can be identified and addressed locally, nationally and globally. We look forward to a much better future if this momentum translates to real change in our communities.

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General Meeting 2020 and IFSW Conference 2020

As we all prepare for a new way of engaging in the Business of the General Meeting we encourage you all to link in and participate in the discussion, decision-making and voting in our regional elections. It may take some time to get used to the new ways of undertaking the work of the General Meeting using virtual technology but the IFSW global secretariat are providing assistance in learning how to access and participate in this forum prior to the event – please contact them before the meeting for assistance. On the other hand, using this format will enable access to this meeting for those for whom physically attending is not possible because of cost or other logistical reasons and we are looking forward to a wide range of active participation from our members.

The Conference 2020 is now also being held virtually with a focus on the future of the Global Agenda. We acknowledge the hosts of the planned event in Calgary and all the work they had undertaken leading up to the difficult decision that had to be taken to cancel the face to face event. We were very much looking forward to joining you in Canada and appreciate your very real sense of loss at not being able to progress the hosting of this as had been hoped. However we also hope that being able to link into the website and hear the presentations, ask questions and participate in the global discussions relating to the future of the global agenda will provide a wide range of perspectives – including those unable to do so previously – to actively participate in this ‘leading edge’ global event.

Regional Conference 2021

At this time planning for our joint Regional Conference in Brisbane is proceeding with a planned time for late 2021. The Australian Association of Social Workers will keep us posted on plans as they progress and we very much look forward to gathering again post Covid-19 to celebrate our achievements, the many learnings of our experiences and the development of a ‘new normal’.

IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Committee, Portfolio and Commission representatives

The work of the region continues to grow and expand with the increased representation on the various Commissions and the ongoing development of portfolio holders for specific purposes.

Executive Committee:

Regional President: Rose Henderson; **Regional Vice – President:** Irene Leung;

Regional Secretary: Teoh Ai Hua; **Regional Treasurer:** Machiko O’Hara;

Immediate Past President: Mariko Kimura; **Publications Officer:** Gary Xia

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Portfolio:

IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2021 Liaison: TBC

IFSW Asia Pacific Representative on IFSW Indigenous Committee: Linda Ford

IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Development Officer (JFSW): (TBC)

Commissions:

Regional representatives of the Interim Education Commission

Karen Healy (Australia) and Mariko Kimura (Japan)

Regional representatives of the Human Right Commission

Raed Amira (Palestine) and Luis Arevalo (New Zealand)

Regional representatives of the Ethics Commission

Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia) and Hassan Mousavi Chelak (Iran)

Regional representatives of the United Nations Commission

Kae Kotbungkair, Regional Commissioner, Thailand

Yolanda Wang (China); Sup Pyo Kim (South Korea); Sebastian Cordoba (Australia); Jude Douglas (New Zealand); Suresh Pathare (India), Hamed Olamee (Iran)

Very sincere thanks to all of you for your ongoing commitment to the roles you have taken up, including participation in meetings, completion of reports and undertaking the tasks assigned. The involvement of a wide range of perspectives from across our region in these roles has ensured our culturally and linguistically rich and diverse region is well represented in both our regional and global work and I sincerely appreciate the willingness of you all to contribute your time and expertise for our profession. I especially thank those on the Executive committee for their ongoing work.



Rose Henderson

Rose Henderson, President IFSW (AP)



Irene Leung

Irene Leung, Vice President IFSW (AP)

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