



Young African Social Work network, C/O IFSW Africa Region

E-mail: yaswnetwork@gmail.com

Facebook: @Young African Social Work network, YouTube: @Social Work TV Africa.

The Young African Social Workers Network commemorates Human Rights Day

On this International Human Rights Day, the African youth in the field of social work unite in a collective voice to reaffirm our commitment to promoting and safeguarding human rights across the continent and beyond. As advocates for human rights, freedom, justice, equality, peace, and dignity, we recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence of human life well expressed in the Ubuntu philosophy; Human rights are pivotal in shaping a just and equitable society respecting the indigenous values and cultures. And the theme: ***'Freedom, Equality and Justice for All'*** for the 2023 commemoration is indeed timely

Currently in many parts of Africa, our communities face a myriad of challenges ranging from poverty, discrimination, political instability, injustices, impunity, and unemployment to conflict and displacement. As young professional social workers, a profession that advances and advocates equity, unity, and sustainable development as well as addressing these social issues, we champion human rights for social justice for all as a fundamental pathway to sustainable and inclusive development and community wellbeing.

We emphasize the importance of inclusive and equitable societies, where the rights of every individual, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, are respected and protected. It is essential to acknowledge and celebrate the rich diversity of our continent while working collaboratively to eliminate discrimination of any form and promote social cohesion.

We call upon governments, civil society organizations, and international bodies to prioritize the implementation of policies and programs that empower and uplift marginalized communities. Starting with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will give all society mobility and promote advancements in Education, healthcare, and social services. This service must not only be accessible to all but improve quality, ensuring that no one is left behind. Young social workers must be included and involved in governance, development programs, and decision-making processes at all levels. This was clearly communicated at the IFSW Africa regional social work conference that ended on 24th November 2023 in Lagos, Nigeria.

In the spirit of Ubuntu, a philosophy that underscores our interconnectedness, we urge for a holistic approach to human rights that recognises the inherent dignity of every person. As young social workers, we commit ourselves to fostering empathy, understanding, and collaboration to build a more just and compassionate world.

On this International Human Rights Day, let us join hands to amplify the voices of the marginalised and vulnerable, challenge injustices, promote inclusion and work towards a future where human rights are not just an aspiration but a lived reality for every individual on the African continent and around the globe. And in alignment with the 2022 People's Summit outcome, of "Advancing a New Eco-Social World," a world that ensures sustainability of our planet for generations to come.

"Happy Human Rights Day to all the compassionate and dedicated social workers who tirelessly champion justice, equality, and dignity for all in the region and beyond. Your unwavering commitment to upholding the fundamental rights of every individual is a beacon of hope in creating a world where everyone is treated with respect and fairness. Thank you for your tireless efforts in making our communities more just, inclusive, and compassionate. Together, let's continue the journey towards a world where human rights are upheld for every person, every day. #HumanRightsDay #SocialJustice".

Mayaka Bernard

Network co-ordinator.