

Motion to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) General Meeting 2024,  
Panama

**Proposed by – Germany**

**Seconded by - Sweden**

(In accordance with Bye Law 8 (b) of the constitution of the International Federation of Social Workers which confirms: *‘Members may propose additional subjects for discussion to be included in the final agenda. The agenda is finalized after the opening of the General Meeting’*)

**Background**

IFSW is a diverse, growing, complex, global membership organisation. This motion proposes that, as IFSW grows, we need to pay more attention to good governance.

There is no standard international definition of good governance for NGOs, but inspiration may be drawn from the *United Nations Human Rights Council*, (addressing governments and other political and social actors) which recommends the following framework:

Ensuring that organisations have structures, processes, procedures, leadership practices and cultural norms in place that promote:

- transparency
- responsibility
- accountability
- participation
- responsiveness
- inclusivity (*added*)

As member associations, we should expect IFSW to be a model of good governance with these characteristics, further underpinned by our ethical code and values. Many governance policies and procedures also relate to legal obligations.

But we believe there are significant gaps in policies, procedures, rules, and accountability (e.g. in how decisions are taken, how information is shared, how leadership is exercised, how existing protocols are being upheld, how internal and external complaints are handled, data protection, protecting the rights and guarding the safety of all involved in the Federation, how members are consulted etc). Such gaps pose significant risks to our organisation.

We recognise the pressure on staffing and voluntary member resources and we also acknowledge the severe impact of the Covid period on all of us, including on our ability to meet and work together at global level and ensure shared understanding. We now need a renewed focus within IFSW on good governance creating a stronger organisation, fit and competent for current and future challenges.

**This motion proposes**

The Executive Committee of IFSW global shall:

- consider the above concerns raised about the nature and sufficiency of good governance structures and processes within IFSW global
- establish a working group of members and staff to review governance and to develop policies and procedures – and their implementation - according to a prioritised list
- ensure consultation with the wider membership as the work progresses
- work towards presenting a full report on good governance developments, matters for decision and proposals for future developments at the 2026 General Meeting