

Report of the 2-Day Social Work Conference held by the Association of Social Workers in Mozambique on July 3rd and 4th,2025



Group photograph of participants at the conference with the Honourable Minister of Gender ,Social and Labour,UNICEF Representative,AASMO Vice President and IFSW Africa president.

Introduction

The second national conference of social workers organized by the African Association of Social Workers Mozambique (AASMO), held in Montebello Indy Maputo Congress Hotel, Mozambique on 3rd and 4th of July 2025. The conference was supported by UNICEF and MTGAS. Following the inaugural conference in 2018, this two-day event convened social workers, academics, students, government representatives, and international partners to discuss the current state and future development of the social work profession in Mozambique.

The conference theme:"Strengthening the Profession,Building the future:Pomoting Social Work Training and Intervention".

The conference was well attended by international and national speakers from Ghana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Portugal joined virtually to share valuable insights about their national social work associations, including organizational structure, membership, legislative status, and key activities. These contributions provided valuable comparative perspectives for AASMO and Mozambique.

Several Mozambican institutions offering social work education identified a major challenge: the absence of a unified curriculum across universities. The varied course titles and contents compromise professional coherence

and standardization. Several line ministries and agencies were in attendance at the conference. They corroborated the challenges faced by social workers in Mozambique and the need to get the profession legalised and have a council to regulate the profession in the country.

The UNICEF representative talked about their intervention in the country and highlighted critical data and challenges facing social workers. He mentioned that a social worker-to-population ratio of 1:75,000, inhabitants, far below the regional benchmark of 1 per 5,000 to 10,000. This severe gap compromises Mozambique's capacity to deliver integrated, community-based, and effective social services. The UNICEF presentation also pointed to high poverty rates and unclear role definitions for social workers as challenges limiting their prioritization in government hiring and budgeting. UNICEF reaffirmed its ongoing commitment as the UN's lead agency for child protection to support AASMO and government partners in strengthening the social work workforce, clarifying roles, and advocating for increased investment.

Key Presentations

- The IFSW Africa President shed light on the theme of the conference emphasizing the importance of fostering collaboration between generations, enhancing mentorship opportunities, and investing in professional capacity building to strengthen social services. She went further to underscored the importance of engaging young social workers early in their education to foster leadership development, mentorship, and sustainability within the profession.

IFSW Africa President, Ms. Oluwatoni Adeleke making her presentation at the conference.

- Eric Hugh Salmon presented on the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, stressing the value of membership for networking, advocacy, and access to global resources.
- Conrad Barberton offered strategies for making an effective investment case to ministries of planning and finance, emphasizing evidence-based advocacy to increase social service funding.
- On the second day of the event, the President of IFSW Africa provided a comprehensive overview of IFSW's global role in facilitating sustainable social outcomes that enables people and their communities to reach their full potential for this and future generations. She pointed out the strategies used in achieving this as partnerships, advocacy and Action. She listed some of their partners and highlighted opportunities for member countries such as:
 - Opportunity for joint advocacy, Facilitation of international and regional cooperation for learning and joint action.
 - The association will be considered as a part of the international profession.
 - The opportunity to influence social work and participation or actively involved in commissions and several committees.
 - Participation in regional and international conferences
 - Engagement in monthly online meetings where experiences and best practices are shared
 - Access to capacity building opportunities and international collaborations

I concluded by shedding light on how to engage with IFSW programs and encouraged active involvement.

Opportunities for IFSW Engagement

- **Strengthening Membership Commitment:** Enhancing member engagement will empower Mozambique's social work community and elevate its global voice.
- **Expanding Portuguese-Speaking Representation:** Increasing Lusophone membership will enrich IFSW's diversity and regional cooperation.
- **Leveraging Government Partnerships:** Support from government officials who are social workers creates promising avenues for policy advocacy and resource mobilization.
- **Continued UNICEF Support:** Sustained capacity-building initiatives from UNICEF will be essential to the association's growth and professional development.
- **Government Support and Institutional Strengthening**

- AASMO benefits from notable government support, especially as the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare is a professional social worker and active AASMO member. This connection provides a strategic advantage for advocacy and policy influence.

Conclusion:

The 2025 AASMO Conference, supported by UNICEF, was a milestone for Mozambique's social work sector. It fostered critical exchanges, international collaboration, and renewed dedication to advancing the profession. Continued partnership with IFSW, UNICEF, and government stakeholders will be vital to strengthening social work practice and improving social services for vulnerable populations in Mozambique.