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Draft Resolution on a Review of the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles

The Norwegian Union of Social Workers (FO) strongly supports the core values of social work, including human dignity, human rights, social justice, solidarity, peace, and nonviolence. These values are fundamental for the social work profession and should continue to be reflected in the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles.

At the same time, FO sees that social work today is practiced in a more complex global situation, influenced by war and conflict, migration, climate change, technological development, and changes in welfare systems and democracy. This creates new ethical challenges and may affect how the ethical principles are understood and used in different countries.

FO believes there is a need for a review of the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles to make sure the principles continue to be:

- relevant and useful in different national contexts,
- based on human rights and international law,
- supportive for ethical social work practice in changing societies, and
- clear enough to support common understanding among IFSW member organisations.

The ethical principles are directed towards the individual social worker, but parts of the principles make it unclear where boundaries are put between the social worker – and areas that are outside the social workers control. As one example, FO believes that some parts of section 9.3 have created uncertainty about the relationship between professional ethics and duties given by national law or public authorities in situations such as war, occupation, compulsory military service, or national emergency.

FO believes this shows the need for a broader review of the ethical principles to make them clearer and easier to apply in different countries and situations.

FO therefore proposes that the IFSW General Meeting establishes an international working group to review the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles and prepare recommendations for the IFSW General Meeting in 2028.

The working group should have broad regional representation and involve member organisations during the process to ensure an open and inclusive review.

The purpose of the review should be to strengthen the common ethical foundation of the global social work profession and make sure the ethical principles continue to give clear and relevant guidance for social workers worldwide.

FO respectfully asks the General Meeting to support this proposal.