

# IFSW-AP Regional Report

## 1. Introduction

Following the 2024 General Meeting in Panama, the Asia-Pacific region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW-AP) successfully sustained its regional activities, communications, conferences, and cross-border collaborations. Despite the significant geographical, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the area, the Executive Committee maintained seamless coordination to support member associations through regular meetings, professional webinars, and regional online communication networks.

### Executive Committee for Term 2024–2026

The regional operations continued under the leadership of the following Executive Committee members:



- President – **Machiko Ohara** (centre, in the photo above)
- Vice President – **Teo Ai Hua** (second from the left, in the photo above)
- Treasurer – **Viktor Virág** (far right, in the photo above)
- Honorary Secretary – **Amran Jamil** (far left, in the photo above)

Since the 2024 General Meeting in Panama, the Asia-Pacific region has continued its activities under the same Executive Committee members. The Committee's strategic and administrative functions continue to be actively supported by Nattapat Sarobol (Publications Lead) and Yoko McLennan (Secretary to the President).

## 2. Regional Overview

The IFSW-AP region spans East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Oceania. It represents diverse communities navigating complex, contemporary social issues, including climate-related crises, natural disasters, rapidly ageing demographics, migration, economic inequality, and accelerated social change.

Throughout this term, member associations demonstrated immense resilience, mutual solidarity, and an unwavering commitment to human rights and social justice. Strong regional connectivity was maintained through the Asia-Pacific Social Work Conference (APSWC) framework, executive governance, and digital communication channels.

## 3. Key Activities for Term 2024–2026

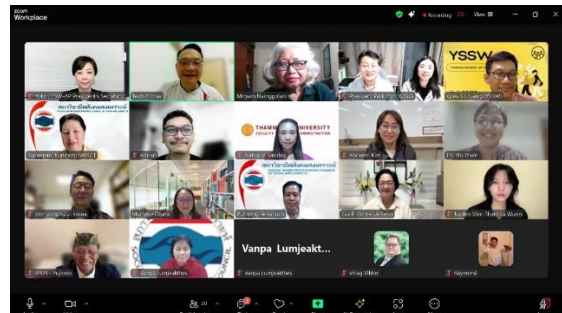
### Regional Meetings and Governance

To maintain robust regional operations and prepare for international governance milestones, the Executive Committee conducted 56 online meetings during this term. Overcoming vast time zone differences, these sessions focused on operational continuity, regional webinar planning, social media strategies, and preparations for the broader IFSW General Meeting.

Additionally, two formal Regional Meetings were convened to solidify regional strategies:

- Online annual regional meeting for 2024 held on 17 January 2025.
- One in-person annual regional meeting for 2025 held on 19 November in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

These governance efforts ensured steady administrative continuity post-Panama and laid the groundwork for upcoming regional conferences in South Korea (2027) and New Zealand (2029).



## Conferences and Regional Events

A major milestone of this reporting period was the 28th Asia-Pacific Social Work Conference (APSWC 2025), hosted in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 18 to 21 November. Guided by the highly relevant theme, “Social Work Responses to Climate Change and Other Environmental Issues,” the conference gathered social workers, educators, and practitioners from across the territory to exchange critical insights on eco-social work practices.

Key highlights from APSWC 2025 included:

- Pre-Conference Workshop: “Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for the Future in the Asia Pacific Region – Focusing on Climate Change and Other Environmental Issues.”
- International Comparative Symposium: Focused on the localization and development of social work education and training standards based on Global Standards.



## Member Engagement and Collaboration

The region prioritized active dialogue through a hybrid mix of face-to-face and virtual platforms.

Key engagement initiatives included:

- **Global Commemorations:** Active participation in World Social Work Day activities across the region to foster a shared professional identity.
- **Local Support and Solidarity:** Extending solidarity and practical support to member associations celebrating local milestones, such as national conferences in Iran and Thailand.
- **Crisis Response:** Expressing continuous solidarity with colleagues and vulnerable communities experiencing severe humanitarian and political crises, particularly in Myanmar.

## 4. Communication and Visibility

To bridge geographical distances and bridge time zones, IFSW-AP actively utilized Facebook and Instagram as primary visibility tools. These social media platforms served as vital nodes for:

- Broadcasting webinar announcements and live conference updates.
- Highlighting grassroots member initiatives.
- Promoting collaborative regional programmes, thereby driving up engagement and increasing the visibility of professional social work across the Asia-Pacific.



## 5. Partnerships and Collaboration

Building a robust professional ecosystem remained a core focus. The Executive Committee deepened its ties with academic institutions, regional networks, and international partners through joint webinars and educational events. These collaborative platforms addressed intersecting themes such as clinical social work practice, disaster management, gerontological social work, and human rights frameworks, effectively expanding educational access and professional networks across the region.



## 6. Challenges

Operating an expansive region naturally presents distinct operational hurdles:

- **Logistical Barriers:** Managing coordination across multiple time zones, distinct languages, and varying organizational capacities of member bodies remains a complex task.
- **Financial Constraints:** High travel costs and limited funding pools occasionally impacted on physical attendance at international meetings and face-to-face regional events.
- **Macro-Level Pressures:** Member associations themselves continue to operate under high stress, responding locally to economic pressures, climate disasters, and rapidly shifting demographic needs.

## 7. Future Directions

Moving forward, IFSW-AP has established clear priorities to sustain momentum and deepen impact:

- **Environmental Advocacy:** Strengthening localized and regional social work frameworks to tackle climate change and environmental degradation.

- Educational Advancements: Supporting standardized social work education, curriculum development, and training models aligned with global benchmarks.
- Digital Connectivity: Optimizing online communication and virtual exchange platforms to ensure equitable access to regional resources.
- Conference Milestones: Ensuring robust planning and member mobilisation for the upcoming 29th APSWC in South Korea (2027) and the 30th APSWC in New Zealand (2029).

## 8. Conclusion

The 2024–2026 reporting period highlighted the exceptional solidarity defining the Asia-Pacific social work community. Despite significant cultural, geographical, and economic diversity, member associations remained deeply interconnected and actively engaged. The shared challenges facing the region are undeniable, but the mutual support, professional leadership, and commitment demonstrated by our members underscore the vital and growing importance of regional cooperation in advancing social justice and human rights across the Asia-Pacific.

