



## **IFSW Africa Region Report(2024–2026)**

### **Introduction**

IFSW Africa Region has experienced significant growth, strengthened professionalisation, and expanded its influence across the continent and globally. Over the past two years, the region has consolidated its role as a vibrant platform for collaboration, advocacy, and capacity building, representing social workers in 29 member countries despite all the challenges in various parts of Africa.

### **1. Expanding Membership and Inclusivity**

Welcomed Guinea-Bissau (2024) and Mozambique (2025) into IFSW Africa.

Achieved historic balance with Francophone countries hosting for the first time in Senegal (2025), and have countries in Anglophone members such as Mozambique, joining other Anglophone countries in the region of IFSW.

Received applications from 10 countries within this period whose application are at different stages pending approval demonstrating Africa's momentum toward full continental representation.

## 2. Strengthening Professionalisation and Regulation

Convened West Africa sub-regional meetings (Lomé 2024, Dakar 2025) to address urgent issues of legislation, regulation, and academic integrity.

Partnered with the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) to develop a framework guiding countries in establishing regulatory councils and harmonised standards.

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At Extraordinary General Assembly:  
**Social workers brainstorm on framework regulating profession**

By Macwalter Njaptek Refor

Social workers from across the Cameroon have brainstormed on establishing framework that regulates their profession. Grouped under the banner of Cameroon National Association of Social Workers, CNASW, they met in Yaounde for the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting.

The General Assembly held on the campus of the National School of Administration and Magistracy, ENAM, in Yaounde on Saturday, October 5.

It was placed under the theme: "The Cameroon National Association of Social Workers at the time of re-establishment: issues, challenges and perspectives".

The opening ceremony was chaired on behalf of the Minister of Social Affairs, MINAS, Pauline Iseine Ngenane, by the Secretary General of that ministry, Paule Beryl Itoh.

In her speech, the minister's representative thanked the organising committee for their effort in ensuring a successful and hitch-free first ever General Assembly of the association which serves as a platform for dialogue on social works in the country.

"The establishment of a platform for meetings and exchanges between social workers appears to be an opportunity for the ministry of Social Affairs in the context of the CNASW. It should constitute a medium for aggregating social issues and equally

According to Social Affairs Inspector and President of CNASW, Mathieu Meyere, the aim of the meeting was to mobilise social workers of all generations around a national umbrella organisation and to rethink the structure, organisation and

operation of the CNASW with a view to establishing a professional order. "We want to lay the foundations for the ethical, normative, legal and institutional framework for the exercise of the profession of social worker in Cameroon, adopt the organic and technical framework responsible for preparing an elective General

social work in Cameroon.



### Regulating social work in Africa



Webinar – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 – 11.30 – 13.00 (UTC)

Progress in achieving recognition of social work in Africa

Joachim Mumba (IFSW & Zambia) Mashood Mustafa (Nigeria)

Updates from countries

Oluwatoni Adeleke (IFSW) Sylvia Daisy Romanus (COSW) David N Jones (COSW)

Webinar Zoom Link [HERE](#)

Conducted high-level advocacy missions (e.g., The Gambia and Mozambique) to advance legislation, improve working conditions, and strengthen government partnerships.

Countries like Gambia, Botswana, Senegal are at different stages with their legislation processes while Zambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone are working towards setting up the social work council.

**Regular meetings with national association leaders**, creating a platform where experiences and challenges are shared, and collective strategies are developed.



## **Presidents from different countries in Africa in a meeting in Dakar**

### **3.Capacity Building and Conferences**

The Africa Region continued to promote professional development and knowledge sharing through engagement with member associations and participation in key professional events. During the reporting period, notable milestones reported by member associations included the Sierra Leone AGM (2024), Cameroon (2024), Guinea Bissau(2024) Mozambique National Conference (2025), NASoW's 50th Anniversary in Nigeria (2025), and the re- launch of SASWA in South Africa (2025).

A major highlight was the successful hosting of the 2025 IFSW Africa Regional Conference in Dakar, Senegal, the first Regional Conference held in a Francophone country. The conference attracted over 200 participants and adopted commitments on workforce development, research, professionalisation, advocacy, and youth engagement, setting a shared agenda for the future of social work in Africa.

### **4. Advocacy and Campaigns**

Advanced campaigns against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and harmful practices.

Celebrated International Women's Day and World Social Work Day with regional webinars and events.

Launched the Ubuntu Sisterhood (2025), a continental network empowering female social workers through mentorship, advocacy, and solidarity.

Launched the Young Social Workers Program in Senegal (2025), laying the foundation for young social workers to take leadership roles in shaping the future of the profession.

## **5. Partnerships and Collaboration**

Facilitated and sustained strong partnerships with UNICEF, which supported activities in Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, Burundi, and other countries. This partnership has enhanced partial sponsorship of presidents from several countries to the Regional conference in 2025.

These collaborations have strengthened child protection systems, humanitarian response frameworks, and professional development initiatives across the region.

Expanded cooperation with universities across different countries, government agencies, and international and local organisations to build resilience and professional capacity

## **6. Recognition and Inspiration**

Established the Africa Awards of Excellence (2025), honouring outstanding practitioners from different countries.

Elevated visibility of social workers in humanitarian response, child protection, gender justice, and peacebuilding through the conference themes in 2025

Promoted intergenerational mentorship and strengthened solidarity across the region.

## **7. Strategic Impact**

**From Awareness to Institutionalisation:** 2024 focused on campaigns and partnerships; 2025 consolidated gains with legislation, regulation, and continental conferences.

**Bridging Linguistic Divides:** Francophone and Anglophone countries joining the IFSW Africa proving Africa's unity in diversity.

**Youth and Gender Leadership:** Ubuntu Sisterhood and Youth Program ensure sustainability and intergenerational continuity.

In 2026, the region is focussing on the resolutions arrived at in the 2025 Africa conference and have started with mobilising support for countries for legislative efforts which in turn will teach associations how to fundraise and be accountable. This is a key focus area as there are challenges of limited funding of the Associations as legislation efforts continues.

## **Challenges:**

As a diverse and geographically expansive region, IFSW Africa continues to face several operational and organisational challenges.

### **1.Regional Coordination and Organisational Diversity**

Coordinating activities across multiple time zones, languages, and varying organisational capacities remains a complex undertaking. Ensuring effective communication and engagement among member associations requires continuous effort and resources.

### **2.Membership Dues and Financial Sustainability resources.**

A number of member associations face difficulties in paying annual membership dues due to limited financial resources and competing national priorities. This affects the ability of associations to fully participate in IFSW programmes and initiatives.

### **3.Leadership and Member Management**

In some countries, national association leadership faces challenges in maintaining consistent engagement with their membership base. Limited communication and consultation with members can affect participation, ownership, and collective action, thereby weakening the effectiveness and visibility of national associations.

### **4.Financial Constraint**

High travel costs, visa requirements, and limited funding opportunities continue to affect participation in international meetings, regional conferences, and face-to-face engagements. These constraints particularly impact associations from low-resource settings.

### **5.Operating in Complex and Changing Environments**

Member associations continue to operate in increasingly challenging environments, responding to economic pressures, climate-related disasters, humanitarian crises, political instability in some contexts, and

rapidly changing demographic and social needs. These pressures often stretch the capacity of social workers and their professional associations.

## **Conclusion**

The past two years have marked a transformative era for IFSW Africa. The region has expanded its membership, strengthened professionalisation, empowered women and youth, and sustained strategic partnerships with UNICEF and other stakeholders. With regular meetings fostering shared learning and solidarity, and with Francophone and Anglophone countries joining hands, IFSW Africa is becoming stronger, more inclusive, and more visible force.

The achievements of 2024–2025 demonstrate Africa’s readiness to shape the global future of social work, with a united voice and a clear vision for sustainable development, social justice, and human rights.