



IFSW President Gary Bailey's 2014 **World Social Work Day Message**

Friends and Colleagues:

Social Workers around the world are coming together to celebrate World Social Work Day, which is celebrated annually on the third Tuesday in March, to highlight for the global community the social work's professions many contributions to society and to be a part of an on-going dialogue with partners as to how various social challenges can be responded to.

The theme of this year's World Social Work Day 2014 is: **Social and Economic Crises-Social Work Solutions**. Social workers are being called upon to engage in actions which:

Promote equality and equity; Enable people to live their lives sustainably; Build participation of service users, consumers and communities; Facilitate caring communities, and Respect diversity and build connections amongst people.

On a daily basis globally people are confronted by issues of poverty, a lack of access to quality education, unaffordable and or inadequate housing, and a lack of needed health and mental health services. What we as social workers know is that a climate that respects and protects basic civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights is fundamental to human wellbeing.

Current global economic situation calls for us raise our collective voices and to increase our professional unity and engagement, so that as social workers we can be more influential and relevant in political and economic arenas. A key aspect of social works primary mission is that of enhancing human well-being and working to ensure that people are able to meet their basic

needs, especially the most vulnerable among us. As a global profession we have done this through our many different roles in society, and in our varied fields of practice.

Now we must work to ensure that those who are the most vulnerable amongst us are at the front of all of our efforts as we work for more just economic systems to be put into place. As social workers we must continue the fight to eradicate poverty and to make sure that the impact of so called austerity measures which are occurring globally and are injuring the most vulnerable around the world are identified resisted and pushed back against!

The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development continues to be the best vehicle to help us to do this. This effort between the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) continues to ensure that our profession becomes stronger. Our shared belief that the world can be changed for the better when we as social workers join together, advocating for the dignity and worth of the person; a more just world; and celebrating the importance of human relationships through the creation of more healthy environments and **promoting social and economic equalities amongst people and societies**

As a profession, social work has been dedicated to improving the welfare of society, of the individual and working with communities towards self-realization. We work to ensure that people are able access their own power at both the individual and community levels, and that solutions to problems are driven from the service user perspective which help to influence the way systems function and social work services are provided .

We must also continue to ensure that people's human rights are ensured and protected and that the voices of those impacted by others poor business and political decisions are not ignored and are responded to.

Pioneering social worker and Nobel Prize recipient Jane Addams said: ***“What after all has maintained the human race on this old globe despite all of the calamities of nature and all of the failings of humankind, if not faith in new possibilities and courage to advocate them”***. As a profession we must continue to stand up and be counted when it matters ... and it matters now more than ever.

On this World Social Work Day 2014, as President of IFSW I am proud to know that there are so many dedicated social work practitioners who especially during these times of such serious global challenges are standing together and working in solidarity and who through their commitment and dedication are invested in ensuring that the needs of those who are the most vulnerable are acknowledge responded to by actions that will benefit all of humanity.

In 1964 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr as he accepted his Nobel Peace Prize said: ***“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down men other-centered can build up”***

As professional social workers we too must have the audacity to believe that the world can be more just and work more fairly for all. Yes there are many issues which confront us and there is much work for us to do, but I know that by working together we can alleviate and impact those issues and decisions which negatively impact those who are the most vulnerable amongst us.

As the late Nelson Mandela so eloquently stated ***“A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dream of.”***

In solidarity and action,

Gary Bailey, MSW, ACSW

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Bailey, MSW, ACSW".

President IFSW