

Bern, 4th June 2014

IFSW Delegate Meeting Melbourne 6th - 7th July 2014

Motion for amendments of the Comments on **Proposed Global Definition of Social Work** concerning procedural issues for interpretation, amplification and revision

Submitted by AvenirSocial, Switzerland

Draft for Resolution of General Meeting 2014 in Melbourne

This General Meeting adopts the following proposed amendments to the comments of the Global Definition of Social Work.

„No part of this definition shall be construed in a way to interfere with other part of this definition.”

“Amplifications” on national and/or regional levels shall not interfere with the meaning of elements of the definition and with the spirit of the whole definition. They have to be submitted to the Global Executive Committee for comment before being approved.“

“As the definition of social work is the key element for establishing the identity of an occupational group, a future revision of this definition has to be initiated only after precise evaluation of the implementation process and the need for change. Adding further comments is to be first choice before altering the definition.”

Objective

- Prevent misinterpretation and misuse of the definition
- Secure consistency of regional and national amplifications of the definition
- Prepare procedural ways for future revisions of the definition.

Context

Although we are not happy with all part of the definition, we acknowledge the great effort, the extensive discussions and the careful opinion making in a democratic process heaving led to this result and we support the adoption of this definition.

„No part of this definition shall be construed in a way to interfere with other part of this definition.”

All the comprehensive considerations incorporated in the process of the making of this definition cannot prevent one-sided interpretations of single elements of the definition contradicting the quintessence of the whole definition. Therefore we propose to add a remark to the comments, that no part shall be used in a way contradicting the whole definition. With that we

emphasize that the different human rights referred to in the definition are of equal importance, they are universal, indivisible and interdependent.

“Amplifications” on national and/or regional levels shall not interfere with the meaning of elements of the definition and with the spirit of the whole definition. They have to be submitted to the Global Executive Committee for comment before being approved. “

The new definition gives regions and national associations the possibility to “amplify” the definition to their means, to their cultural need and understanding. With this the definition is given respect to the autonomy of national member associations and to regional groupings. In this autonomy lays a certain risk to lose the unity and coherence of Social Work Definition. As safeguard to undesirable development without restricting the autonomy of member associations and regional groupings “amplifications” must be presented to IFSW global executive committee for comment before adopting them on national or regional level.

“As the definition of social work is the key element for establishing the identity of an occupational group, a future revision of this definition has to be initiated only after precise evaluation of the implementation process and the need for change. Adding further comments is to be first choice before altering the definition.”

The IFSW General Meeting in Montréal, Canada, July 2000 adopted the international definition of the social work profession replacing the IFSW definition adopted in 1982. It was then “understood that social work in the 21st century is dynamic and evolving, and therefore no definition should be regarded as exhaustive.” This remains true: social work was always and will ever be dynamic and evolving and will call for amplifications and revisions in the future.

The global definition is referred in a growing number of national and international contexts such as laws, professional association’s code of conducts, regulations of professional accreditation, codes of ethics, curricula and training programmes, international agreements etc. Modification and revision of the global definition may have a large number of unexpected and unforeseeable effects and should therefore only be undertaken after thorough evaluation of the need for change and effects of modifications. In general additional comments may be first to be considered as adequate way to react to evolving realities of social work.

Sincerely,



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