

IFSW AFRICA REGION REPORT-2014

INTRODUCTION

The Profession is becoming more visible and relevant in the Africa Region even as the Region grapples with socio-economic problems like unemployment, food security rapid population growth, poverty. Social Workers are now being employed in areas where they were hitherto considered irrelevant. The future looks bright for the profession in the Africa Region thanks to efforts at promoting the Profession in the Region.

The Region has seen increased collaboration and communication among national Social Work Associations and other civil Society actors within the Region during the Period under Review.

MEMBERSHIP

Twenty-three (23) National Associations in Africa namely Benin, Botswana, Djibouti, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Lesotho, Niger and Zimbabwe make up the membership of the Africa Region. While the Region has not had an increase in its membership during the period under review the President and the member at Large for the Region have had the opportunity to communicate and collaboration with Social work practitioners and educators who are not members of the Association. It is hoped this development will result in an increase in membership in the ensuing year all things being equal. Efforts are underway to reactivate not too active members like Benin, Djibouti, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Sudan. It is important to note that various conflicts on the continent have affected the membership of the Africa Region. For example Libya which used to be a very active member is now dormant.

National Associations from Burundi, Somaliland, Egypt and Ethiopia have expressed interest in joining the Federation.

THE EXECUTIVE

The Region has Mr. Daniel Opare Asiedu of Ghana as its President and Noel Muridzo of Zimbabwe as Vice President and member-at-large for Africa. We are pleased to inform the Federation that we have co-opted unto the executive Joseph Kayinga of Tanzania as Secretary General. He has been very helpful to us and we propose that he be officially recognised by the Federation as Secretary-General for the Africa Region.

LINKS TO REGIONAL ORGANISATION

The Region has a close working relationship with the Association of Schools of Social Works in Africa (ASSWA) the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Union and UN-Nairobi. The Region is an accredited Civil Society Organisation within the UN governing council.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Significant activities in the region during the period under Review were as follows:

1. Voices of Development Conference

This conference which focused on the post 2015 post MDGs was successfully held in Johannesburg, South Africa. South Africa Hosted the conference. We were privileged to have the Dr. Rory Truel and Dr. David Jones attending the conference.

2. Kampala conference

The President and representatives from some member associations in the region participated in an International Social Work Conference held in Kampala, Uganda from 16th to 18 March, 2014 under the theme, "Professional Social Work in East Africa towards Social Development and poverty

Reduction”. There was a Regional Meeting on the sidelines of the Conference. At least 16 representatives from 10 countries on the continent attended the said meeting. Far reaching decisions were taken at the meeting.

3. World Social Work Day.

Most member Associations in the Region celebrated this year’s Social Work day. The most significant and memorable of the celebration took place in Kampala where members of the Region, the ASSWA and other international participants marched through the principal streets of Kampala amid singing and dancing to celebrate the day. The celebration of the day was part of activities planned for the conference.

4. Visit of the Secretary-General to Egypt

We were privileged to have the Secretary-General visit Egypt. His visit has yielded positive results as Egypt is about to re-join the federation. We are most grateful to Dr. Rory Truell

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNS

The Region has played its part in the campaign against human rights abuses in the Continent. The abduction of 200 girls of the Boko Haram group in Nigeria has been condemned. A statement was issued by the Global President, Gary Baily condemning the abduction and demanding the return of the girls. We are grateful to the President and Secretary General for their support and to colleagues outside the region who pushed for a statement to be issued by the secretariat. Members of the Region have in their own small ways campaigned for the release of the Sudanese woman condemned to death for her belief.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Region is engaged in vigorous membership drive to get the remaining 31 countries in Africa who are not members to join the Federation. Most of these countries do not have viable

professional associations. We intend to engage with individual social workers in those countries with the view to encouraging them to form professional Social Work Associations.

REGIONAL ISSUES/CHALLENGES

1. Non- payment of membership dues to the Federation.
2. Lack of financial resources.
3. Non -existence of Physical office. The president is currently using his personal office in Accra, Ghana as the Regional Secretariat

FUTURE VISION FOR THE REGION

1. To establish a Regional Secretariat manned by a paid Secretary-General with the support of Secretariat. This falls in line with the proposal by the Secretary-General. We whole heartedly support the proposal
2. Creation of a website and an e-newsletter to help in communication among members.
3. Strengthen relationship with regional UN bodies and other Regional Organisations.
4. Establish an African institute of Social Work as a centre of excellence for Social Workers.
5. To embark on a vigorous membership drive aimed at bringing on board the remaining 31 countries in Africa who are not members of the Federation.
6. To establish peer review mechanisms to enable countries share best practices and experiences.

Submitted this 12th day of June 2014 by

Daniel Opare Asiedu

PRESIDENT, IFSW AFRICA