

## **Regional Report – Africa**

This is my last report as the regional President for Africa and I would like to make it brief and reflectively as a combination of other reports done in the last few years.

In my report in June 2011, I did highlight some key issues of concern for the region and which several national associations had identified as a priority in their continuous efforts to raise the voice and visibility of the profession. Collaboration and networking among the national associations, civil society groups and social development agencies has resulted to recognition and expanded space for social work in the management of public affairs; there are now wider consultations involving social workers, open dialogue leading to consensus and recognition of the roles that social workers can effectively play particularly in mediating, resolving conflicts and social development engagement in general, as opposed to confining themselves only to the traditional delivery of social related services. This recognition has led to establishment of legal frameworks to support social work training and practice and also formation technical working groups where such legal instruments are not in existence.

The social work fraternity has also been widely recognized as a distinct group in civil society groups and which unlike some CSO actors has taken the advantage of collaborating with governments by offering constructive criticisms on governance and other social work related concerns. In Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania among others, the presence of governments in the activities of national associations has been evident and regular.

Issues related to poverty, poor governance food security and unemployment still constitute the major challenges for the region. The need for new skills and enhanced capacity for social work practitioners and trainers, resource allocations by governments the key requirements for social work in Africa to get to the next level.

A Summit on Social Work Leadership was held in Nairobi on 14-16 May 2012. Over 200 participants including delegates from Uganda, Botswana South Africa and Zimbabwe took part. The event was funded by IFSW and had a huge financial support from Danish Association of Social Workers. A detailed separate report on this event is under preparation..

Periodic gatherings in whatever form are very important for the growth of national associations in Africa as organizing regional conferences have now become a big challenge. The effect of the Regional development fund has been felt across this vast region and outcome of this investment has in the past few years contributed to membership growth from 9 to 16 within the last 7 years. Although this growth has not translated into an increase in IFSW dues payments, indications are that this problem will be overcome in the near future.

The number of national associations in IFSW membership has grown from 9 to 16 within the last 5 years, and although this number is not supported by update fees payments, indications are that this problem will be overcome in the near future.

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