

# Resolutions of the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> East Africa Regional Conference on Social Work and Social Development

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**Participating Countries:** Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Austria

## **Social Work and Social Development in East Africa.**

### **Call for Action**

#### **1. Preamble**

We, the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> East Africa Regional Conference on Social Work and Social Development, gathered in Arusha, Tanzania from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, under the theme “Social Work and Social Welfare”; bringing together social work practitioners, educators, researchers, policy makers and social work students to discuss how to mainstream social welfare and social protection in the East African Community:

- 1.1 Cognizant of the fact that social welfare and social protection are major pillars of social development as declared in Article 120 (c) of the East African Community (EAC) Treaty where partner states undertake to closely co-operate amongst themselves in the field of social welfare with respect to the development and adoption of a common approach toward the disadvantaged and marginalized groups including the vulnerable children, elderly, persons with disabilities including those with albinism, persons living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), people living in poverty and other vulnerable groups;

- 1.2 Recognising the crucial contribution of social protection and developmental social welfare towards reducing poverty and vulnerability;
- 1.3 Recalling the commitment made by the EAC member states contained in the Bujumbura Declaration of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012 to address child rights and wellbeing in the EAC;
- 1.4 Participants reaffirm the significant role that social work plays in the social and economic development of our countries through prevention, management and resolution of social problems that otherwise cripple human functioning. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the social work professionals in East Africa strive to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote inclusive development and individual wellbeing. Social work focuses on humanitarian and democratic ideals, values of respect, equality, worth and dignity of all people.
- 1.5 Reaffirming our commitment to pursue the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, agreed upon by the two global organisations i.e. International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW); and underpinned by four pillars namely:
  - 1.5.1 Promoting social and economic equalities within countries and between countries
  - 1.5.2 Promoting the dignity and worth of all peoples
  - 1.5.3 Working towards environmental sustainability
  - 1.5.4 Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships
- 1.6 We recognize that in order to strengthen social care services and support to vulnerable populations as well as improve individual functioning so that people can fully participate and benefit from development, there is an urgent need to fully recognize and professionalize social work in East Africa.
- 1.7 We acknowledge the efforts that are being done by different stakeholders to strengthen professional social work in East Africa, particularly the PROSOWO project (Promotion of Professional Social Work in East Africa).
2. Recalling the fact that previous fora, specifically the 2014 International Social Work Conference in Kampala and the 2015 Bujumbura Social Work Conference, identified the need for social workers to be more proactive in influencing social policies and advocating human rights, we the participants in the Arusha conference, reaffirm our commitment to:

- 2.1 Maximize the use of social work values, knowledge and skills towards the achievement of the objectives of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development within the EAC.
- 2.2 Challenge all forms of inequality and exclusion, poverty, oppression, marginalization, linked to social criteria such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, and rural-urban living.
- 2.3 Challenge the discrimination of minority and marginalized groups such as people with Albinism.
- 2.4 Mainstream gender and promote and advocate gender equality in all policies and in all spheres of social work practice.
- 2.5 Recognize the alignment of the political and ethical mandates of the social work profession and national development goals.
- 2.6 We therefore call upon key Ministries and public sectors to accord more recognition to social work as the primary profession in translating social welfare policies into practice through delivery of social services to especially vulnerable populations.
- 2.7 We appeal to national governments to enact laws to regulate social work practice and education in order to ensure that only qualified and competent social work practitioners are involved in service delivery.
- 2.8 To standardize social work curricula, while realizing the practice could be unique and different in EAC in such a way that there should be mutual recognition of qualifications essential for the envisaged labour mobility in accordance with the EAC treaty.
- 2.9 We further appeal to national governments to:
  - 2.9.1 Fully implement laws and policies and scale up social protection programmes for older people.
  - 2.9.2 Increase the budgetary allocation to social welfare services
  - 2.9.3 Work with all stakeholders to improve the working environment and remuneration of social work practitioners in different practice settings.
- 2.10 We call on the EAC to accord a consultative status to the social work profession within the EAC framework in order to recognize accelerated response to social welfare and social protection policy and programming within the EAC.