



Annual Report 2024

Introduction

This report covers the period from **1 January to 31 December 2024**, highlighting the principal activities and achievements of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW). In 2024, ICSW advanced its mission across six priority areas:

- Promoting social development, social welfare, and social justice
- Networking and policy innovations in our work
- Communicating with our stakeholders
- On-going global advocacy and socially responsible global governance
- Regional level cooperation
- Knowledge-building, policy dialogue, and capacity development

Highlights of 2024

A landmark year for ICSW, 2024 was marked by major accomplishments that strengthened our global presence, reinforced our advocacy role, and renewed our organizational direction.

- **Successful Joint World Conference in Panama**
The most significant achievement of the year was the highly successful **2024 Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development**, held in Panama. The event gathered over **1,500 professionals from 81 countries**, reconnecting the global social welfare community and charting the path for future collaboration. ICSW served as a co-sponsor and played an active role in organizing and leading conference sessions.
- **High-Level Advocacy at the United Nations**
ICSW remained a leading civil society voice at the **62nd Session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD)**, where it submitted a written statement on the priority theme and co-organized a virtual side event on civic engagement and community participation. ICSW also made a formal submission to the **UN Summit of the Future**, calling for a *new social contract*, intergenerational equity, and a *Global Digital Compact* to safeguard citizens' rights in the digital age.
- **Election of a New President**
The term of President **Suh Sang Mok** concluded in 2024. The General Assembly elected **Dr. Sergei Zelenev** as the new ICSW President for a four-year term, marking the beginning of a new leadership phase and strategic direction. The assumption of duties was aligned with the annual calendar to commence on **1 January 2025**.
- **Launch of the Citizen Co-Design Initiative**
ICSW launched a new flagship initiative on **citizen participation in the design of social**

policies, in partnership with local authorities in Málaga and Ronda, Spain. The first seminar in Ronda (November 2024) focused on developing innovative co-design methodologies to make social services more democratic, inclusive, and responsive.

- **Major Digital Transformation: New ICSW Website**

A comprehensive overhaul of ICSW's digital presence was completed with the launch of a **new website on 2 October 2024**, creating a modern, user-friendly platform for information sharing, global communication, and member engagement.

- **Regional Leadership on Mental Health**

Through **ICSW Europe**, and in collaboration with **ICSW Sweden**, the organization hosted a high-level seminar in Stockholm on "*Mental Health – Human Rights and Participation.*" The event reaffirmed ICSW's commitment to advancing mental health as a core component of social justice and human rights.

Outcomes by Priority Area

1. Promoting Social Development, Social Welfare, and Social Justice

- ICSW submitted a **written statement** to the 62nd Session of the **Commission for Social Development**, addressing the theme "*Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*"
- Together with **IASSW**, ICSW organized a **virtual side event** titled "*Social Policies to Accelerate Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Promoting Civic Engagement and Community Participation.*" The session attracted high-level participation and was widely praised for its practical policy insights.
- **Championing Intergenerational Solidarity:** ICSW promoted the 2025 World Social Work Day theme — "*Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing*" — and continued to serve as a convening member of the Steering Committee for the UN celebration in New York.
- **Addressing Mental Health and Human Rights:** The Stockholm seminar highlighted the urgent need to integrate mental health into broader welfare systems and combat stigma through rights-based approaches.
- **Advocating Worker Well-being:** The October Newsletter featured expert commentary on **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)** as a vital element of decent work and family well-being.
- **Regional Focus on Justice:** Regional analyses from **MENA** and **North East Asia** informed global debates on inequality, equity, and sustainable welfare.

2. Networking and Policy Innovations

- **Panama World Conference:** As the flagship networking event of the year, the Panama Conference fostered collaboration among professionals, academics, and policymakers, offering an unparalleled platform for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange.
- **Co-Design for Democratic Policy-Making:** The **Ronda Seminar** marked a new chapter in policy innovation by introducing participatory co-design practices in social service development, in collaboration with municipal authorities.

- **Digital Connectivity:** The launch of the **new ICSW website** enhanced digital networking, enabling members and partners to exchange ideas, access resources, and participate in virtual events.

3. Communicating with Our Stakeholders

- **A Year in Review:** The **December Newsletter** presented a comprehensive overview of ICSW's 2024 accomplishments, including reflections from the Executive Director on the organization's evolving agenda and partnerships.
- **Leadership Communication:** In his messages to members, incoming President **Dr. Sergei Zelenev** outlined his vision for a more collaborative, innovative, and inclusive ICSW.
- **Regional and Thematic Coverage:** Dedicated newsletters highlighted regional developments (MENA, North East Asia) and cross-cutting issues such as global cooperation, digital inclusion, and the future of social policy.

4. Global Advocacy and Socially Responsible Governance

- **Engagement at the United Nations:** ICSW was actively involved in the **62nd CSocD session**, contributing policy insights on poverty eradication, inequality, and inclusive governance.
- **Advocacy at the Summit of the Future:** ICSW's formal submission to **ECOSOC** emphasized the importance of intergenerational equity, universal social protection, and digital rights.
- **Shaping a New Social Contract:** ICSW continued its long-standing advocacy for universal social protection frameworks, arguing for systems that empower communities and strengthen social cohesion in the face of global challenges.

5. Regional Cooperation

- **Latin America:** ICSW's collaboration with regional partners, particularly the **Federation of Social Workers of Latin America and the Caribbean** under President **Kenya Batista**, was instrumental in the success of the Panama Conference.
- **Europe:** The Stockholm seminar on *Mental Health – Human Rights and Participation* demonstrated strong European leadership in addressing regional social challenges.
- **MENA and North East Asia:** Regional partners contributed unique perspectives and policy insights, enriching the global debate and enhancing inter-regional learning.

6. Knowledge-Building, Policy Dialogue, and Capacity Development

- **World Conference as a Knowledge Platform:** The Panama Conference provided hundreds of sessions that advanced professional knowledge and capacity for over 1,500 participants.
- **Thought Leadership:** Through its newsletters and communications, ICSW published expert analyses on global governance, digital transformation in welfare systems, and the role of intergenerational solidarity in sustainable development.

- **Preparing for the 2025 Global Summit:** ICSW initiated preparations for the **Second World Summit for Social Development**, to be held in **Doha, Qatar**, positioning it as a milestone event to reassess global welfare priorities and the future of inclusive social protection.

Conclusion

The year 2024 marked both continuity and renewal for ICSW — a time of deepening engagement, innovative outreach, and forward-looking leadership. From the success of the Panama Conference to the launch of new participatory initiatives and digital platforms, ICSW continued to champion social justice and human well-being across regions and generations. With renewed leadership and vision, the organization enters 2025 poised to shape global dialogue at the forthcoming Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha, Qatar in November 2025 and to continue its legacy of advancing inclusive, people-centered social progress worldwide.