



**N
E
ICSW
S**

International Council on Social Welfare

May 2023

Working Together for a Better ICSW



***Professor Antonio López Peláez,
Executive Director of ICSW and Professor of Social Work
and Social Services at the National Distance Education
University (UNED) (Spain)***

Dear fellow ICSW members, friends, and interested readers,

Collective mobilization allows us to put key social welfare issues on the public agenda that would not otherwise attract public attention. The three major social work organizations, IASSW, IFSW, and ICSW, were founded precisely at the first international conference on social work, in Paris in 1928. The collective mobilization that this conference entailed, in which thousands of people participated, resulted in the launching of organizations that, one hundred years later, continue to work for the collective welfare, at the local, regional and global levels. Just one year from now, in Panama, in 2024, we will celebrate the World Congress of Social Work. You can find the link and information at the end of this newsletter.

It is important to participate, and I encourage all

readers of the Newsletter, members and friends of ICSW, to participate in this congress, in the deliberations that will allow us to better meet the challenges of social welfare, poverty and social exclusion in the coming years.

As part of ICSW's constant updating process, we are innovating our website, incorporating new sections and collaborations. In the coming months, we hope to be able to enjoy a much more powerful and user-friendly website. In this issue of the Newsletter, we are publishing an article by Mr. Christopher Dapaah- Distinguished Fellow and Vice President of ICSW Central and West Africa region. It is a profound reflection on the keys to address gender-based violence in Wenchi and Banda Communities, and I would like to personally thank Mr. Christopher very much for his contribution to this issue of the newsletter.

We also publish two articles on the new challenges facing the United Nations (ICSW is a consultative entity of the United Nations, in the Commission for Social Development), and on the rise of social protection in Global South countries. For ICSW, social protection in the countries of the Global South is a matter of the highest priority. I would like to thank Leila Ali, Masters of Social Work: International and Community Development, Monmouth University, for these two contributions to our newsletter.

I hope you find them interesting, and I would like to thank all the ICSW Regions for their contributions to each of the newsletters.

Take care and stay healthy

Resource Link Foundation Calls on Development Partners to Empower Women and Girls for Voice to Advocate on Gender Based Violence Approach in Wenchi and Banda Communities



Mr. Christopher Dapaah- Distinguished fellow and Vice President of ICSW Central and West Africa region

According World Bank reports -2022, Gender-based violence takes many forms: physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological. Examples include female genital mutilation, killing in the name of so-called 'honor', murder, forced and early marriage, and sex trafficking are still on the increase mostly in the rural and peri rural communities with limited information on the legal and policy provisions Two of the most prevalent types of violence that women experience are intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV) (WHO 2021)..

Gender based Violence against women and girls has gained worldwide currency in both advanced and deprived economies due to its pervasive and debilitating nature on Human rights principles.

The trend in defilement and other rape cases reported shows that the victims brought up in

burgeoning slums are more vulnerable. In these areas, girls are more exposed to sexual assaults. For instance, in 2020, due to COVID 19, more Girls and women were at risk of Gender based violence since many were kept home away from productive environment and school communities.

Gender based violence is a daily occurrence in most rural communities where poverty levels are high, and women have very little say in decision making. Forced marriages, domestic servitude, loss of educational opportunities confronts the girl child when families experience economic shocks for various reasons. Customary law and cultural traditions are some of the main factors inhibiting women's rights. Girls are very often withdrawn and married off to older men, while some are trafficked and exploited as house helps or forced into prostitution, outmoded customary practices, such as genital mutilation, religious bondage in shrines to atone for the sins of family members are still visited on very young girls and women. Reporting of perpetrators by victims are seen as stigma to the family and against cultural norms of the society out of ignorance and limited knowledge on human rights and process of handling cases.

The Republic of Ghana has enacted laws and developed policies that have ensured nondiscrimination based on sex. The laws and policies also cater for and enhance equality among the sexes.

The country's Criminal Code Act, 1960 (Act 29) includes a section on sexual offences which is detailed throughout subsections 97 – 111 (5) of chapter six (1960)¹. However, a public health report shows that 33 to 37 percent of women in Ghana have experienced intimate partner violence in the course of their relationship (this includes physical, sexual, and emotional) due to lack or

limited legal procedures and information on how to address abuse cases.

Further on, Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) was established in 1998 as Specialized Unit within the Ghana Police Service in response to the increasing number of reported cases of abuse and violence against women and children.

Among others, DOVVSU assists victims of sexual abuse, physical assault, fraud and neglect. Another way is by making the domestic violence helpline widely publicized on various media platforms and agency websites.

On Domestic Violence Secretariat (DVS) and Human Trafficking Programmes In 2021, the Orange Support Centre was launched to provide information and support for survivors of Domestic or Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (D/SGBV) using a toll-free line and BOAME (Help Me) App for ease of case reporting and resolution.

In 2021, the Domestic Violence Information Portal (DVIP) was launched to provide and enhance data sharing amongst all stakeholders in the fight against D/SGBV and Child Marriage, yet with its inception, there have been physical abuse mostly in the remote communities and in many homes with drug abuse.

Additionally, medico-legal convening in response to sexual violence is being implemented in Ghana. The Institute of Development Studies has also developed a national strategic framework on ending child marriage in Ghana 2017-2026 among several ways to help victims of sexual violence in Ghana. One way is by contacting the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service. Several sexual abuse, and domestic violence cases were

recorded, of which female cases dominate and in 2021, the Child Marriage Information Portal (CMIP) was also launched. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) as a body receives complaints on daily basis on discrimination, prejudice, mistreatment, torture among others for fair hearing.

The Commission also carries out special investigations into human rights abuses that are systemic or cultural. The legal systems provide safeguards for the rights of women and non-discrimination based on gender.

On Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment issues in 2021, Ghana prepared its Combined 8th and 9th Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Report.

In 2021, a National Gender Equality Clinic was organized to promote sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls.

There are other several indications for improving legislation on sexual violence in Ghana including drafted bill on "Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values 2021" as introduced to Ghana's parliament in July 2021 and underwent its first reading by Parliament on 3 August 2021 and transmitted to Parliament's Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee for further considerations.

The Gender based violence remains prevalence despite all these legal and policy provisions in Ghana, survivors continue to face challenges on Gender based due to lack of access to information, limited or no empowerment and education on medical resources that allow for adequate post-rape care services in support of survivors, It is realized that, there are limited number of sexual assault referral centers and to

bridge this gap, however, survivors of sexual violence are still without adequate access to care due to limited or lack of knowledge of legal service infrastructure and the needed information to follow the due procedures to report cases for redress.

In 2022, DOVVSU reports also showed that out of the 16,272 cases in 2015, 1291 cases in court, 139 convicted and 26 cases have been acquitted and discharged. It said 1157 are still under trial, 3316 cases closed and 10945 cases under investigation. 8179 men and 1468 women were arrested in 2015 for domestic violence charges.

The highest ever number of rapes within a 12-month period was recorded by police in the year ending September 2022: of 70,633 cases and many were under reported due to lack of knowledge and right based approach on the processes or stigma from the public. In the Rural and Peri urban communities like Wenchi, Banda and Tain Districts with low or limited legal service infrastructure or support institutions for improving abused survivors or families is of much concern.

It is further realized that, women and Girls face barriers in reporting violence cases. These obstacles are rooted in a cultural belief that domestic and sexual violence is a private matter that should be addressed outside of the criminal justice system. A public health report shows that 33 to 37 percent of women and Girls in Ghana have experienced intimate partner violence in the course of their relationship (this includes physical, sexual, and emotional violence). Education on the signs of sexual violence or rape, post rape and sexual violence support services are inadequate in rural communities and schools.

Under the international human rights law, the Ghanaian government is obligated to address, prevent, investigate, and punish domestic violence perpetrators. It has taken critical first steps, one of which is the establishment of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) yet, citizens are not informed on the legal spaces in addressing such cases like post rape and medical challenges.

In Wenchi, Banda and Tain Districts in Bono Region in Ghana have some of the highest rate of child marriage and Gender based violence cases due to the above mentioned socio-economic/cultural issues and hence the need for an urgent action to mitigate the problem including negative cultural beliefs whereby gender base violence is a norm. In the target districts in most school communities in Ghana. It is realized that, reporting rape is traumatic for anyone, but having to pay two months' wages to complete the medical form prevents many in Ghana from seeking justice.

Studies found that 14 percent of girls are victims of sexual abuse and 52 percent have experienced gender-based violence. These numbers are likely understated, as girls tend not to report crimes for fear of reprisal and likewise for women for the fear divorce or being single mother who could not afford to cater for the children within the context of poverty.

Without addressing violence against girls and women and boys, and eliminating human trafficking, Ghana will not achieve the some of the of the SDGs targets related to Gender equity mostly SDG 5.2, 5.3, 16.2 If much efforts are put in place to combat the challenges of the violence against women and Girls through empowerment, the 2030 agenda cannot be achieved if half of the human race is left behind.

Charting new paths for the United Nations

Leila Ali, Social Science Teacher, American School of Kosovo

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, in his remarks to the General Assembly Consultation on February 13, 2023, made several important policy statements about future directions for the United Nations. Many of his initiatives have direct relevance for the ICSW and other civil society organizations. Referring to his previously issued report *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General has outlined his vision for the future of global collaboration, first of all accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2015, Member States have undertaken significant efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and to create and sustain healthy and prosperous communities. However, as the General Assembly prepares for the SDG Summit in September as well as the Summit for the Future next year, the Secretary-General emphasized the need to move away from abstract ideas and towards concrete actions, essential for improving global response and reaching the 2030 Agenda.

Underscoring the urgency and importance of addressing the many challenges facing the world today, including climate change, conflict, inequality, food insecurity, and nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General noted that the advancement towards achieving the SDGs has been uneven and that significant barriers and risks remain. He emphasized that the pace and scale of these challenges are outstripping our current problem-solving mechanisms, and that the international community must act quickly

and decisively to address them. In this light, collective action that highlights inclusive, accessible, and effective multilateral governance is essential. Through this approach, global cooperation and partnerships between governments, civil society, the private sector, and other key stakeholders might be strengthened. It is hoped that the upcoming SDG Summit this September could breathe new life into these systems to prepare for the Summit of the Future in 2024.

The Summit will provide an opportunity for leaders from around the world to agree on a roadmap that will turbocharge progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and make up for lost ground. The Summit will be a platform where new strategies and ideas can emerge that work for today's world while also moving us closer towards the future we want.

To this end, the Secretary-General called on G20 countries to agree on a global SDG Stimulus before the Summit in September. This call entails an increase in financing for sustainable development efforts in the amount of at least 500 billion dollars per year for countries in the Global South. The SDG Stimulus aims to offset challenging market conditions and strengthen the voice of the Global South in financial governance. More specifically, the Secretary-General noted that his report included many proposals for addressing the existing challenges, and that the Secretariat will issue a series of eleven policy briefs with concrete ideas for consideration in the context of moving forward.

One of the policy briefs will recognize the limitations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a key benchmark of socio-economic development due to its inability to capture important aspects of social and environmental well-being, such as

inequality, health, education, and natural resource depletion. The forthcoming policy brief will advance work on metrics looking beyond GDP in order for policymakers to make informed decisions on debt relief, concessional funding, and international cooperation. These metrics should also consider vulnerability, sustainability, and other vital measures of progress and overall well-being.

With due attention on gender equality and issues regarding youth, the Secretary-General highlighted the important work being done through the Global Accelerator on jobs and social protection. The Global Accelerator, as an investment in social development and economic recovery, focuses on promoting the economic inclusion of women, creating both green and digital jobs, providing guarantees in youth labor, and establishing a global fund for sustainable systems of social protection.

In addition to addressing the series of policy briefs pertinent to Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General looks forward to hearing from the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB). Guided by the United Nations Charter and the 2030 Agenda, HLAB will provide recommendations on best practices aimed at effectively filling gaps in global governance and the multilateral system as a whole.

Finally, the Secretary-General announced the upcoming World Social Summit in 2025, which will provide a unique opportunity and global platform for “deliberation based on inclusion, trust and listening, with focus on tackling inequalities and strengthening people’ agency, opportunities, and rights.” It is hoped that the World Social Summit will prioritize essential social challenges, including education, housing, jobs,

and social protection. The Secretary-General’s endorsement of the World Social Summit is noteworthy, as it brings attention to the importance of a new level of global cooperation and solidarity in tackling social challenges. By providing a forum for inclusive and participatory deliberation, the Summit will enable diverse perspectives and voices to be heard, ensuring the resulting policies and initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of all people, particularly those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Through these upcoming summits, the United Nations will look for new ways to strengthen policies at all levels thus making real changes in the lives of people everywhere.

The rise of social protection in developing countries: new insights

Leila Ali, Social Science Teacher, American School of Kosova

The rise of social protection in Global South countries has seen significant development in recent years, moving away from traditional food aid and subsidies towards more targeted and reliable forms of intervention. Through the provision of social assistance, social insurance, and labor market programs, today’s social protection systems strive to reduce (and prevent) poverty and vulnerability throughout the life-cycle. Social protection, including social protection floors, has been recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a vital tool contributing to a number of SDGs.

Social protection systems have notably expanded in low and middle-income countries. At the same time, however, it is estimated that more than half

of the world's population still lacks equitable access to social protection. In this context, a recent report to the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), published in 2022, may be of great interest to the ICSW audience.¹ Authored by a group of researchers, including Miguel Niño-Zarazúa, Ana Horigoshi, Alma Santillán Hernández, and Ernesto Tiburcio, the report distinguishes social protection systems as "nationwide policy portfolios aimed at protecting populations against life-course and employment-related hazards that threaten acceptable levels of well-being; supporting their productive capacity; and facilitating their full participation in society." The diversification of social protection systems visible in many countries has been driven by a mixture of domestic contributions, such as economic growth and demographic changes, as well as external factors, including policy diffusion and foreign aid. This study analyzes the key determinants that underscore the recent expansion of social protection systems in the Global South regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the role of foreign aid in these recent dynamics. The report identifies a range of public measures across nine main areas, such as child and family benefits, unemployment support, and health protection. In this light, the report focuses specifically on interventions within non-contributory assistance, and thus, helps provide greater insight into the successes of these programs while also identifying the areas that need improvement.

The devastating economic and social consequences brought about by the recent pandemic as well as ongoing regional military conflicts have revealed consequential gaps in access to social protection systems. Therefore, further expansion is needed in

order to adequately protect marginalized communities and better prepare them for future responses to multiple crises.

Drawing on 1) statistical analyses of international aid to social protection, 2) a systematic literature review on the contributing factors of social protection expansion, and 3) an international comparative analysis that is based on advanced econometrics methods within the years 2000-2019, this study works to answer several critical questions. These questions focus on whether foreign aid has contributed to the development of social protection systems and under what methods and financial approaches, which factors have driven these processes, and what other underlying factors have either contributed to, or hindered, the recent evolution and expansion of social protection systems.

Despite the overarching goal of providing support to Global South regions, the range of donors and organizations involved have distinct preferences and approaches to the types of programs they create for beneficiaries. The study explores, for example, how the World Bank's efforts in many poor countries are based on the goal of identifying and targeting specific populations that are in need. This can be seen in the promotion of their programs of conditional cash transfers (CCTs), social pensions, and public work programs. On the other hand, the UN approach emphasizes the importance of universal social protection systems provided to all members of society when needed. While the study does not explore the consequences of these contrasting approaches when influencing policy, they are important to consider when looking at recent shifts in social protection efforts.

¹ EBA is a government committee mandated to independently evaluate and analyse *Sweden's* international development assistance. <https://eba.se/en/reports/20402/20402/>

Evidence from the report indicates that while bilateral and multilateral donor agencies merge their efforts through dialogue and the exchanging of ideas, policy agendas are more actively advanced by multilateral agencies due to their distinct corporate objectives and their more active relationships with national government and key stakeholders. On the other hand, bilateral donor agencies operate in a more decentralized manner, providing country officers with more autonomy in collaborating with counterparts and countries receiving aid. Together, multilaterals, such as UNICEF and the ILO, as well as top bilateral donors have impacted the expansion of protection systems by providing technical assistance, policy design, and advice regarding program implementation, monitoring, and impact evaluation.

In recent decades, social protection portfolios have included CCTs, social pensions, unconditional cash transfers (UCTs), and public work programs. These types of programs have become increasingly important due to the limited availability of applicable social insurance schemes in these regions. In many developing countries, UCTs have led the expansion of social protection systems. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), CCTs have been the most widespread, followed by social pensions. In Asia and the Pacific region, UCTs, CCTs, and public work programs are all used to support vulnerable populations. The concentration of social protection aid in LAC is largely driven by multilateral agencies (such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the ILO), whereas the World Bank has been the largest direct contributor of financial resources towards social aid in sub-Saharan Africa over the last ten years. While the influence of donors and policy diffusion have had a considerably positive effect in LAC and Asia-Pacific regions, the report found that this relationship is much weaker in Africa.

Unsurprisingly, the pace at which social protection systems have developed and the types of programs that are adopted vary markedly across countries and global regions. The poorest countries face the largest deficits in coverage as well as limited financial and governmental capacity to implement such systems to scale. The report pinpoints the significant unequal distribution of social protection systems within sub-Saharan Africa when compared to other Global South regions. With just a handful of programs in place that reach over a million recipients, this region has the lowest effective coverage across marginalized populations, with only 15% of the population covered by at least one area of protection. As a result, these countries are disproportionately impacted and left without access to essential services of support and recovery. This situation can exacerbate recovery and beget greater social inequality and economic insecurity, which has serious implications for ICSW-led efforts and the advocacy and activities of other civil society organizations.

Overall, the study highlights the important role and positive contributions of foreign aid in the development of social protection systems in the Global South. Despite a positive trend in providing assistance to social protection programs, these programs still capture only a small fraction of total global aid budgets, with these trends being outpaced by more active donor assistance in sectors such as health and education.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of long-term sustainability of these systems. Building fiscal capacity coupled with improving tax collections will strengthen aid interventions and resource mobilization effort. From both a human rights and social justice perspective, expanding coverage of, and access to,

social protection systems is crucial to ensure adequate standard of living and the realization of one's full potential and participation in society. The investments mapped out in this study can help developing countries secure and maintain the ability to administer effective and sustainable social protection programs that address poverty and inequality, promote inclusive growth and participation, and prioritize the opportunity for their citizens to have a healthy and full life.

**More Activity at ICSW
- Save the Date!**

SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 2024
PANAMA CITY,
PANAMA
DEL 4 AL 7 DE ABRIL

SWSD
THE JOINT CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
P A N A M A 2 0 2 4

*Respecting Diversity
Through Joint Social Action*

#swsdpanama2024

ORGANIZAN:    COORDINADOR Y ANFITRION LOCAL: 

Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development 2024 will be hosted in **Panama City, Panama**, from **April 4 to 7**. The SWSD2024 will be jointly hosted by International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Federation of Social Workers and International Council on Social Welfare.

SWSD 2024 will be a **hybrid conference** with both online sessions and face-to-face sessions in Panama. If you wish to register for either online pass or in-person pass, please visit the below link for register online.

[Registration – SWSD 2024 – Panama](#)

The Early-Bird price for registration will be valid until December 31st, 2023.

The theme of SWSD 2024 is **“Respecting Diversity through Joint Social Action.”** And there are 17 sub-themes you can participate in for your presentation. The types of presentation can be ‘oral paper presentation,’ ‘symposium(in-person only),’ ‘workshop(in-person only),’ ‘poster presentation’ and ‘creative performing arts.’

17 sub-themes are as follows:

- 1) Democracy, Human Rights, Peace-building and Eco-social Justice
- 2) Ethics in Social Work and Social Development
- 3) Social Movements, Social Activism and Advocacy
- 4) Poverty and social inequalities
- 5) Inclusive social policies and legislation
- 6) Climate Change, Social Work and Social Development
- 7) Postcolonial/Decolonial/Indigenous/Emancipatory approaches
- 8) Ethno-cultural, religious and national diversities
- 9) Gender and Diversity
- 10) Diversity and Psychosocial Responses in Disaster Situations

- 11) Post Pandemic Social Work and Social Development
- 12) Digital Technology/Artificial Intelligence in Social Work and Social Development
- 13) Social Media: Constraints and Opportunities to Diversities
- 14) Social Work, Social Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals
- 15) Innovation, Social Entrepreneurship and People's Economy
- 16) Social Service Workers' Working Conditions
- 17) Social Work/Social Development in Designated Fields

If you are interested in participating in presentation, please visit [Summary Guide – SWSD 2024 – Panama](#) and download 'Abstracts Presentation Guidelines' to check important information for abstract submission.

The **deadline for abstract submission** is **May 31st, 2023**. Please make sure to submit your abstract on time!

For any inquiries about the conference, you may contact the conference secretariat at info@swsd2024.org.pa

The content of the ICSW News may be freely reproduced or cited provided acknowledgment of the source. The views do not necessarily represent policies of ICSW.

News Editor: **Antonio López Peláez, Executive Director, ICSW**
alopez@icsw.org

ICSW - International Council on Social Welfare. Office number 34. Department of Social Work, Faculty of Law, National Distance Education University (UNED).
C/ Obispo Trejo 2, 28040 Madrid (Spain).

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome!