

January 13th, 2019

**An Open Letter**

from

the Japanese Association for Social Work Education (JASWE) and  
the Japanese Federation of Social Workers (JFSW)

to

the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW),  
the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and  
the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)

on

*Strengthening Tripartite Partnership on Global, Regional and National Levels*

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) have been hosting the *Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development* in collaboration since 2010. Unfortunately, regarding the conference in 2020, IASSW and ICSW will jointly host a conference in Rimini (Italy), while IFSW will host a separate conference in Calgary (Canada). Considering severe circumstances surrounding social work and social welfare such as disparity, poverty, disasters, conflict, discrimination and environmental destruction, it is necessary more than ever that social work and social welfare related organizations deepen mutual understanding and strengthen partnership based on trust while they also respect each other's uniqueness.

The joint world conference hosted in collaboration between the three organizations is a symbol of such partnership and an opportunity for mutual exchanges. Yet, it is most regretful that the 2020 conference will be hosted separately at two distinct locations. This fact poses considerable demerits in many different ways to the members of the three organizations.

The Japanese Association for Social Work Education (JASWE) and the Japanese Federation of Social Workers (JFSW) express deep concern over this situation and hope that social work and social welfare related international organizations will further deepen mutual understanding and that social work and social welfare related global, regional and national initiatives will develop further. Hereby, we propose the implementation of the following measures for improvement.

1. Explicit written agreement for strengthening tripartite partnership

It is necessary that social work and social welfare related organizations on global, regional and national levels deepen mutual understanding, build further relationships based on trust and work in partnership while they also respect each other's uniqueness. However, there is a concern that misunderstandings and conflicts occur amidst such factors as differences in organizational structure and culture, lack of human resources and miscommunications due to linguistic differences.

Taking into account this current situation, we propose the conclusion of a written agreement to strengthen partnership in the future based on the discussion of visions and structures on global, regional and national levels. Such a written agreement should also clarify about policies and procedures regarding the joint world conference and include content on further tripartite partnership.

## 2. Strengthening tripartite partnership on regional and national levels

Considering that everyday social work and social welfare activities are carried out in local situations, it is necessary to actually advance partnership between organizations also in local situations at regional and national levels. JASWE and JFSW have been engaged in such collaboration regarding joint work in the *Global Definition of the Social Work Profession* and the *Japanese Amplification of the Global Definition of the Social Work Profession*. However, we propose to go beyond partnership or collaboration in such temporary activities, so that we can confirm and strengthen further partner relationships by setting up a joint platform including the Japanese ICSW counterpart organization too. In addition, we expect active advancement of similarly strengthened partner relationships in other regions and countries as well.

## 3. Partnership regarding the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development*

The *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* (2012) set forth jointly by IASSW, ICSW and IFSW has been promoted in collaboration between the three organizations. Now, a new *Agenda* for 2020 - 2030 is being formed. Even though the conference in 2020 will be held in separate places, it is necessary that the three organizations continue in partnership and proceed collaboratively with setting and implementing the themes for the next ten years. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish mechanism for working in collaboration not only on global, but also on regional and national levels.