

Media Statement

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPRECIATES THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Pretoria, 14 March 2022: In commemoration of World Social Work Day observed every year on the third Tuesday of March (tomorrow 15 March) unfolding this year under the theme: “Co-building a New Eco-Social World: Leaving No One Behind.” The Department of Social Development wishes to appreciate the significant role social workers play in the country and in communities.

As the theme dictates, the Department supports the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) initiative of raising awareness of climate change on the quality of life and livelihoods of communities.

Our country has experienced devastating effects of changing weather patterns as evidenced by droughts, wildfires and floods which among others destroyed homes and displaced people. Our social workers and social auxiliary workers are always at the forefront responding to the needs of communities in times of natural disasters.

The Department calls upon all South Africans to unite and work together with social work practitioners towards ensuring that all participate in initiatives which promote the value of the environment in psycho-social needs of people as well as a key component of sustainable socio-economic development of the country.

“Let us support social work practitioners in their endeavor to fully utilise and promote the person-in environment interactions as a contribution to the new Eco-Social World we all aspire to live in,” says Minister Lindiwe Zulu.

The World Social Work Day is not only about commemorating the day, but it also affords key stakeholders to recognize social work as an essential profession for efficient delivery of integrated quality and ethical developmental social welfare services.

This year’s commemoration, therefore, is envisaged at strengthening the Department of Social Development and sector partners’ participation in global engagements which the development of the profession focusing more on the theory and practice of social work.

South Africa is grappling with multiple social problems in the country ranging from teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse as well as the second pandemic of gender-based violence which negatively affects the most vulnerable women and children. Many households, especially, those who are hardest hit by COVID-19 also depend largely on social workers for counseling, psychosocial support, and other varied interventions. t delivery of integrated quality and ethical developmental social welfare services in the country. We have seen social workers being a source of hope to people during COVID 19, in the return of South Africans from Wuhan during the first wave of COVID 19, and the collapse of the church in Nigeria. The department recognises that the social work profession is still a critical skill required by the sector to implement key legislative frameworks guiding response and interventions on a variety of social ills and vulnerabilities.

To further improve the image of the social work profession and instill moral support for social workers and social auxiliary workers, the Department recommit itself that it will engage networks and professional associations and professionals to promote the integration of eco-social work practice in the education and practice of the profession.

Such an approach will be pursued with anticipation that social workers across the country will be equipped to respond to community needs emanating from the impact of climate and environmental changes on the quality of life and functioning of peoples of the country and the world. Such an awareness strengthens interventions for the social wellbeing of individuals, families, communities, and society at large.

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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