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Subject: Request to enact the legislation to establish a National Council for Social Work Education in India

Dear Sir/Madam

Greetings from Social Work Community!

We are approaching you with a humble request to support the enactment of a legislation to establish National Council for Social Work Education in India. This Council is required to enhance quality in social work education, including its linkages with practice, knowledge, and ethical conduct; and to create national registers of accredited social work education institutions and programmes.

For more than a century now, social work is an internationally recognised practice-based profession where students are imparted training through a scientific body of knowledge, values and ethics, as well as methods and skills of working with people and systems. Social Work is being included as an academic discipline in colleges and universities spread over 145 countries. Most of these countries have a Council for Social Work in operation. In India, there are 17 statutory councils of different disciplines like Law, Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Architecture, Nursing, Ayurved, Homeopathy, Rehabilitation, Behaviour Science etc. The recently passed law “The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021” has recognised professional social workers under Behavioural council.

India has had a very rich history of voluntary work, development work, social reforms and social movements, promoted by religious and philanthropic organisations as well as social reformers. Training for professional social work started with one institution of social work education as early as in 1936, but today more than 526 institutions offer social work education programmes in the central, state, private & deemed universities and colleges in most of the states and union territories. There are 66000 students enrolled in BSW programmes and 48000 in MSW programmes as per All India Survey on Higher Education Report 2018-19. Over a half million professional social workers are estimated to be currently working with civil society organisations, government and in the corporate sector, as well as with the local, state, national and international agencies.

Professional social work contributes to community and social development through rights-based universal provision for basic needs. They also carry out policy analysis and programme development, conduct capacity building programmes, initiate and manage civil society

organisations, implement interventions at the micro, mezo and macro levels and carry out their monitoring and evaluation. Thus, professional social workers are playing major role in translating the Government's vision which envisages a New India by 2022, by eradicating poverty and corruption, through inclusive and sustainable development.

In spite of the significant achievements of social work profession in India, there are several concerns regarding the profession that need to be urgently addressed. In the past, the University Grants Commission (UGC) sponsored two review committees on social work education and the development of two model curricula on social work which were very useful for developing benchmarks for quality in social work education. To achieve this goal, both the review committees made recommendations for setting up a National Council of Social Work Education to strengthen social work education.

On July 14, 2020, a meeting of social work educators was called by the social sector division of NITI Aayog, where the need for a National Council for Professional Social Work was discussed. As a follow up to the NITI Aayog meeting, we have initiated a process, ably guided by Prof A. S. Desai, former Chairperson, University Grants Commission (UGC), to develop a document for establishing namely "Legislation for establishing The National Council for Social Work Education (NCSWE) in consultation with stakeholders. This document is aptly in tune with National Educational Policy, 2020 announced by the Government of India.

We earnestly request you to bring out legislation to establish a National Council for Social Work Education to promote quality in social work education and practice.

Sincerely yours,

On the behalf of State Campaign Committee