



Social Development

Department:
Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SOCIAL WORK INDABA 2015

“Revitalising the Social Work Profession in South Africa”

24-26th March 2015

Durban ICC

CONFERENCE REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CESM	Classification of Education Subject Matter
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EHW	Employee Health and Wellness
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGR	Inter-Government Relations
NASWA	National Association of Social Workers
NDP	National Development Plan
NEC	National Executive Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework.
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
PACCA	Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAQA	South Africa Qualifications Authority
SAW	Social Auxiliary Worker
SWK	Social Work
SW	Social Worker
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

The theme for the National Social Work Indaba was dubbed *Revitalising the Social Work Profession in South Africa*. The revitalisation of social work profession is viewed as a holistic programme which includes rationalising the social welfare facilities and technology, and the quality of the service provided. Revitalisation therefore involves an extensive programme of new construction, renovation, and improved organisational management of social welfare services along with systems, human resources, equipment, and funding which are essential components of the service platform required for welfare service delivery. Furthermore, it looks into innovative ways of doing things. In addition to that it emphasises on the changes in the theories and practices of social work practice that impact on globalisation and its positive and negative effects on social welfare services.

An evaluation study on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers conducted during the financial year 2012/2013 and other studies conducted revealed amongst others that:

- The professional identity and image of the social work profession is threatened.
- There is lack of professional conduct and unethical social work practice.
- There is poor quality in service delivery.
- Social workers are faced with high caseloads and confronted with poor working conditions.
- There is a high turnover amongst social workers with little upward mobility which can compromise social welfare service delivery.
- There is an increase in the number of young workforce members who need more support and supervision.

The National Development Plan also outlined that the inadequacy of South Africa's social welfare services to provide the quality of care required is reflected in the inadequate supply of social work, community development, and child and youth care practitioners. It is widely noted that the inadequacy of qualified social service practitioners is also linked to poor working conditions and a lack of funding for the social services. It is on this basis that the Minister of Social Development planned to engage social work practitioners through the National Social Work Indaba to ensure that a strategy to address these challenges is developed.

It is important to note that the Department of Social Development has implemented various programmes to respond to the needs of social workers and support social work practice in the country. These include recruitment, continued regulation, supervision, and management of the practice across the sector. It was envisaged that the National Social Work Indaba will provide an opportunity for social workers, who are mainly at the coal face of service delivery, to evaluate and reawaken strategies which will be most appropriate and relevant for it to compete with other helping professions.

APPROACH

The National Social Work Indaba was held at the Durban ICC from the 24th to the 26th of March 2015 and was attended by more than one thousand two hundred participants from the nine (9) provinces in South Africa. The participants included representatives of the Portfolio Committee of Social Development, members of the Executive Council, Heads of Department, social workers and social auxiliary workers from national and provincial government and non-profit organisations from all nine provinces, Institutions of Higher Learning, the Health and Welfare SETA, the South African Council for Social Service Professions, Social Work Veterans, the Ministerial committee for the review of the White Paper and the Ministerial Committee on foster care, representatives from professional associations, invited guests from Howard University (USA) and representatives from international and development partners.

The Indaba was hosted by the Department of Social Development under the leadership of the Minister of Social Development, Ms. Bathabile Dhlamini, and the Deputy Minister, Ms. Hendrietta Bongopane Zulu. The Indaba was convened to provide a platform for the social service workforce practitioners to critically look at the social work approaches and techniques which are applied within the practice, and to develop proposals and interventions aimed at addressing factors that impact on social work practice and the delivery of quality social welfare services. Furthermore, it was envisaged that the Indaba will assist in developing strategies that will promote integration and strengthen the multi-disciplinary approach.

The Indaba was held over a three day period. Day one (1) included the opening ceremony with presentations from local and international academics, researchers and experts in the field of social work. Day two (2) was dedicated to commission discussions. The outcomes for Day two formed the crux of the Indaba process. Day three (3) was for reflection, commission feedback presentations, evaluations and the adoption of resolutions and declarations from Indaba deliberations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Day one (1)

The Minister of Social Development, Ms. Bathabile Dhlamini, opened the Indaba Conference with a keynote address in which she commended the social service practitioners for the work they do. She assured delegates that issues discussed would get the attention they deserve. The Deputy Minister, Ms. Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, added that social workers should know how they will address the issues raised at this event and restore the noble respect this profession carries. She noted the difficult conditions in which social workers work. Ms. Bogopane-Zulu said that education was paramount as social work was not a static profession; therefore, practitioners needed to stay relevant.

After the Minister's key message and the Deputy Minister's input the invited presenters were given the platform to share their presentations. Seven presenters gave informative presentations from various perspectives on the revitalisation of the social work profession in South Africa. Mr Zane Dangor, the special Ministerial Advisor, moderated the presentation proceedings.

The first presentation was titled, *Social Work as a Calling and a Profession - Servant Leadership*, by Reverend Dr Bernard I. Richardson. Reverend Dr B. Richardson is the fourth Dean of the historic Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel in the United States of America. He delivered a moving and passionate message to the delegates where he likened social workers to servant leaders for the community they serve. The message was touching and motivating. He encouraged social workers to place others first, be selfless, empowering others and not focusing on themselves. Dr Richardson said that servant leaders were special and that social workers were the same. He reminded delegates that social workers are supposed to be visionaries and stewards of communities whose characteristics are matched to their passion. They listen to the people they serve and make others feel embraced.

The second presentation was made by the international representatives from Howard University, Professor J. Craigen and Dr J. Bailey. The presentation was titled *International Perspectives on Social Work Revitalisation*. Dr Jean Bailey is the Chair of the Howard University Republic of South Africa Project (HURSAP) and Professor Craigen is an Associate Professor at Howard University. The two speakers highlighted that South Africa and Howard University have strong ties and they are both committed to the agenda of pursuing transformational democracy and facilitating community engagement. Professor Craigen said that the challenges currently faced are inherent in the development of the social work profession.

Professor Taylor, Head of Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town, presented a paper titled, *From Welfare Development to Social Welfare*. In her presentation she emphasised the strong and proud history of social work in South Africa: from those who protested in Sharpeville to those who led the resistance

to the brutality of the apartheid state. Professor Taylor explained the process leading to the transformative, developmental social welfare agenda. She mentioned that post-1994 extensive consultation with numerous stakeholders resulted in a National Social Welfare and Development Plan which clarified the role of social workers and social work in a democratic state. She also said social work is critical to the reconstruction of communities.

The fourth presentation was by Professor S. Sithole who is a professor at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Limpopo. He is also currently the president of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions. His presentation was titled, *Social Work Revitalisation-perspectives from the Academia (Contemporary Social Work Practice, Training and the Future)*. He gave a detailed overview of the practice environment in which social workers find themselves working and the challenges they face. He also said the training for social workers needs to inform practice. Professor Sithole gave an interesting report on research done to establish whether training in community development provided at training institutions should continue. According to Professor Sithole, the answer was affirmative and he expanded that the content of academic work was beyond the orbits of the current government, taking into cognizance a change in future needs. On the future of social work he said the Department of Social Development should be managed by social workers where their recognition as professionals would be restored. He added that it is paramount that the poor working conditions that social workers are facing be addressed as these directly affect the identity of the practitioners.

The fifth presentation was undertaken by Dr Zethu Mkhize titled, *Social Work Revitalisation - A Perspective from the SACSSP*. Dr Mkhize is the President of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). She said she is aware of the hostility towards the council by the social service practitioners. She said challenges come from the dichotomy of social work and the council, and a question of different values. She also enlightened the delegates that social work is the only profession that enters into a contract with the employer and the clients. Dr Mkhize said that there are challenges faced by the professional and the profession itself. She also advised social workers to be registered and always to abide by the principles of the SACSSP.

The sixth presentation was titled, *Perspectives of Practitioners*. It was presented by Mr Skhumbuzo Gibson Nkuna. Mr Nkuna is a National Association of Social Workers NASWA (NEC) member for stakeholder liaison. He shared that a strong and courageous social work organisation is needed. He said the social work fraternity applauds the Minister for initiating a discourse regarding liberty and revitalisation of the social work profession in South Africa. Mr Nkuna emphasized that social work is a profession; it is not a career, not a post nor about a rank. He indicated that for social work to be regarded as a profession, social work professionals should set standards of practice. Mr Nkuna then outlined the NASWSA plans to revitalize social work practice which he called 'ambitious'.

The last presentation was undertaken by the Social Worker Veterans representative, Ms. R. Sempe. She said that the veteran social workers responded to Minister Bathabile Dlamini's call to come back to serve in the communities and in other forums in order to contribute to the advancement of the profession. She mentioned that the veterans have already had some achievements, including addressing the foster care backlog, and training, mentoring and coaching and counselling support on toll-free lines to victims of gender based violence. Ms. Sempe said that social worker veterans have a structure called the National Veterans Social Workers' Forum which is comprised of an Executive Committee, 13 members and one ex-officio member. Ms. Sempe indicated that one of the key priorities of the forum is to restore the vitality of the profession, which literally meant breathing life back into the profession.

The build-up activities for the Indaba involved dialogues within provinces regarding key matters on social work practice. The dialogue report was presented to the delegates on the first day. The dialogue findings showed that certain key issues were cutting across all provinces; these included lack of job satisfaction, poor working conditions, influence from political players and the lack of service integration within the Department of Social development (DSD).

Day two (2)

The second day started with a feedback and recap session on day one activities, and a briefing on the commissions was also presented. The delegates were kindly requested to go to the commissions they were allocated during registration. The commissions were named as per the six thematic areas below. The thematic areas were linked to the theme of revitalising the social work profession:

Commission 1:	Supervision and Management
Commission 2:	Working Conditions and Retention Strategies
Commission 3:	Social Work Practice
Commission 4:	Promoting Integration and Multidisciplinary Practices
Commission 5:	Professional and Ethical Consideration in Social Work
Commission 6:	Capacity Building of Social Work Practitioners

There were robust engagements in all commissions.

The delegates indicated that they want realistic timeframes on the outcomes of the Indaba and a strong message has to be sent to senior managers so as to change the way the social workers are currently working. They also said the sector needs to be unified as it is too fragmented at the moment. There is a need to strengthen the transformation objectives.

Commission 1 dealt with *Supervision and Management* with regard to contemporary practice theories which assume that social workers have the capacity to enact their work as a thoughtful, analytic and creative activity, and that these capacities are, or should be, recognized and supported in human services organizations. However, emerging evidence from the front line of social services practice suggests that, despite public policy rhetoric emphasizing service quality, the practice environment is

characterized by a lack of support for, if not outright hostility towards, professional social work.

Commission 2 focused on *Working Conditions and Retention Strategies*. It was mentioned that the working conditions for the social workers are very poor and the salary levels not implemented according to acceptable standards (SAQA NQF Level). Furthermore, it was mentioned that social workers are confronted with inadequate and inaccessible infrastructure and resources. The safety and security of practitioners is not guaranteed with most buildings not complying with the Health and Safety Act and Health's standards. It was recommended that a review of current salaries, benefit structures and incentive schemes be done. In addition to that the Department of Social Development must develop and implement a resource policy aligned with the service delivery model.

The theme for commission 3 was termed *Social Work Practice*. Three key questions were answered in this commission. The first one was on the perception and understanding of social work in the country. According to the participants the role of social work is not visible and the social work profession is considered to be low level work. The participants said in order for the negative perceptions to change and for the community to understand the role of social workers better, the working conditions of social workers must be improved. The second question was on implementation of social work models/approaches in the face of overwhelming social ills and difficult working conditions. The participants indicated that it is difficult to implement models effectively because there is lack of physical infrastructure, lack of tools of trade and all affect service delivery. The third question sought to find out whether social work in South Africa is moving with the times in terms of ICT. It was found out that social work in South Africa is behind with ICT and it was resolved that there must be development and implementation of a knowledge management system, including a centralised data-base, and documented case studies to influence practice and monitor case management.

Commission 4's theme was *Promoting Integration and Multi-Disciplinary Practices*. It was agreed that there is a need to empower social workers to work in a multi-disciplinary environment, i.e. including multi-disciplinary approaches in the curriculum of social work academic training. It was resolved in this group that in order to promote integration there is a need to create an enabling environment for multi-sectorial engagement for social work by establishing negotiated service delivery agreements between the DSD and local municipalities and provinces. It was noted that social workers lack professional confidence and have low self-esteem in practice that affects their engagement with other stakeholders. A resolution from the commission was that the government needs to improve the professional confidence of social work practice by increasing human capacity and infrastructure and by rewarding service excellence and innovation.

For commission 5 the theme was *Professional and Ethical Consideration in Social Work*. The commission sought to clarify the role of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The representative of the SACSSP explained

that the council had regulatory, advocacy and monitoring roles. It was then recommended that the SACSSP must have clear documentation of their roles and they must be communicated to all social workers. The delegates noted that the council is perceived as a reprimanding organisation and used to threaten social work practitioners. The issue of range of practice was discussed and it was found that there is a lack of clarity on the range of services social workers and social auxiliary workers provide. It was therefore recommended that a policy prescribing the scope of work and job descriptions of social workers and social auxiliary workers be developed and implemented.

The theme for commission 6 was *Capacity Building of Social Work Practitioners*. It was mentioned that the training from schools of social work is not adequate, theory is different from practice and there is inadequate preparation for field work. The commission also mentioned that post-graduation opportunities for continuous professional development are limited. There is no proper induction done for social workers when they enter the field. It was recommended that the schools of social work strengthen their curricula and that employers and the council strengthen induction programmes and continuous professional development. Furthermore, the government was urged to establish relationships at an international level for mutual learning (including specialised exchanges in the interest of best practice and facilitate participation of social workers in certificate programmes abroad.

Overall, the commission deliberations were crucial and provided a platform for building a way forward in revitalising the social work profession in South Africa. The delegates closed the meeting with strong declarations of support for the agreed resolutions. There was consensus amongst the delegates that the social work profession has been compromised and the current state and image of the social work profession needs to be rebuilt. The Minister was praised by the delegates for the bold step that she took in organizing the Indaba

MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE FROM THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – Ms. BATHABILE DLAMINI

In her keynote address, Honourable Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, Minister of Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, stated that the ruling party's contribution to enabling social workers to address social welfare challenges should be acknowledged. The Minister encouraged all delegates to participate fully in the Indaba discussions and be open and honest in expressing their views.

The Minister commended the work done by social workers and she mentioned that in some cases social workers have performed beyond expectation. This, she said, is evidenced by the good reports that reach her office from other Ministers who are also astounded by the work of social workers. The Minister specifically referenced the tragedies of Marikana and the building collapse in Nigeria. In the case of Nigeria, she heralded social workers on how they disseminated information and respected the confidentiality of families and government protocol. She said that there was no

leaked information, which was pleasing to families of all people affected by the tragedy.

However, the Minister also lamented the tendency by some social workers who dress unprofessionally, as this, she said, was an embarrassment to the profession. She called for the Indaba engagements to be used to reflect on ethics, norms, and values as well as reflect on the history of the profession. The Minister indicated that the resolutions taken at the Indaba must be implemented within the agreed time-frames.

Minister Dhlamini noted that there was fragmentation in stakeholder relations, between the Department of Social Development and non-profit organisations (NPOs). According to the Minister it was imperative that work must be streamlined and relationships be strengthened since most NPOs are integral in the delivery of social services. However, she said all NPOs funded by government should be offering sustainable, transforming, and auditable services. The Minister also indicated that it will not be in the best interests of government to continue funding organisations that have not contributed to the transformation of communities.

Giving a reminder of where the nation comes from, the Minister stated that the social work fraternity served as disseminators of information during the years of apartheid about the atrocities done to the people of South Africa. The Minister highlighted that the after effects of apartheid are still prevalent; many people suffer emotionally, others physically, while others have no confidence in the government. The effects of our history, she said, can also be seen in the intolerance that some show to people of different languages, origin or colour. The Minister then urged the social service practitioners not to focus only on who should get social grants but on finding solutions to the challenges the nation is grappling with such as substance abuse, violence, school drop-outs and teenage pregnancies. The Minister reminded delegates that social work was not only hinged on welfare, but also on social development as a mandate.

The Minister spoke with concern that some newly trained social workers lack empathy, compassion and are not committed to their work. According to Minister Bathabile Dhlami, social workers trained prior to political change in 1994 are well equipped to handle the needs of our communities. However, she lamented the lack of ability or passion to follow up to improve the lives of their clients by the post 1994 group of practitioners. In order to maintain a healthy cycle of intervention, the Minister encouraged the current social workers to capitalise on following up on clients. She then emphasized that the duty of a social worker is transformative in nature.

In conclusion the Minister said that the work of a social work practitioner involves passion and respect. She ended by reminding all social workers to put the needs of communities first and be innovative in order to ultimately improve the work of the Department of Social Development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS-DSD to insert

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1ST National Social Work Indaba hosted by the Honourable Minister for Social Development, Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, from the 24th - 26th March 2015 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal proved to be extremely successful. The Indaba joined together social workers and social auxiliary workers from all provinces in South Africa as well as the academia, social work veterans, international researchers and political heads who then engaged in fruitful presentations and discussions on the revitalisation of the social work profession in South Africa. The Indaba presentations and discussions hinged on six thematic areas which also informed the commissions:

Commission 1:	Supervision and Management
Commission 2:	Working Conditions and Retention Strategies
Commission 3:	Social Work Practice
Commission 4:	Promoting Integration and Multidisciplinary Practices
Commission 5:	Professional and Ethical Consideration in Social Work
Commission 6:	Capacity Building of Social Work Practitioners

The presentations and discussions were intended to have three key outcomes which are to critically look at the social work approaches and techniques which are applied within the practice, to develop proposals and interventions aimed at addressing factors that impact on social work practice (which, in turn, will promote the delivery of quality social welfare services), and to develop strategies that will promote integration and a multi-disciplinary approach. The aim for the Indaba was to explore innovative ways to improve the quality of service delivery and targeted social workers and social auxiliary workers. The National Social Work Indaba also sought to provide a platform for social work practitioners to engage and deliberate on issues affecting the social work profession in South Africa.

1.1 THE INDABA OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the National Social Work Indaba were as follows:

- i. To critically look at the social work approaches and techniques which are applied within the practice.
- ii. To develop proposals and interventions aimed at addressing factors that impact on social work practice which, in turn, affect the delivery of quality social welfare services.
- iii. To develop strategies that will promote integration and a multi-disciplinary approach.

2. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2.1 OPENING SESSION - DAY ONE

The opening ceremony commenced with the singing of the national anthem of the Republic of South Africa. This was followed by the Programme Director's address, Ms. Nokuthula Gladness Khanyile, HOD: Department of Social Development, KZN. In her statement she thanked the Minister of Social Development, Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, for her contribution to leadership and her passion for building communities. She also thanked the Minister for affording social workers and social auxiliary workers in South Africa the opportunity to come together and to discuss policy and operational matters that relate to their profession.

After the Programme Director's address, the Deputy Mayor of Ethekewini Metro welcomed all the Indaba delegates to Durban. The Deputy Mayor highlighted the challenges the KZN province is grappling with, the biggest concern being poverty. However, she mentioned that the social workers are doing their best to address these challenges. The Deputy Mayor mentioned that she hoped that the Indaba would assist in streamlining and highlighting areas where laws that hinder service delivery can be changed. She stated that, if those laws could be amended, it would fast track service delivery processes. The Deputy Mayor wished the delegates the best in their Indaba deliberations. She ended her address by declaring the Social Work Indaba open.

2.2 DEPUTY MINISTER'S REMARKS - Ms. HENDRIETTA BOGOPANE-ZULU

In her opening address, the Honourable Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms. Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, started by giving an overview of the difficult circumstances of her childhood, in which she shared that she was born with a disability and how a social worker was instrumental in assisting her to overcome the disability. The Deputy Minister then said that social workers that go the extra mile are the kind of social workers that South Africa currently needs. In addition to dedication to cases, Ms. Bogopane-Zulu strongly felt that there was a need for specialist social workers who can deal effectively with special cases of disability such as autism and cerebral palsy among others. The Deputy Minister was also concerned with social workers who were themselves disabled. She mentioned they were not adequately catered for by the Department of Social Development. She reported that of the 3 200 qualified disabled social workers, only seven were employed in Government. This was due to the absence of working conditions that accommodate disabled social workers. Ms. Bogopane-Zulu felt strongly that these people needed to be brought back into the profession.

Ms Bogopane-Zulu emphasised the critical importance of professional behaviour in establishing social work as a profession. She stated that "There is nothing that will give the profession the centre it deserves than those who own the profession". The Minister also noted the difficult conditions under which social workers work and how she envisaged the participation of passionate social worker veterans in the field will make a difference to social work practice.

Ms. Bogopane-Zulu concluded by highlighting that the focus of the Department of Social Development is broader than welfare. It is dedicated as well to integrated development aimed at ending poverty and transformation. A strong reference system must be maintained to help practitioners to fulfil their functions in welfare services using integrated development mechanisms to end poverty and its limitations. The Deputy Minister ended her opening address by encouraging the social workers to participate fully at the Indaba, because only the owners of the profession can give the challenges the attention they deserve.

3. MAIN PRESENTATIONS AND INPUTS ON PERSPECTIVES ON REVITALISING SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Zane Dangor, the special Ministerial Advisor, moderated the presentation proceedings. Seven presenters were invited to give input from varying perspectives on revitalising social work practice in the country.

3.1. Social work as a calling and a profession - servant leadership: Reverend Dr Benard I. Richardson.

Reverend Dr B. Richardson is the fourth Dean of the historic Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel in the United States of America. He opened his address by saying that no human being could possibly exist in isolation and that embracing inter-existence and being known for one's generosity were key to humanity. Quoting the late President Nelson Mandela, Dr Richardson gave an illustration where the late President's grandmother never asked if a visitor wanted food, but offered them food instead. This, he said, was Ubuntu exemplified. He asked the delegates if they were going to embrace this value to improve their communities.

He referred to Dr Martin Luther King Junior and Dr Benjamin Mays of Morehouse College who promoted service instead of self-gain. In his capacity as a Dean in his educational institution, Dr Richardson said that he advises every young person who aspires to stardom that any fool can potentially be a celebrity. But, young people should ideally endeavour to be like the social worker that the Deputy Minister and the Minister spoke of. Leadership should embody the principles of Ubuntu. The kind of leadership spoken of today is a model that should be used to encourage social workers where they place others at high priority, being selfless, empowering others, not focusing on themselves and serving their constituents.

Dr Richardson said that servant leaders were special and that social workers were the same. Social workers are visionaries and stewards of their communities whose characteristics matched their passion; they listen to the people they serve and make others feel embraced. He highlighted as a world-wide crisis the demand on this profession and others to bring change to their communities with little or no resources. He said that the worst challenges were those where intervention was required because of the pain inflicted on people by institutions. These he said were the hardest to deal with because nobody would take responsibility for hurting another as opposed to an instance where an identifiable person hurts another. It takes a servant leader to heal institutional hurt, someone with an understanding that everyone matters.

The concept of Ubuntu, he said, was crucial to the social workers' profession. Quoting from the work of a poet named Oliver, he asked, "What gift do I bring to the world?" Dr Richardson encouraged social workers to ask introspective questions such as their level of their commitment, their authenticity to the calling and to those they serve, and how they perceive other people's views of them.

Dr Richardson went on to tell the delegates he once helped a young student who was struggling academically. The student thanked him and questioned why he chose his field of work since he seemed wise and intelligent. The speaker said that people, even those being helped, do not understand the work you do. In relation to the lesson from the story, he urged everyone to not look for recognition from those they helped, but that it was God who called servant leaders into these positions.

He went on to identify listening as a crucial skill for servant leaders. A listening servant leader, he said, understands that pain has a memory. Its implication is the aftermath of apartheid in the case of South Africa. He shared his personal experience with excruciating pain, and that, after an operation, the pain subsided, but the lesson of the experience stayed in his memory so much that he would flinch involuntarily when he thought of his experience. He said it was the same with people, their memories may linger long after the bad chapter of their lives is gone, and that is the reason that listening is an invaluable method of intervention.

Dr Richardson closed with an analogy of how as a young preacher he was preoccupied with the content of his service and at a certain time he failed to intervene in the life of a man in need of understanding which instead was recognised by someone else who was not even a preacher or a social worker. He cited the incident as the greatest lesson of his life. On that note, he called social workers to think beyond distractions and to concern themselves with saving lives.

3.2. International perspectives on social work revitalisation: Professor J. Craigen and Dr J. Bailey

Dr Jean Bailey is the Chair of the Howard University Republic of South Africa Project (HURSAP). She started her presentation by explaining the relationship between Howard University and South Africa. She said that there had been collaboration of over twenty years dating back to the time of former President Nelson Mandela.

Dr Bailey said the objectives of the Howard University Republic of South Africa Project are to create community engagement, promote interdisciplinary research, promote faculty and student exchanges in training and service programmes, compile and disseminate resources as well as establish links between America's historically Black colleges and universities and those in South Africa. Another goal of the collaboration is to address the economic and socio-developmental needs in South Africa.

She expressed concern about the effect of education and was pleased that South Africa has adopted the notion of early childhood education and is working with the Head Start programme which is a generational approach to changing lives and in the end everyone benefits. She expressed gratitude for the invitation to participate in the transformational democracy.

Dr Bailey invited Professor James Craigen to the stage to give his input. Professor Craigen is Associate Professor at Howard University School of Social Work in Washington DC. He opened his presentation by quoting Nelson Mandela: “The values of human solidarity that once drove our quest for a humane society seem to have been replaced, or are being threatened by, a crass materialism and pursuit of social goals of instant gratification”. He indicated that one of the challenges of our time, without being pietistic or moralistic, is to re-instill in the consciousness of our people that sense of human solidarity, of being in the world for another and because and through others.

Professor Craigen said he has over 20 years’ experience in social work and the challenges faced are inherent in the development of the social work profession. He indicated that one of the ways the process can be viewed is to recognize that it is an integrated process and proves that we are pursuing global human rights with an ecological perspective. The ecological perspective reflects the link between humanity and nature. The sum is greater than the parts. All need to be equal. The social development perspective helps maintain the focus of all actions on the protection of all involved in addition to the desire to seek to improve the environments within which clients function. Consequently, he said, all levels must be multi-functional and inclusive. Professor Craigen concluded by stating that specialization has to be considered and a questions needs to be asked whether there is a need to deal with expanding the knowledge base of social workers and how strengths could be built on to meet the needs of social workers.

3.3. From welfare development to social welfare: Professor Vivienne Taylor

In her presentation Professor Taylor, Head of Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town, emphasised the strong and proud history of social work in South Africa: from those who protested in Sharpeville, as well as those who led the resistance to the brutality of the apartheid state. Post-1994, the country was fragmented and divided on racial, political, economic and spatial lines. Twenty (20) years later, the challenge of racial discrimination, social inequality, and poverty remain. She highlighted the need to understand what are the obstacles faced by social workers in delivering a quality service. Professor Taylor further went on to say social workers are dealing with historical issues such as people who were brutalised by the state as well as new challenges such as HIV and Ebola as a result making social work in South Africa a complex and daunting task.

Professor Taylor explained the process leading to the transformative, developmental social welfare agenda. Post-1994 extensive consultation with numerous stakeholders resulted in a National Social Welfare and Development Plan which classified the role of social workers and social work in a democratic state. The plan included values and principles that would inform social service provision and the restructuring of the welfare system that we have today. (The term “Developmental Social Welfare” came out of those processes). The transformative developmental social welfare agenda is about making human rights a reality for millions of people. Professor Taylor then highlighted that the social work agenda is on the national development plan and the Minister is addressing the challenges through the establishment of a committee to review the white paper.

Professor Taylor mentioned that there were positive changes and advances at a policy and legislative level when it comes to dealing with issues of family and child welfare, the elderly and social security. According to Professor Taylor in order to deal with those issues effectively, the following key steps are proposed:

- **There is a need to focus on developmental processes**, not just social work as a reactive process but linking social and economic processes from the bottom up.
- **Provide a comprehensive range of services**. When we talk about comprehensive, don't only prioritise Early Childhood Development (ECD), but also people with disabilities and the elderly. There needs to be a comprehensive integrated programme that ensures an integrated approach and breakdown of silos.
- **Food security**. It is unacceptable that we are dumping food to increase prices, while 40% of our children going to bed without food. The challenge is how to bring these together at an operational level.
- **Focus on the redistribution of resources**, not just social grants, but resources that include social workers, community, youth and child care, development workers, etc.
- **Focus on training and education**. We have a skills deficit in social workers and we need to ensure that we educate and train social service professionals to provide quality care.

In her conclusion, Professor Taylor said social work is critical to the reconstruction of communities. She went on to say that the Indaba should be able to find solutions on how social workers could build on the legacy of social workers who went before them and on how they could begin to lift the legacy of social development, not just their own conditions of service and education, but by making a real difference to the people on the ground.

3.4. Social work revitalisation perspectives from the academia (contemporary social work practice, training and the future): Professor Sello Sithole

Professor S. Sithole is a Professor at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Limpopo. He is also currently the president of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions. Professor Sithole opened his presentation by reflecting on issues that have been raised in the earlier presentation. He said that there have been highlighted challenges facing the profession for which a decisive turn for the better was needed. He marked this as a crossroads for social work. He then went on to say that professionally it was indeed possible for the Indaba to achieve what it sought to achieve.

From the perspective of academia, Professor Sithole put forward the notion that issues affecting the effective implementation of social development strategies and those that impact on the transformation of communities require that social work be revitalised using community development as a method. He went on to identify the problems facing the profession as:

- Low morale of practitioners due to lack of respect towards the profession by other professionals,
- Salaries below marketable levels,
- Inadequate interest in the profession where choices of work are concentrated in the cities while the greatest need is in the rural areas,
- Redistribution of tasks, especially to the Directorate of Social Development, leading to no capacity for the social workers to practice what they have been taught in Child and Youth Care and Community Development, threatens the profession's identity, and
- Lack of well-resourced academic training professionals.

According to Professor Sithole community development serves as a training ground for social work; there often is no platform to practice what has been taught. Professor Sithole questioned if this was ethical, offering that scarce resources should rather be spent on meaningful endeavours. He also mentioned challenges in the implementation of the Children's Act (Act No. 38 of 2005). He said the workload has been tremendous as a result and that practitioners should accept the help of other professionals and not regard their interventions as a loss to the practice. He inspired the meeting to also research other new areas of intervention on social concerns.

Referencing research work conducted by William Pinar on Curriculum Change Theory, Professor Sithole informed the delegates about an exploratory methodology undertaken with the participation of academics and practitioners using a focus group approach. The research focused on the values and the historical analysis of the profession, and discussed the question of whether the universities should continue to teach community development. The answer was affirmative and expanded that the content of academic work was beyond the orbits of the current government, taking into cognizance a change in future needs. In addition to that it was clear from the research findings that community development should continue because training is not designed specifically for the South African market as social workers are taught to penetrate international markets. However, some of the answers provided by respondents to this study were in favour of abandoning the teaching of community development at university level as this area was no longer the practice of social workers.

In his conclusion, Professor Sithole said from the perspectives of the academia it was offered to this Indaba that:

- The Department of Social Development should be managed by social workers where their recognition as professionals would be restored.
- Addressing the poor working conditions should be a priority as this affected the identity of the practitioners in their roles of social workers.
- The alienation on the part of social workers that marginalised them from the profession and ultimately inhibiting their work should be addressed.
- The retention of social workers would prevent the loss of key community builders.

3.5. Social work revitalisation - a perspective from the SACSSP - Dr Zethu Mkhize

Dr Z. Mkhize, the President of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), opened her address by explaining that social work is the only profession that enters into a contract with the employer and the clients. She said challenges come from the dichotomy between social work and Council, and a question of different values. According to Dr Mkhize practitioners are disgruntled as Council regulates most aspects of the profession. She went to say the relationship between social workers and the SACSSP is embedded in the Social Services Professions Act. With regards to specialisation, she said that the SACSSP can provide clarity as it regulates training because it is spoken of but without clarity on the type of specialisation.

Dr Mkhize said that there are challenges faced by the professional and the profession itself. Firstly, she said, for the professional, cases are given to students or newly qualified social workers without supervision and this consequently causes damage to the profession and beneficiaries. Secondly, she mentioned that the social workers have a high case load which is unmanageable. Lastly, she said social workers lack understanding of the profession, particularly the legislative framework, as a result of which many social workers are struck off the roll.

Dr Mkhize went on to mention the challenges faced by the profession itself. She said rendering of poor services as well as unprofessional conduct result in the profession coming into disrepute. She added that the lack of clear demarcation in the profession results in duplication of services. Dr Mkhize then indicated that social workers in general are not active and do not participate in the work of the SACSSP. Social workers must be at the forefront of the activities, otherwise they will find people who do not understand the issues of the profession making decisions.

In her conclusion, Dr Mkhize, advised that social workers must be registered with the Council and must abide by the principles of the SACSSP. If not, the client can and should take legal action against the social worker. The Minister and the President protect the social worker in court, which is an indication of the seriousness with which government perceives the profession. She strongly emphasized that there is a need to revitalize the profession and the Indaba should come up with a plan on how to find each other, not for ourselves, but for the people we serve.

3.6. Perspectives of practitioners (importance of being organised - one voice for social workers): Mr Skhumbuzo Gibson Nkuna

Mr S. Nkuna is a NASWA NEC member for stakeholder liaison. He started by pointing out that a strong and courageous social work organisation is needed. He said the social work fraternity applauds the Minister for initiating a discourse regarding liberty and revitalisation of the social work profession in South Africa. The purpose of the Social Work Indaba includes finding solutions from all social workers irrespective of how high in government or how low in social work practice they are.

Social workers are here particularly not to impose views but to find a collective solution and to build trust among partners. Mr Nkuna noted that social workers have been represented by different bodies in South Africa and are currently represented by NASWA.

Mr Nkuna said the emphasis is that social work is a profession; it is not about a career, not about a post nor about a rank. He added that among other factors that determine a profession there must be a clear licencing procedure for practice, and a clear code of ethics must apply to everyone whether a manager, supervisor or social worker. He further enlightened the delegates about practice standards. Practice standards of the profession are determined outside the workplace; it is not the workplace that determines what practice standards of that profession are. Social workers should be accountable to set the standards of the profession. Unless there is a strong, vibrant and organised social work sector, objectives cannot be achieved. Mr Nkuna reflected that in the 1990s there was a social worker association concerned about social work practice and at that time the social work profession was autonomous without government influence. Mr Nkuna also urged the social workers of the previous generation to mentor and coach the new social workers .

Mr Nkuna outlined the NASWSA plans to revitalize social work practice. He called the plans ambitious.

- Social workers need to be registered members to practice social work in South Africa.
- Social work training at higher education institutions should continuously be reviewed in consultation with the social workers in the field.
- Creation of platforms for social work specialisation.
- Creation of an environment where social workers are able to write publications in journals just like other professions.
- Facilitating a social work leadership programme.

In conclusion, Mr Nkuna said it is only with the co-operation of the DSD and the SACSSP that these plans can succeed because some functions reside with the Department which is a service department. He further urged all social workers to take it upon themselves to march to the revitalization of the social work profession.

3.7. A perspective from social work veterans: Ms Rachel Sempe

Ms. R Sempe is a veteran social worker with over thirty-four years of experience and is a member of the National Veterans Social Workers' Forum. She opened her presentation by stating that "once a social worker, always a social worker". She offered that the veteran social workers had responded to Minister Bathabile Dlamini's call to come back to serve in the communities and in other forums in order to contribute to the advancement of the profession. Ms Sempe mentioned that the National Veterans Social Workers' Forum has so far tackled the following on its agenda:

- I. The shortage of human resources
- II. The relevance of veterans to the profession
- III. Sustainability
- IV. The need for coaching and mentoring.

The National Veterans Social Workers' Forum comprises of an Executive Committee, 13 members and one ex-officio member. The veterans in the forum are experienced in various aspects of the profession and they include senior administrators, managers, practitioners, researchers and academics. Ms. Sempe stated that combined they were the encyclopaedia of the practice as most practiced during the years of racial segregation in the country.

Ms Sempe reflected on the working conditions during the apartheid era which were characterised by racial discrimination, poor salaries and working conditions and inequality in service delivery. Despite the challenges she said the practitioners adhered to the values and ethics of the profession and were passionate and dedicated to serve. She said during the time she was working they had a passion and determination to deliver quality services and went the extra mile even without the necessary resources.

Ms Sempe mentioned that in seeking to restore the vitality of the profession, which literally meant breathing life back into the profession, the Veterans' Forum considered the need for revitalisation by asking the following questions:

- Why is there a need for revitalisation?
- What needs to be revitalised?
- How will the revitalisation be implemented?
- How will the veterans contribute to the revitalisation?

As a start, she said that social workers would do well to recognise their roles as advocates, catalysts and change agents for individuals, families and groups and communities. This resonated with the concept of servant leadership.

Ms. Sempe suggested mechanisms for revitalisation focusing on:

- Recruitment and retention
- Scholarships and training
- Capacity building, and
- Improved working conditions.

Ms. Sempe reiterated the commitment of veteran social workers to revitalising social work as envisioned by the Ministry with a view to enhancing the profession. She said

that the forum had also developed its own constitution and strategic plan to keep in line with its objectives.

Ms. Sempe highlighted the achievements of the National Veterans Social Workers' Forum since 2012 which included addressing the foster care backlog, training, mentoring and coaching, and counselling support on toll-free lines to victims of gender based violence. The forum, she said, also offered valuable input into the White Paper on Social Work as well as on other projects for the improvement and sustainability of the profession.

In closing, Ms. Sempe stated that being recalled to serve was well received by the veterans as well as the new generation of practitioners. She expressed the veterans' gratitude about their re-engagement to improve service delivery. Quoting the late Mahatma Gandhi, Ms. Sempe reminded delegates to "be the change you want to see in the world". She added that the onus was upon every delegate to restore, reclaim and revitalise the social work profession and sector.

4. SUMMARY OF PROVINCIAL DIALOGUES AND REPORTS

Ms. Roberts reported on the DSD dialogues that were conducted in provinces in preparation for the Indaba. The results of the provincial dialogues highlighted various issues; however, the following issues were specifically mentioned in each province:

- Lack of job satisfaction,
- Influence from political players,
- Lack of integration of services both internally among ourselves and externally.

Other issues highlighted in the provincial dialogues were:

- Inadequate infrastructure and resources, e.g. open plan offices are not conducive to confidentiality and maintaining the dignity of the client.
- The lack of provision of tools of the trade.
- The absence of adequate employee wellness programmes. There is inadequate debriefing provided for social workers.
- Scholarships/bursaries are attracting the wrong type of applicants and, as a result, the passion for the profession has been compromised and service delivery has not been enhanced (numbers vs quality). There needs to be an adequate screening process to ensure the right candidates are chosen.
- There is a lack of parity in how social workers are compensated.
- Lack of succession planning.
- There is a need for generic social workers to address the high case load, but special needs cases don't have specialised social workers addressing them (inadequate number of specialist social workers). It was recommended that curriculum development should support specialisation.
- There is a perception that tertiary education institutions are not producing quality social workers. It was recommended that tertiary institutions should be properly evaluated.
- There is a strong focus on foster care, while all other areas are being neglected.

- There is no knowledge management system in place to ensure that knowledge is captured. As a result, when social workers leave, their knowledge and experience are lost to the organisation.
- There is a lack of alignment of existing policies and practice. The model encourages inter-sectorial integration, but this does not occur in practice resulting in duplication of effort.
- The roles of departments are not properly defined.
- There is a lack of resources/ budget which limits the methods social workers can employ.
- There is a need for a good monitoring and evaluation system to ensure practice is in line with policy.
- Lack of induction and orientation programmes. There should be national programmes that establish a uniform set of requirements and rules across the provinces.
- There are times when the political mandate clashes with the social work profession and the way we do our duties.
- There is insufficient funding for administration.
- All these impact on the quality of supervision and management
- Executive management are not qualified social workers – social work is seen as a support function instead of a core function.
- There is a shortage of supervisors and inadequate provision of supervisory posts in the organogram. The policy framework clearly defined the supervision rate (1:5); however, the current numbers are far short of this ideal. This shortage emanates from OSD and entry requirements which are different from one province to another.
- When supervision is performed, it is not done in line with policy prescripts.
- Social workers have many roles they perform, i.e. one person can be a case worker, supervisor and a manager all at once. This results in role confusion.

The provinces also brought forward solutions to the challenges they face. The provinces recommended that:

- Employee wellness programmes need to be implemented at local level.
- The HR plan and infrastructure plan needs to be integrated.
- New recruits must be appointed on a permanent basis instead of on contract.
- The work environment should be conducive to the practice of the profession.
- There is a need to align social work professionals with other professionals in terms of NQF levels and salaries.
- Occupation Specific Dispensation must be applied uniformly across provinces.
- Bursaries should be allocated on merit.
- Provision should be made for new recruits in the organogram (Three year plan).
- There should be a review of policy and guidelines and curriculum development to ensure alignment.
- There is a need for universities to practice uniformity in curriculum development and field placement.
- Students need to be placed where learning can take place.

In conclusion, Ms. Roberts mentioned that the dialogues afforded all social workers an opportunity to reflect on key practice and management issues. The provincial dialogues, she said, will kick start the discussions in the commissions and will also provide guidance on the way forward and what needs to change.

5. COMMISSION REPORTS - DAY TWO (2)

All Indaba delegates were divided into six commissions to deliberate on issues related to revitalising the social work profession. A theme was allocated per commission and presentations related to the thematic topic were done in each commission. The commissions were then tasked with identifying key issues, recommendations and time frames for action. It was envisaged that the commission feedbacks would then inform the action plan and the resolutions and declarations of the Indaba. The following are detailed commission reports:

5.1. COMMISSION 1: SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

Commission 1 focused on the supervision and management of social workers. In order to guide the processes the commission started with two presentations.

The first presentation was by Ms. R.K. Mokoena titled, *The Role of Supervision and Management in Social Work*. In her presentation, Ms Mokoena highlighted the critical importance of supervision as a determinant of quality service delivery. She clearly indicated the functions of supervision and management and the fact that, in the case of social work, the two are intertwined. She unpacked the definition of supervision and placed it within the current policy and legislative framework. The presentation addressed the challenges of implementation and the skills required by a supervisor. The presentation made a strong case for the argument that “supporting social workers with good quality supervision is an investment, not an expense”.

The second presentation delivered by Ms. P. Allen was titled *Youth Aging out of Foster Care: A Promising Model of Support in Washington, DC*. Ms. Allen’s presentation provided an overview of the history of the child welfare system in Washington, DC, and the poor outcomes of children aging out of foster care. Her presentation highlighted a number of points relevant to overhauling a system including the period of time it takes to effect change, the importance of involving stakeholders in the process, and the need for change to happen from both top-down and bottom-up.

After the presentations, the participants debated the topic of supervision and management of social workers with the following three questions as their basis for discussion:

1. Is generic supervision/management different from social work supervision/management and can a non-social worker supervise or manage social workers or their work? What is the policy and legal framework regarding supervision?
2. Do we have deliberate strategies and programmes to develop social work supervision and management in the Department to ensure continuous development of supervision and management capacity and skills?
3. Have we embraced supervision as a tool to improve service delivery to ensure quality service delivery? Is supervision institutionalised adequately in the sector?

The delegates broke into three groups to discuss each of the questions separately. As a result eight (8) key issues were identified from the commission. Recommendations and timeframes were also provided. Below are the detailed key issues:

5.1.1 Generic vs social work management/supervision

The participants acknowledged that management and supervision functions are interrelated, as management may be regarded as a function of supervision and, conversely, supervision may be regarded as a management function. While good administrative background and technical management abilities are critical (for appointment as a manager), knowledge of programme content is equally important and, in the case of social work, one cannot replace the one with the other; there must be social work and administration/technical management abilities.

It was also noted in the commission that social work management/administration requires knowledge about social policy and the delivery of social services, vision for future planning, an understanding of human behaviour, commitment to social work ethics and values, understanding of legislative mandates and legal authority to interpret these. The resolution in this regard was that a structured programme must be put in place to develop supervision and management competencies and skills within social work nationally. It is the responsibility of the employer to build supervision and management capacity.

5.1.2 Legislative and policy frameworks

The commission participants mentioned key legislative frameworks that guide their practice and how they are linked to supervision and management such as the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996, and the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 and the Code of Ethics.

The social workers also mentioned certain key parts of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 and the Code of Ethics, Chapter 2, Section 15 (1) (a), (b) and Rule 7 (3).

After the detailed discussions on the key legislation and key statutes, it was resolved that people appointed as Supervisors/Junior, Middle, Senior Managers (Provincial, District and Service Point) in the social work setting must have a qualification and be registration with the Council (as an inherent requirement). It was also recommended that non-social work managers must be moved to where they are relevant to create space for appropriately qualified and registered social workers (in order to comply with the Act). It was also mentioned that the supervision framework confirms the provisions of the Act and provides guidelines for ratios and supervision processes

5.1.3. Implementation and oversight of the supervision framework

According to the commission findings, supervision is not taking place as per the supervision framework. In addition to that it was discovered that they had a number of concerns which included lack of knowledge of the framework, lack of exposure to the supervision framework and lack of supervision of supervisors. The participants

also said that no-one ensures that supervision is taking place according to the framework and guidelines. It was also indicated that the framework does not adequately cater for auxiliary social workers.

It was resolved that by September 2015 an implementation plan and monitoring plan regarding roll-out of the framework be done. It was further agreed that within the same time frame training of all social workers in relation to the original supervision framework be done. The participants also felt that with immediate effect the framework must include supervision of auxiliary workers.

5.1.4 Lack of standardisation and alignment

It was noted in the discussion that a lack of standardisation in terms of implementation, salaries, policies and procedures is evident.

It was resolved that by September 2015 the following should be done:

- Implementation of structured supervision models such as Situation Leadership Supervision/developmental model (SLS).
- Practice guidelines to be standardised by supervision task team with members from DSD, NPOs and academia on provincial and national level.
- Implementation of standard induction manual for newly appointed supervisors.
- A review of salaries together with the alignment of positions needs to be undertaken.
- A review of policies and procedures needs to be performed to ensure alignment of policies – recruitment strategies, occupational specific dispensation (OSD) - with the supervision framework.
- Standardise salary scales.
- Standardise acting allowances and similar.

5.1.5. HR management/recruitment/succession planning

The following concerns were noted regarding HR management/recruitment/succession planning:

- Organisational structure is Human Resource-driven.
- Inadequate human resources (not enough supervisors).
- Insufficient budget. Where there are vacant posts, there is no budget so posts are frozen and there are delays in filling positions.
- Positions and salaries are not always aligned.
- Supervisors are appointed from junior management and lack management skills. Supervisors are not trained in supervision. Supervisors are often appointed based on years in service as opposed to skills and appropriate attitudes.

It was resolved that by end of the financial year 2015/2016 the following should be done:

- Organisational structure and related budget allocation to be reviewed in relation to both the DSD and NPO sectors.
- Social work services to give inputs on the organisational structure.

- Looking at the ratio - the ideal is 1:5 (for a person doing supervision only).
- When planning for the number of social workers, the DSD and NPOs must also plan for the number of supervisors required as well as the necessary infrastructure.
- Employment contracts should stipulate compulsory training in supervision and management.
- Training must include a portfolio of evidence.
- A probation/induction period should be introduced during which a newly appointed supervisor is assessed for suitability for the post and also assisted with specific areas of development.
- Recruitment should look at necessary skills, knowledge, personality and attitude of an individual applying for the supervision post.

5.1.6 Inadequate provision of resources

It was found that delegates said the physical environment is not conducive to performance and necessary resources are not provided or budgeted for. The recommendation was that the physical resources must be reviewed to ensure adequate space and confidentiality. It was also mentioned that the necessary tools of the trade must be provided.

5.1.7 Lack of capacity building

The challenge with capacity building is that co-ordinators in the DSD are co-ordinators of projects, not trained supervisors. They are not formally appointed, but are nonetheless utilised as supervisors. It was recommended that training must take place through available training resources and supervision must be regarded as part of leadership. The commission recommended that in-service training should be made available. This was all recommended to be done within the 2015/2016 financial year.

5.2. COMMISSION 2: WORKING CONDITIONS AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Commission 2 was facilitated by Mrs D. Seloana and Ms. I. Gathinji. Three presentations related to the theme of working conditions and retention strategies were made in this commission. The presentations were to direct discussions in finding resolutions to issues experienced by social workers in their practice. The Minister also gave input in the commission discussions.

The first presentation was by Mr Vilane titled, *A Social Worker in a Rural Setting: A Personal Account of my Experiences*. Mr Vilane is a ward social worker in the north of KwaZulu-Natal close to the Swaziland and Mozambican borders. The ward within which he works experienced severe deprivation and poverty. The 200 – 300 homesteads are scattered. He opened his presentation by explaining that social work is a helping and caring profession that requires commitment and dedication to help people improve their social functioning. Rural residents have the same rights as urban residents according to the Bill of Rights. Public servants have to implement government mandates to change lives and bring hope to deprived communities.

Mr Vilane gave a detailed description of the community in which he works. The community is called Enkovukeni, which is located in the extreme north of the province on an island close to the Indian Ocean. According to Mr Vilane, at least 50 households live in abject poverty. The area is under developed, with few services and long distances between dispersed households. Obtaining water is a major challenge. Road conditions are poor. Public transport does not exist. The local vehicles are bakkies. No bridge exists across the river to the village. Vehicles cannot drive to the village. In order to reach the village and visit clients Mr Vilane has to cross the river by boat, if any is available and if the weather conditions are conducive. The homemade boats are unsafe in wind and rain. If a boat cannot be used, he wades across the crocodile-infested lake.

Despite all the challenges, Mr Vilane, said that he was proud to have brought hope to the community. Mr Vilane asserted that social workers have to be committed and dedicated to their work to assist people to improve their social functioning and bring hope to deprived communities.

The second presentation was by Ms. Van Rensburg titled, *Training of Social Workers as a Scarce Skill in the Public Service and how Social Work is rated in the (funding) Scale (and recommendations)*. Ms. van Rensburg began the presentation by explaining the funding scale. She then discussed some of the issues facing social work practice and the change of focus in the DHET. An explanation of qualifications and the new Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system followed.

According to Ms. Van Rensburg the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) utilises information from the universities on enrolments in various programmes using the Higher Education Management System. The data is categorised according to subject modules which are coded on the Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM). Social work fell in CESM 22 in the 1982 version of CESM. The revised codes, published in 2008, placed social work in CESM 20 along with sociology and social sciences. The funding CESM place for social work previously was 1, which is the lowest level. The revised CESM 20 places social work in funding group 2 which has slightly higher funding for the universities.

The third presentation was titled, *Specialisation versus Generic Social Work Practice – An International Perspective* by Dr C. Lewis. This was Dr Lewis's second visit to South Africa and he says he was inspired by his experience of being with the local social workers. According to Dr Lewis many black people are still suffering in the United States of America where the poor are often perceived as the enemy. However, he says in South Africa people care about those who are suffering and people are being brought together to find solutions.

He gave the definition of social work by the International Federation of Social Work as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people...." According to the definition, social workers have a mandate not only to take care of people, but also to put effort into making required changes. The mandate

for social change varies in different places around the world. He indicated that a single solution is not possible.

He went on to speak about specialization and said that it permits social workers to focus on the specific needs of the nation or region requiring intervention. It directs the education and training of social workers to meet specific demands and it produces a workforce with the knowledge and skills to address specific problems.

After the three presentations the participants engaged in an intensive and passionate discussion regarding the working conditions. The participants attempted to answer the following four key questions:

- I. What are the experiences of social workers in rural and far-flung areas? Is the Department of Social Development viewed as responsive to their needs to retain them in these areas? What can be done to improve service delivery conditions in rural areas?
- II. Have the existing strategies resulted in recruitment, development and retention of relevant social work skills? What is the contribution of OSD and how is OSD viewed by social workers?
- III. Is social work rated the same as other scarce skills, e.g. health, education and the social sector of the Department?
- IV. Specialisation or generic social work – is it a question of one or the other or both? What do we need as a country and what must a policy position be?

During the discussions six key issues were identified:

5.2.1 Issue 1: Salary levels not implemented according to standards (SAQA NQF level)

The following were indicated under this key issue:

- Development of different job descriptions that talk to different grades (National DSD and DPSA).
- Consider granting higher salaries on obtaining higher qualifications on the NQF levels.
- Review of benefits policies such as medical aid and insurance (National DSD).
- Granting of bursaries for post-graduate qualifications and professional development (sector policy).
- Recognition after undertaking relevant post-graduate studies (sector policy).
- Investigate the issue of professional assistants/secretaries earning the same salary as a social worker (salary level 7) (National DSD).
- The matter of social work as a scarce skill should be pursued by the Minister.

The recommendation to these issues was that there should be review of current salaries and benefits which must be commensurate with the quality and nature of service delivery.

5.2.2 Issue 2: Inadequate and inaccessible infrastructure and resources

The key output was that the tools of trade are inadequate and hamper effective service delivery. It was recommended that a resource policy aligned with the service delivery model should be developed and implemented.

5.2.3 Issue 3: Safety and security of practitioners not adequately provided for

The following were identified:

- Installation of ultra-violet light in order to prevent communicable diseases in social work DSD offices.
- Comply with Health and Safety Act and Health's standards.
- Implementation of the danger allowance aligned with the job description of the social workers.
- Review of injury on duty policy to cater for occupation-specific circumstances.
- Consider life insurance benefits that are aligned with the risks to which social workers and social auxiliary workers are exposed.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities of social workers to address scope creep.
- Establish and resource Employee Health and Wellness Units at least at sub-district level.

It was recommended that fully resourced Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) Units at sub-district level be fully implemented.

5.2.4 Issue 4: Retention strategies

The following were identified:

- Implement existing policies relating to retention.
- Review of certain aspects of OSD with a three-year grade progression to be considered.
- Address the issue of unemployed social workers and scholarship (supply and demand).
- Implement a rural allowance.
- Succession plans to be developed to allow for upward mobility.
- Collaboration with other departments to employ social work graduates.
- Acting allowance to be implemented in terms of the prescripts.
- Review of PMDS Policy to cover the qualitative aspects as well as development issues.

It was recommended that there should be a review followed by the implementation of the retention strategy.

5.2.5 Issue 5: Specialisation versus general practice

The commission put forward that they should consider a service delivery model that takes into account both the generalist and specialist approaches – a hybrid model. However, the delegates said that a movement to specialisation must be informed by meeting clear criteria defined for that field or curriculum. The salary must be

commensurate with the specialisation. It was strongly recommended that the DSD should explore curriculum options for various types of specialization.

5.2.6 Cross cutting issues

It was identified that:

- Social workers do not have a voice.
- Developments at national office are not communicated to social workers on the ground.
- Decisions are made by support staff without understanding the issues experienced by, and the requirements of, the social workers.

The following three resolutions were then identified:

- The need for a collective voice for social service practitioners.
- Improvement on information and communication management (knowledge management).
- Support service staff to understand the type of support required by social workers

The commission was very intense as most of the issues were what the social workers grapple with in their every day jobs. However, the participants managed to come up with recommendations to improve the current state of affairs.

5.3. COMMISSION 3: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Commission 3 was facilitated by Ms. Hill and Mr N. Ncube. The theme for the commission was *Social Work Practice*. There were three presentations done in the commission, the presentations were then followed by the discussions. The first presentation was by Mr M. Mathebane from the UNISA Social Work Department titled *Indigenising Social Work in the 21st Century (the Social Work of Yesterday and the Social Work of Today)*.

In his presentation Mr Mathebane sought to invigorate the group to find the answer to the question "Is the role of social work understood correctly by communities and structures in Government?" In the beginning of his presentation Mr Mathebane stated that he would delve deeper into the topic of 'Africanization' and not 'indigenization' as a focus for contextualising social work practice in South Africa. He went on to distinguish between the two concepts and said that indigenisation is about making something appropriate to its context. The concept is based on the understanding that social work is a profession, and is a product of modernity in the West. Africanisation, he said, is a paradigm which gives lenses which are used to look at situations that are dealt with, and provides a particular lens for looking at day-to-day issues as social workers. It is also a theory of change because one cannot talk of African solutions if there are no theories coming out of different types of research that Africans do that will inform the discourse, so that whatever is done is based on a well-researched knowledge base.

Mr Mathebane gave a comparison between the Eurocentric view and the Afrocentric one. He said it was noted that the former is very individualistic whereas the latter looks at the family as an extended part of the individual. Whether it is a helpful approach or not, an African family with a Eurocentric view needs to be reflected upon, he said. The social work of yesterday and the social work of today was compared, and it was noted that the transformation that has occurred thus far was appreciated. However, political, legislative and policy changes are still needed. Not much has been done to change the material conditions of African people. The developmental social work paradigm of today has been adopted but there are still issues with it.

In his closing remarks Mr Mathebane challenged the social workers to document their experiences, contribute to the journals, and take control of knowledge production instead of taking from everywhere else, from contexts which, in most cases, are not even reflective of or responsive to the needs and interests of the people of South Africa. He ended by posing a food for thought question - was social work a corrosive agent unto itself and the community it serves? For example, do some of the strategies developed work against the very communities that they are meant to benefit, such as grants and food parcels?

The second presentation was titled, *Best Social Work Practice Models – International Perspective (including observations from the African continent)* by Dr K. Majied from Howard University in the USA. The key strategic question that the presentation sought to answer was, “How practical is it to implement social work models/approaches in the face of overwhelming social ills and difficult working conditions?”

Dr Majied opened her presentation by indicating that from listening to the presentations on day one there was a shared struggle between South African social workers and Black social workers in the United States. Segregation in the United States ended approximately fifty (50) years ago and there was a tremendous struggle for Black social workers in America to have a voice and to be involved in the leadership of social work in America. There is, therefore, a lot of similarity in what people were saying on day one with what black social workers were saying in the Association of Social Workers in America, especially with regard to issues of the battle for professionalization that is needed for social workers to have graduate training. The fact that a number of people call themselves social workers and have no professional training occurs in America as well. The drive to develop continued development and for better salaries are also issues being dealt with in America.

She told the audience of her own struggles in deciding to study social work; however, she persisted because she was passionate about it. She decided to pursue a Doctorate. She went to predominantly white institutions as she was studying social work and she experienced a Eurocentric perspective to teaching social work. As an example, she cited the fact that there was one class available on cultural diversity and this class was an elective and not taken seriously. The reason why she studied towards her PhD was because she wanted to study racism and look at the impact of

racism on mental health because she thinks that the reason there are so many Black people using substances, committing violence and having depression and anxiety is related to the impact of racism.

Dr Majied went on to mention the history of Howard University as a predominantly Black institution and its influence on creating the Black middle class in America. She also mentioned the relationship between Howard University and the South African government. Nelson Mandela had visited the University and obtained an Honorary Doctorate, and he advised them that they should be the University that led the way for the reconstruction of South Africa and they could support the development of Black education and Black professionalism in South Africa. She took that message personally as she could relate to what he was talking about, having being born in a segregated hospital and where her own survival was born out of that same struggle. She felt a sense of responsibility to her own country and internationally.

Dr Majied concluded her presentation by talking about contemporary social work because new types of problems are emerging such as social work and immigration. She mentioned that this leads to the point of social justice where equal services have to be provided to everyone. She further talked about issues such as family violence, sexual assault, gay and lesbian issues, all of which are elements of contemporary social work practice. The more issues emerge the more social workers have to stay current with them, which she saw as a good thing as training has grown in this area in the United States and there are opportunities for information sharing.

The third presentation was done by Ms. L. Ngcingwana, DSD Chief Information Officer, titled, *Social Work in the 21st Century: Use of Information Communication Technology Evolution (Are we moving with the times?)*. The presentation sought to answer the following two key questions: How can ICT contribute to enhancing social work service delivery? and How do we develop ICT interest amongst social workers?

She started by informing the delegates that she is not a social worker; however, her view was that part of being a social worker was to empower, protect, transform and to bring about regenerative communities. One aspect that she mentioned was access to information, balancing the importance of information management, and tracking performance which relates to documenting work experiences as well as balancing the confidentiality of client information.

She explained how ICT can help social workers. It is about access to information. There is a need to manage information for accountability, to manage information to assist supervisors to manage effectively and focus on the key indicators of the delivery of services. The need for a referral system was highlighted. Collaboration with colleagues in other departments will be useful and there is a need to integrate through a centralised database system. She mentioned that it is important to standardise the capturing of data at a local level by having mobile applications. She said there is a system called the National Integrated Social Information Management System that does household profiling and is being redeveloped to include community profiling.

In conclusion, Ms. Ngcingwana said that looking at the issues being mentioned during the Indaba, there was emphasis on case management tracking, different mega systems where there is collaboration across the departments, issues of active information sharing, integrated social development initiatives, social transformation, fast tracking of service delivery, the referral system and confidentiality of information and the balancing thereof, and performance measurement and feedback so that the impact of government investment can be visible within the communities.

After the presentations discussions took place attempting to answer each key question and also come up with solutions.

i. What needs to be done to entrench this understanding and the role of social work in the redefined agenda of the country?

Firstly, the participants said that the theme on its own might not be addressed by the questions that were raised. According to the participants the role of social work is not visible. The participants said that in order to address the issues faced by social workers, things must be changed such as working conditions. It was further agreed by all participants that the communities need to understand the role of social workers; similar sentiments were shared by Mr Mathebane regarding the Afrocentric approach. The need to agree that social workers are going to claim back the community from whoever took it from them was also highlighted.

ii. How practical it is to implement social work models/approaches in the face of overwhelming social ills and difficult working conditions?

The key matters in this question were what international practices to learn from and what innovations are there for effective social work practice in South Africa? The discussion started by participants indicating that there is lack of physical infrastructure and lack of tools of trade, and all affect service delivery. Furthermore, participants said indigenisation is about making social work relevant to the context; we need theories based on research by Africans with an indigenous knowledge base. It was then resolved by Commission 3 delegates that there be an adoption of the Afrocentric approach to social work practice and the use of culture and history to inform our practice with monitoring and evaluation approaches. It was further recommended that social work practice should remain focused on the needs of its clientele and not be influenced by political agendas.

iii. Information Communication Technology in social work practice - is social work in South Africa is moving with the times in terms of ICT?

Two key matters at the centre of the discussion were on how ICT can contribute to enhancing social work service delivery and how the government can develop ICT interest amongst social workers. It was resolved that there must be development and implementation of a knowledge management system, including a centralised database and documented case studies to influence practice and monitor case management. The second recommendation was that there should be standardise use

of ICT in social work at universities and in the workplace. Thirdly, there should be a strengthened comprehensive ICT programme that will deal with social programmes within the departmental ICT infrastructure.

5.4. COMMISSION 4: PROMOTING INTEGRATION AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

Commission 4 focused on promoting integration and multi-disciplinary practices. This commission was facilitated by Dr M. Kubeka, Mr T. Buthelezi and Ms. M. Phala. There were three sessions to this commission, presented by speakers from different organisations. The first session was presented by three speakers from Howard University, the second session by Ms. P. Kgaboesele from North West DSD and the third session by Prof V. Sewpaul from UKZN.

5.4.1 Session 1

Professor Harper presented the International Best Practice Models in Integration and Multidisciplinary Approach in Social Work titled *Hip-Hop 2 Prevent Substance Abuse and HIV/AIDS*. The model targeted youth in the USA. Dr Harper shared the best practice model programme called *Hip-Hop 2 Prevent Substance Abuse and HIV/AIDS* targeting youth. Dr Harper reported that the best way to reach youth was to engage with them on a level that they understood. The Hip-Hop programme was used in the USA by social workers and public health officials to encourage the youth, influence their attitudes and promote healthy lifestyles. The programme used only USA government curricula.

Professor Bailey then presented a talk titled, *International Best Practice Model: Project Head Start*. Professor Bailey outlined Project Head Start, which was a successful anti-poverty programme launched in 1965. The programme has produced clear and lasting gains for children and families. It consisted of a comprehensive preschool programme, education for children, and health and social services for families and children. The programme was so successful that it was expanded by President Obama in 2009.

Ms. Toldson presented *Integrating Substance Abuse Prevention in Social Work Practice: A Multi-disciplinary Approach*. Ms. Toldson gave an overview of the impact of substance abuse on individuals, their families, the community and society as a whole. Prevention methods, continuum of care, characteristics and behaviour of the individuals were outlined. The Coalition Model was introduced which ensured that all the stakeholders worked together to achieve drug-free communities. Skills required to implement the Strategic Prevention Framework were also presented.

5.4.2 SESSION 2

Ms. Mhlongo Kgaboesele from the Special Needs Programmes: Department of Social Development, North West Province, presented on a topic, *Positioning Social Work within a Multi-Professional Environment – Maintaining Professional Identity and*

Confidence. She presented an introduction to the key concepts of social work practice and integrated social welfare services in the context of multi-professional environments. The benefits, requisites and barriers to a multi-professional environment were highlighted. The social work professional identity and confidence issues were addressed. Recommendations around the orientation of social workers on the mandate (Legislative and Policy), operations of the Department, creation of learning platforms, capacity building programmes and continuing professional development were presented. Recommendations in terms of resources, supportive supervision, performance management when attending court cases and an information and knowledge portal were also made.

5.4.3 SESSION 3

Professor Sewpaul from the University of KwaZulu-Natal presented *Research in Social Work – The Now and the Future*. Professor Sewpaul emphasized the importance of research and provided the social workers with methods of doing research. Various research methodologies were covered such as modernity, positivist research and post-modern social work research. The impact of research and the importance of people were highlighted. The need to equalize power relations and the inherent difficulties in practice were emphasized. It was noted that the social workers' identity as experts could be a problem as the people do not consider them as equals. There was a constant awareness of power dynamics and consistency of approach which required genuine dialogue. Triangulation – including methods, data sources and strategies for data collection – was stressed as being important.

After the three sessions the commission was then requested to discuss integration and multidisciplinary practice within the social work practice. The group was asked to identify key issues, come up with recommendations and then provide timeframes. Four key issues were identified:

I. Integrating SW in the context of a multi-professional environment

In discussing this issue it was found that there is a need for training and knowledge development of social workers in the multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder environment. Social workers need to understand what it means to work in a multi-sectorial environment. There is also a need to expand the theory and practice of multi-disciplinary approaches for social work and also the integration of theory and practice. Creating platforms for continuous learning of social workers as well as on the job training is also of most importance. Structured supervision to fully understand how to operate in a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial environment is needed. This will empower social workers to be able to work in a multi-disciplinary environment, i.e. include multi-disciplinary approaches in the curriculum of social work academic training and on-going formation. It was agreed that this issue needs to be looked at immediately, and to continue every year.

II. Areas of integration for multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder environment

There was a need to create an enabling environment for multi-sectorial engagement for social work by establishing negotiated service delivery agreements between the DSD and local municipalities and provinces (government and NPOs). It was discovered that currently there are no MoUs signed with stakeholders. Therefore there is a need to sign MoUs with key stakeholders on multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approaches for social work. There has to be an enabling policy for integration and collaboration. It was also discussed that the DSD should identify areas of integration in the different programming areas, and ways of strengthening integration needs to be considered. The DSD also needs to co-ordinate the different local level structures (i.e.PACCA/NCCPF/National Drug Master Plan) and include them in the forums. There is also a need to enforce accountability across the multi-disciplinary environment and with multi-stakeholders. This issue needs to be addressed in the next two years, starting from the current financial year (April 2015 – March 2017).

III. Professional confidence and self-esteem in social work practice

There is a need to improve the professional confidence of social work practice by increasing human capacity and infrastructure, and rewarding service excellence and innovation. There also need to decentralise the SACSSP into provinces to improve relationships and professional identity. Poor working conditions and insufficient tools of trade are found to be challenges in the profession. Key performance agreements for social workers in a multi-disciplinary environment need to be reviewed. There are perceived weak relations with other sectors and a lack of respect from other departments towards social workers when they attended forums. Therefore, relationships with other departments need to be strengthened. There seems to be a delayed response by management to challenges in respect of resources, lack of interpersonal and management skills, perceived lack of support from the Council as well as the fact that the Council is not sufficiently marketed. Service excellence needs to be responded to by rewarding and encouraging innovation by the social workers. This issue needs to be addressed in the current financial year (April 2015 – March 2016).

IV. Are social workers researching adequately and how do we improve research capacity within the sector?

A question was raised whether social work is continuing to enjoy high level research in order to respond to the complexities of social ills in South Africa. Research agenda on social work needs to be included in the strategic imperatives and planning of the department. Currently research was not a priority in the Department. A budget for research needs to be established, and an operational plan is also required to ensure that a difference is made in terms of services provided by social workers. There was a recommendation that research should be linked to administrative function (household profiling) that will give results instantly, not research that is based on generalisation. Action-based research also needs to be normalised. The question was raised whether the profiling that was done was being adequately analysed and applied in the communities. The consensus was that scientific research in terms of statistics was not effective, given the nature of the work. Standardisation of the

research in the Department and the use of the same methodology are important. The academic institutions could be of great assistance in this area as they were experts in conducting research. Reviewing the programmes that were applied in the communities in terms of effectiveness was also found to be essential. There is also a need for the integration of Community Development Services and Social Work Services in conducting research. There is a need for collaborative partnerships: working with various stakeholders and co-ordinating structures to gather information in communities. This issue needs to be addressed in the next two years, starting from the current financial year (April 2015 – March 2017).

5.5 COMMISSION 5: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SOCIAL WORK

The focus of Commission 5 was on professional and ethical considerations in social work. The commission was facilitated by Mr N. Skosana and Ms. R. Sonko. There were two sessions to this commission: the first session was led by Dr Z. Mkhize from the South African Council of the Social Services Profession (SACSSP), and the second session by Dr Kamillah Majied from Howard University.

SESSION 1

The first session, presented by Dr Z. Mkhize from SACSSP, focused on the role of the SACSSP, regulations governing the social work profession, and the importance of registration and related processes. Dr Mkhize mentioned that the mandate of the Council is provided for by government statute, and can only be amended by the same. One responsibility of the Council, as discussed by Dr Mkhize, is to regulate the social work profession and to record registered social workers. Another one is to serve as an oversight to compliance monitoring of quality assurance in the education, training and development fraternity whose coursework is approved by the Council. The Council ensures that the coursework adds value to the profession by engaging in periodic reviews of the social services environment.

Dr Mkhize mentioned that the Council provides guidelines on, and promotes professional conduct within, the practice by protecting the interests of clients by applying the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct and Rules for handling misconduct and omissions by practitioners. The employers are responsible for implementing these guidelines. She added that the Council is the only institution that recognises specialization in the field. She also clarified that community development is not a specialised area but a method used along with others in the profession. The measurements of the services offered by the profession are also prescribed by the Council.

Dr Mkhize informed the meeting that social workers were required to register with the Council and will not be allowed to practice without recognition from the Council. Membership is renewable annually on March 31st, and failure to comply with this guideline is in violation of the prescripts of the Council and is, therefore, illegal. Dr Mkhize mentioned that the Council was aware of the disconnection between

practitioners and the Council. She said that this should not be as the Council members were appointed by the practitioners. It was noted that there were overlapping functions between the Directorate and the Council, and Dr Mkhize offered that the Council would ensure that there is clear communication on the distinct roles of the institutions in future to avoid further confusion.

SESSION 2

The second session was presented by Dr Kamillah Majied from Howard University. This session focused on international perspectives on professional and ethical considerations in social work practice. Dr Majied looked at social work from an American perspective, and highlighted the relationships between societal challenges such as racial segregation, sexism, poverty, mental health and others. She highlighted the importance of restoring respect to the profession and enhancing the image of social workers. She further said that racial segregation and violence were shared concerns with America.

From the extensive research done in South Africa, Trinidad and the United Kingdom among Africans and immigrants (people of African heritage), it has been established that there needs to be advocacy for justice and human rights. Social work is a value-based profession in which internationally applicable ethics could be entrenched in the following values: social justice, confidentiality, discretion, and competence.

Dr Majied mentioned that every country has institutions with higher levels and lower levels of education, and educators with varying skills and content of coursework. There is nothing wrong with this; however, the content has to be standardised. There need to be ethics governing all schools on core competencies with regard to ethics, mental health practice, and community organisation, amongst other things. Failure to comply with the requirements in the United States results in the university or training institution not receiving accreditation. She stated that practitioners should determine what is needed and what should not be a standard component in the field of social work.

She also recommended that there should be clear limits and boundaries. She emphasised that the practitioner should not befriend clients but must maintain professional conduct. Clients may violate this relationship if engaged through social media. Dr Majied highlighted that social workers may be liable for misconduct if anything said during these interactions could be considered inappropriate. Moreover, even when a practitioner clearly states that his or her interactions on social networks be defined as a consulting session, there is a risk that the person they may be engaging with is not who they say they are. Therefore, engaging in this way with clients is risky and should be discouraged.

Following the presentations, the group was then requested to discuss professional and ethical considerations, looking at key issues, resolutions and timeframes. The following key issues and questions were raised:

i. What is the role of the SACSSP, how do social workers understand this role and how best should the correct understanding of this role be entrenched within the social work fraternity?

The discussion concluded that the Council needs to enhance regulation, defend the profession and be visible for effective monitoring. Council was seen as not being active in the profession and the Council guidelines and roles are not clear. The Council should protect practitioners and enhance its image in other professions. Remuneration should be in line with the training and values in the profession and work standards must be set. The roles of the DSD and Council must be distinctive to help regulate the workplace to not jeopardise the future generations in the profession. There is a need for the full participation of social workers to ensure that conditions of employment are protected. According to the commission discussion, the Council is perceived to be more interested in collecting money but not monitoring and testing to ensure that practitioners are competent. It was also mentioned that the Council should consider rebranding themselves and engage in rigorous marketing. Employing veterans in the provinces to assist with visibility was also recommended. Social workers should be the eyes and ears of the Council to ensure adherence to good practice. It was then recommended that there needs to be a review of policy, legislative frameworks and systems that govern the Council with a view to improving organisational efficiency.

ii. What are the key regulations of the profession and what are the key challenges in implementation? How is the integrity of the profession being eroded whereas there is a legislative framework to protect it? Who carries the enforcement role?

It was discussed during the commission that field work is more rigorous than theory and the Council needs to be clear on this matter. The protection of social workers and applicable norms and standards are important areas. High caseloads and stringent demands are seen in certain areas; this may result in practitioners being prone to error. Therefore, there was a plea to the SACSSP to regulate these matters and protect social workers against possible risks that may occur. Trade unions, other associations and the Council should not be confused about their respective roles. There is a difference between a duty bearer (social worker) and a rights bearer (client). The duty bearer should protect the rights of the victims. Colleagues who violate client rights must be brought to book as they are responsible for bringing the profession into disrepute.

The workload prevents practitioners from performing at effective levels; workplaces and tools are not adequate to ensure the privacy of clients and information; and there is no adequate office equipment to process cases. Professional conduct and adherence to rules may be hampered as one resource is often shared by a whole office. Therapeutic sessions should be performed in a designated place, but the dignity of practitioners is not respected. Social workers clean their offices themselves to make them habitable. This should be addressed as it also hampers professional performance. There is also of concern that the Council does not protect social

auxiliary workers. They also need to be respected and protected, and should not be abused but allocated proper areas of responsibility

iii. What is the value in remaining registered as a social worker?

During this discussion, the SACSSP was asked to provide clarity on the use of the registration funds. It was also mentioned that the system needs proper attention, as there are time lapses between notices and responses. The current registration fee seems to be high as social workers perceive their salaries to be low. SACSSP should engage this matter and adhere to SAQA standards regarding remuneration. It is imperative that the profession be protected. It was recommended that the Council must develop and implement a transformational agenda to ensure demographic representation, regulation of the social service workforce and to improve relations with its members and other related matters.

iv. Clarity is required on the role of SACSSP in influencing programmes in training institutions

It was of concern that social workers are being instructed and managed by people who are not in the social work profession; this should be done by professionals with a social work qualification as they will understand the profession and the challenges faced within it. The SACSSP is seen only as a registration body and the needs of practitioners are not addressed regarding lack of confidentiality in the workplace where there are open-plan settings. Clients have been lodging complaints against practitioners for matters that the Council should address. The other challenge was that there is not sufficient interaction between the Council and higher learning institutions. Another concern was that students are not protected from other organisations that are convincing them to register for specialised areas; they feel that this is undermining the social work profession. The Council should offer training to social auxiliary workers in order to bridge gaps in knowledge and training. The Council must also, as a priority, develop and implement a communication strategy to engage with its members.

5.6 COMMISSION 6: CAPACITY BUILDING OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS

The focus of Commission 6 was on capacity building of social work practitioners. The commission was facilitated by Dr Rose September a senior official from DSD and two other facilitators from Mott MacDonald Ms M Roper and Ms V Baloyi. The commission had 3 different sessions.

Session 1

The first session was titled, *“Are social work practitioners being adequately trained to meet service demands in South Africa today?”* The session hinged on the key strategic question, *“Relevance and practicality of social work training to meet needs of South Africa.”* Dr Rose September opened the commission by indicating that the aim of this commission is to encourage social workers to think of the young social workers who have just graduated from the universities. Ms. Roper then gave a

highlight of the conceptual framework which was developed in 2012, and a number of activities that were taken forward through the development of the conceptual framework. She mentioned that the national strategic framework was very explicit saying that, in order to make the legislature, policies and the guidelines a reality, one needs to ensure that there are capacitated social workers and practitioners to deliver on the legislation. As a result the research was developed based on what is needed, how we can strategically go forward and also to ensure that the recommendations are cost-effective and work within the reality of the context of social work at provincial and district levels.

The following were then the key recommendations from Ms Roper's engagements with the group. It was noted that there are critical gaps in the undergraduate training with regard to culturally sensitive practices and in the area of disabilities. It was agreed that the Department will address this issue, proper training for social workers in the Department needs to address gaps in undergraduate training and to include a stronger curriculum on culturally sensitive practices and courses that accommodate persons with disabilities. Further inputs were also given:

- a) Strengthen relationships/contracts between Universities, placement organisations and the Council to improve practice outcomes of the social workers.
- b) Dr September stated that incentives and accreditations should be considered for organisations. If the organisations take on students they should be incentivized.

Further discussion questions were raised in which Dr September led the discussions. The following key questions were raised

- a) One of the delegates indicated that training at Universities is relevant but does not apply at the field and practice level. This is practical not theoretical. Social workers are not prepared enough; they are taught theory and not prepared for field practice.
- b) The other issue that was raised is that students from the universities are not trained on childcare. In social work people are needed who can be confident, and there is a need to start building self-esteem. The Council is the custodian one should choose to build them in this profession. Employers who have social workers working for them have the responsibility to train their staff and ensure that they are well equipped.
- c) Social workers in the North West are required by their supervisors to do more statistical work and they are not concerned about the quality of services provided for the community. Furthermore, the supervisors expect them to bring higher percentages of numbers of people consulted with, rather than having a focus on the quality of those consultations.
- d) One of the delegates asked how SAQA ensures that criteria for entrance and exit are enforced.
- e) A delegate suggested that supervisors should develop a clear analysis on what is happening in the field because it is very difficult for them to do the work without proper knowledge.

Dr September then requested one of the academic institutions to respond regarding standardisation of the outcomes and whether there is a need for national examinations and the issue of how much time practice students get over the four-year course. The following responses were recorded:

- a) *“A delegate from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) responded from the tertiary institution perspective. She mentioned that there are more than 20 institutions that offer services to social work students. On behalf of UWC, she confirmed that there are 27 discipline outcomes. These represent an enormous amount of work for students to cover. However, she confirmed that it is also important to have partnerships in service training and induction of new social workers into specific fields. The university mandate is to provide generic social training because the Universities must provide competent students or practitioners who possess distinguishable knowledge of 27 disciplines to anchor them to any job. She suggested that it is the responsibility of the employer to induct new social workers into specific contexts in which they provide service. The discussion around generic and specialisation is an important conversation. However, it should be understood that the mandate for the social worker training is for generic skills. There should be no confusion between the mandate and responsibility of the tertiary institution; the induction and in-service training is for the employer to do. Currently, universities are getting few placings and internships for students. Even for well-resourced universities like UWC it is a challenge to find specific organisations that are able to take students, since the university aims to provide a wide range of internships for students from first year to fourth year.*
- b) *To respond to the question of how much time students spend in the field practising, for the UWC programme there is a 50-50 split between field and practice, but there is a challenge regarding learning from first year to fourth year, as teaching students in the first year is introduction and in the fourth year it is advanced. All the placements must speak to the series so that there is a strong link between the theory and the practice. SSE and SSP are responsible for maintaining and sustaining the standardisation and this should go through all 27 outcomes. The standardization should still form part of the monitoring of each institution providing learning opportunities for students. The programme offered by the institution should connect to the needs of the specific sector in the area, for example, in the region of the Western Cape there are challenges with gangsterism, violence and substance abuse.*
- c) *Universities do attempt to cover all the 27 level outcomes. The departments of social work in the universities all go through a Council of Higher Education audit and the Council assesses the 27 level outcomes and how far they have been achieved. The Council also reviews the balance between field and internship training. The Council of Higher Education is charged with examining requirements for the BSW programme, but not the post-graduate programme. This is an oversight of the Council. At the moment there is a task team looking at the PSW degree and there are number of academics on the task team reporting to the Council of Higher Education”.*

Dr September added that there is a need to look at the entrance level, the qualifications, and the attributes of candidates that enter or apply to do social works. Giving bursaries to just anyone may not be the best route, and there should be selection criteria when considering recruitment of social workers. There are critical areas lacking and there is therefore ongoing review required between practice and academia to ensure that the curriculum responds to the demands of the country and communities. There is a specific ongoing need to ensure that the qualifications are SAQA approved. The issue around the specific areas that need emphasis were disability and culturally sensitive practice. The issue around the need for regulation and whether the work of social workers has impact has been noted. The key is the partnership between CPD specific for undergraduate work as an introduction to ongoing needs of social workers. It was mentioned that the development of the partnership between the employer and the worker in the practice is necessary to evolve and advance.

Key resolutions from the deliberations led by Dr September were noted as follows:

- a) There is a need to address gaps in undergraduate training to include culturally sensitive practice.
- b) Learning should not stop at graduation level, and social workers should be afforded the opportunity to be further developed. A social work academy for social service practitioners led by DSD should be established to provide ongoing capacity building and meeting professional development requirements.
- c) Review of the CPD system to become an ongoing systematic process designed to contribute to the career journey, IDP and PMDS for all social work practitioners.
- d) There is a need to identify mentors in offices who will support new social workers.
- e) Students should be supervised when training, and support organisations should take this seriously. Review current student social work placement practice for improved training outcomes. DSD should liaise with the universities to strengthen the criteria, because theory is different from the practical social work.
- f) Address the diversity of the job descriptions and working conditions for Managers, Supervisors and Social Workers.
- g) Design suitable training, development and support programmes for the Social Auxiliary Workers, including relationships between Council, tertiary institutions, placement organisations and other stakeholders.
- h) Specific gaps in training and management were identified; there must be particular training for social work administrators so that the roles are performed by the social workers themselves.
- i) Establish relationships at an international level for mutual learning, including specialised exchanges in the interests of best practice and facilitate participation of social workers in Certificate programmes abroad.
- j) Exchange programmes designed to enhance the understanding of social work theory, policy and practice should be considered.

Session 2

The second session was titled, "International opportunities for capacity building". The key strategic question was "What can South Africa learn from the international community?" The session was facilitated by Dr September and Ms Baloyi.

The session was open with a presentation by Ms. E. Smith titled, "International opportunities for capacity building". In her presentation Ms E Smith indicated that one of the key issues that came to mind is that social work is a growing sector referring to previously where social workers were assisted by volunteers. Now there are other organisations that are getting involved, but sometimes social work does not embrace other sectors when they approach them.

She indicated a focus on two areas: (a) What are the needs within the sector; and (b) The different roles that are required in the sector. She encouraged Social Workers to enlarge their territory, as social work is multi-skilled and sometimes as social workers we undermine our competencies. She further emphasised that social work is a leading profession and social workers should set the example for those that are coming into the profession. Social Workers should lead and not be led.

Council has the responsibility of leading with quality and standards and the responsibility of Social Workers is to ensure and maintain those standards whether education, training and development standards, and to ensure that ethical standards are in line with what has been taught in universities. The issuing of registration is important for the protection of the profession. Social workers are seen as key resources when it comes to addressing community issues. Sometimes the resource is not utilised but there is now appropriate training, and for that the universities are acknowledged in ensuring that people are ready to take the leading role. There are diverse skills that we need to start using. The Council mandate is to strive to enhance the image of the profession.

Fields of service are prevention, awareness and early intervention, statutory services and aftercare. All the social workers know core competences around prevention and awareness which include community development and group work. Identify problems upfront and attempt to prevent them from occurring. A key area is early intervention. There are many needs related to after-care as well as integration. Ms Smith stated that within the mental health environment as well as in ongoing social work, the needs are aftercare and integration. This is important because even if one works with a family for many years if aftercare is neglected the family goes back to where it was before. All interventions will be in vain if this critical area is neglected.

CPD trainings must align with the needs within the communities and society. Social workers cannot do everything but must excel in areas where they are competent and leading and can make a difference. They must start to recognise at what level child and youth workers and community development workers can best be drawn on. It is critical to look at the skills of the social workers for the development of the communities.

All the statutory bodies should register with SAQA for a period of 5 years. Registration with SAQA is mandated for education, training and development including continuous training development. There should be CPD specific training for social workers. Ms Smith stated that the correct code of ethics should be followed, as the code of ethics is critical in all Social Work engagement, and when engaging with the communities there should be ethical level of intervention.

The Social Work qualification has been raised from NQF 7 to 8, the reason being that it requires social workers to have specific full competencies so it will enable social workers to render full services at a higher level. Review and address the gaps in social work services and then emphasise continued development in those areas. The plan is not just to build knowledge, skills and competencies but also to promote excellence and to keep practitioners aware of what is current in the field.

The purpose of developing an area of specialisation is to ensure that the standard is lifted and to ensure that there is better protection for the communities; therefore areas of specialisation should address a specific need in the market or communities. If social workers want to lead in a profession they have to lead by example. Irrespective of the origin of the person, the age, sex and socio-economic status, Social Workers must ensure that at every level they conduct themselves ethically.

The following recommendations were made:

Key Issue 1: Are social workers well inducted to start practice?

- a) It was recommended that detailed guidance should be given for new Social Workers.
- b) Employers are responsible for induction and training of the employees and that induction process is to be part of overall development process which includes in-service requirements and expectations and probation period. The induction process should be implemented immediately upon the employment of a Social Worker.
- c) There is no existing structure for Entry level, therefore structure and orientation plan for all entrance level Social Workers should be developed and must be implemented immediately when a social worker is employed and not after weeks or months.
- d) There is not enough training for the Social Workers and therefore employers should provide ongoing service training for new workers. There must be more trained supervisors to provide guidance to new Social Workers.
- e) There is a lack of resources and financial input in the social work field and the Department should consider to provide the social work sector with needed resources to enable social workers to work better.
- f) There is no clear job description for managers and supervisors; the Department should develop a standardised job description for the managers, supervisors and the social workers.

Key Issue 2: Specific Social Auxiliary Workers capacity building needs.

- a) The Council should give a clear indication as to when auxiliary social work starts and ends, because at the moment Social Auxiliary Workers are used for cheap labour.
- b) There should be development and career pathing for Social Auxiliary Workers.
- c) Social Auxiliary Workers should be appointed immediately after completing training.
- d) It was recommended that Social Auxiliary Workers should be recognised and rewarded accordingly

Further engagements on the legislation and the role of the council, CPD points and Social Auxiliary Workers happened and the following key resolutions were noted.

- a) There is a need for a standardised induction/orientation process that is budgeted for. It must have employer's commitment and responsibility for implementing immediately upon appointment of the Social Worker. The induction must be part of the continuum of development which includes probation, in-service and incremental management of the caseloads.
- b) DSD and other employers should proactively promote access to structured and standardised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities by employees, including utilisation of the online system.
- c) Address the diversity of the job description and working conditions of the Social Auxiliary Workers.
- d) Design suitable training, development and support programmes for the SAWs, including clear relationship between Council, tertiary institutions, placement organisations and other stakeholders.
- e) Facilitate access for SAWs to further their studies in social work.
- f) Identify co-ordination and management structures and implement.

Session 3

This session focused on international opportunities for capacity building, and the question addressed was: 'What can South Africa learn from the international community?' Dr Bailey was the main speaker of the session in which he indicated that Howard University will be partnering with various universities to assist in capacity building and the first university they partnered with was the University of Fort Hare. Since 1996 Howard University has been participating with a number of organisations to assist in transformation in South Africa. The work involves studies and exchanges. There are similarities between African American and black South African liberation struggles and this is a major connection. This calls for everyone to address the challenges that were faced because of racism and discrimination that were experienced historically. It is important to celebrate the liberation of the ANC through collaboration and there have been a number of events in recent times. Recommendations were made in the area of social development to assist in capacity building of social work in South Africa. Howard University and the University of Pretoria recently agreed on a memorandum of understanding. The focus has been on the institutional level but now there is a move to the practice level. The focus is to build capacity within South Africa beginning where the client is and looking at the

needs of social work. This will include research, scholarship and training. All the work will be done in conjunction with the Department to provide assistance in line with the objectives.

The key recommendations from the speakers address were noted as follows:

- a) To establish relationship at international level for mutual learning. Specialised exchange programmes should be done in the interest of best practice, ensuring that knowledge and certification is afforded for all social work practitioners at international level.
- b) We have agreed that in-service training or capacity building is the responsibility of the employer that the objectives and the growth of the employer must be met, and those must be matched with the needs of the work force.

The discussion in the session started by one of the delegates asking that in terms of continuous of development of black South Africans with Howard University, how black is black because at the moment in South Africa there is cross cultural training so if only black South Africans are trained how then will other cultures be capacitated in order for them to render services to communities? Does this mean she will have to look after only people who look like her because she is not black enough to attend to black South Africans?

The response was that there is a need to first become competent then consider cross-cultural challenges. How do you identify and develop the equity to help a particular person or family? One cannot ignore the differences that are in people's needs, and all the processes will be done with regard to social ethics and codes of conduct. The approach will be to acknowledge that we cannot ignore the history and the responses of the client to particular issues that they are facing.

The second question to be asked was, "must the University be approached only via the Province structures or directly? Some problems have capacity building that works well, others do not. We need to develop frameworks for a specific work force?.

Howard University will start where South Africa is in terms of capacity building trainings and therefore will work with the Department to try to understand what the needs are and to programme with the department for meeting those needs, which can range from in-service building all the way to the possibility of complete capacity building.

c) It was noted that it is important to combine with other countries. In South Africa social work delegates from Howard University mentioned that there are opportunities for South Africa to combine with international training.

d) One of the delegates indicated that in America for social workers to be recognised in the profession one must complete a Master's degree in order to specialise.

The following resolutions were agreed:

a) Establish relationships at an international level for mutual learning, including specialised exchanges in the interest of best practice and facilitate participation of social workers in Certificate programmes abroad.

b) It was noted that there are different models which South Africa can learn from, models where training capacity is mostly in-house, models where there is partnership between employer and the Universities, or models that are most unstructured.

6. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS AND DECLARATIONS - DAY THREE

Following the presentations and discussion on the *Revitalisation of the Social Work Profession in South Africa*, the participants having met at the Durban ICC from 24 March to 26 March 2015 adopted the following resolutions and declarations:

We the participants attending the first Social Work Indaba with the theme “Revitalising Social Work Practice in South Africa”, hosted by the Department of Social Development and development partners, and attended by the Minister of Social Development, the Deputy Minister of Social Development, representatives of the Portfolio Committee of Social Development, members of the Executive Council, Heads of Department, social workers and social auxiliary workers from national and provincial government and non-profit organisations from all nine provinces, Institutions of Higher Learning, the Health and Welfare SETA, the South African Council for Social Service Professions, social work Veterans, the Ministerial Committee for the review of the White Paper and the Ministerial Committee on foster care, representatives from professional associations and invited guests from Howard University (USA), and representatives from international and development partners,

Acknowledge:

- *the role and contribution of social workers and social auxiliary workers and social work in the fight for human rights, social and economic rights enshrined in our country's Constitution and the commitment to improve the quality of life of all South Africans.*

Take cognisance of:-

- *the heightened levels of addiction, HIV and AIDS, increasing criminality among young people, high levels of gang-related violence in schools and communities and sexual violence against children and women, especially in economically deprived areas, and human development indicators that point to a country with significant levels of social fragmentation, unacceptable levels of social alienation and the breakdown of social institutions and increased levels of vulnerability among children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities;*
- *the present state, standing and image of the social work profession;*
- *the constrained levels of the financing and resourcing of the social welfare sector that continues to significantly compromise the provision*

of adequate, appropriate and quality services to individuals, families and communities in need;

noting that:-

- *the NDP 2030 vision states that a robust social welfare system should be one of the pillars of the country's social protection agenda and that the poor bear the greatest burden of a heavily constrained social welfare system;*
- *social workers have the capacity to enact their work as a thoughtful, analytical and creative activity, and that these capacities are and should be recognised and supported in human service organisations;*

THEREFORE RESOLVE THAT:

Commission 1: Social Work Supervision and Management

- *The recruitment and appointment of supervisors, middle and senior managers at national, provincial, district and service points and in the sector in general, in the social work setting, must have a social work qualification and be registered*
- *Non-social work managers be redeployed to other areas where skills will be relevant to create space for appropriately qualified and registered social workers (in order to comply with the Act)*
- *A standardized programme must be put in place to develop supervision, mentoring, coaching and management competencies and skills within social work nationally*
- *National audit of the current supervision and management capacity to be done and a plan of action developed to address capacity deficiencies*
- *There must be a review to ensure alignment of the South African Social Services Professions Act No 110 of 1978 (as amended), the Code of Ethics, the Social Services Practitioners Policy, the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD), the Supervision Framework and other related policy documents*

Commission 2: Working Conditions and Retention Strategies

- *Review of current salaries, benefit structures and incentive schemes*
- *Develop and implement a resource policy aligned with the service delivery model for the provision of appropriate social infrastructure for social workers to render effective social work services and standardised package of tools of trade*
- *Implement fully resourced Employee Health and Wellness programmes (including institutionalised debriefing programmes) at sub district level*
- *Review and implement a social services practitioner retention strategy*
- *Refine the social welfare service delivery model to accommodate both generic and specialised social work practice*
- *Develop a strategy for generic and specialised social work practice*
- *The need for a collective voice for social service practitioners*
- *Improvement on information and communication management (knowledge management)*

Commission 3: Social Work Practice

- *Review and ensure standardised organisational structure at service delivery level to enhance service delivery capacity*
- *Market the profession robustly for it to be visible in the community*
- *Implementation of all methods in social work, including community development*
- *Generate a body of knowledge on the Afrocentric and cultural sensitive approach to social work practice*
- *Develop an ICT strategy to enhance social work processes, including improved infrastructure and training*

Commission 4: Promoting Integration and Multi-disciplinary Practices

- *Empower social workers to function within a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder environment*
- *Improve professional confidence, self-esteem and image of social work practice*
- *Strengthen social work research agenda to inform evidence-based interventions*

Commission 5: Professional and Ethical Considerations in Social Work

- *The Council must develop and implement a transformation agenda to ensure demographic representation, regulation of the social service workforce and to improve relations with its members and other related matters*
- *Review of policy, legislative frameworks and systems that govern the Council with a view to improve organisational efficiency*
- *The Council must, as a priority, develop and implement a communication strategy to engage with its members*
- *Clearly define the scope of practice and norms and standards for social workers and social auxiliary workers*
- *Review and dissemination of Code of Ethics for social workers and other social service professionals*

Commission 6: Capacity Building of Social Work Practitioners

- *Review current student social work placement practice for improved training outcomes*
- *DSD and other employers should proactively promote access to structured and standardised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities by employees, including utilisation of the online system*
- *Social Development Services Academy must be established to ensure continuous skills and professional development of social service professionals*
- *Standardised induction programme for social services professionals must be developed and implemented*
- *Exchange programmes designed to enhance the understanding of social work theory, policy and practice*
- *Ensure career-pathing for social auxiliary workers*

Declaration

We, the participants of the Social Work Indaba on responding to the call for revitalising social work, declare the following:

1. *Recognizing the history of racial discrimination that bequeathed to the post-apartheid democratic government a fragmented social welfare system characterized by poor quality services and uneven access determined by race and geographic location;*
2. *Affirming the NDP 2030 vision, that a robust social welfare system should be one of the pillars of the country's social protection agenda and that the poor bear the greatest burden of a heavily constrained social welfare system;*
3. *Noting that there are heightened levels of addictions, HIV and AIDS, increasing criminality among young people, high levels of gang related violence in schools and communities and sexual violence against children and women, especially in economically deprived areas, and human development indicators that point to a country with significant levels of social fragmentation, unacceptable levels of social alienation and the breakdown of social institutions and increased levels of vulnerability among children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities;*
4. *Acknowledging the role and contribution of social workers and social auxiliary workers and social work in the fight for human rights, and the social and economic rights enshrined in our country's Constitution and the commitment to improve the quality of life of all South Africans;*
5. *Concerned with the present state, standing and image of the social work profession;*
6. *Further constrained by the levels of the financing and resourcing of the social welfare sector that continues to significantly compromise the provision of adequate, appropriate and quality services to individuals, families and communities in need;*
7. *Acknowledging that social workers have the capacity to enact their work as a thoughtful, analytical and creative activity, and that these capacities are and should be recognised and supported in human service organisations;*
8. *We reaffirm our commitment to the social work profession and the Agenda for Social Development and social justice by responding to the urgent call for revitalizing social work practice;*
9. *We call on the social development sector to take decisive action to implement the resolutions of this INDABA;*
10. *We commit to work together to develop and implement a plan of action with clear time frames, annual reviews on progress and a biannual national social work indaba on the following identified key areas:*

- *Social work supervision and management*
- *Working conditions and retention strategies*
- *Social work practice*
- *Promoting integration and multi-disciplinary practices*
- *Professional and ethical considerations in social work*
- *Capacity building of social workers*

7. CONFERENCE CLOSURE.

The Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dhlamini, closed the conference by stating that declarations should be the peak and the conference should end just there. She thanked all the delegates for their participation and she informed them that the preparation for the conference started a long time back in early 2014. She said that the President wanted a social security conference but we thought it would be better to have a social development conference before the social security conference.

According to the Minister, social security is important because when looking after vulnerable groups work does not end with case work, but it must extend to helping people get out of poverty. The Minister also said she has received messages of support from all quarters and even communities believe that social workers should have had this conference long before.

The Minister said she has an open door policy where everyone - a social worker or a citizen being affected with social development matters - is free to contact her so that she is always in touch with all the issues on the ground. She advised practitioners that it is the core of social work that you work on behalf of the people you work with. Innovation and creativity are the key words; these are very important when you are a social worker.

The Minister advised the practitioners that at all times they must carry the profession with dignity and respect. She said all citizens are a product of the struggle and practitioners must not pretend as if they belong somewhere else. The Minister highlighted that social workers must transform the country and work towards healing many people who still have scars.

The Minister reflected on her key message for the conference, where she stated that there is a need for the Department of Social Development to integrate with other disciplines. She urged government to support ECDs to meet the minimum requirements. She urged the government practitioners to work with NGOs and CBOs because they are not competitors.

The Minister, urged social workers to focus on other areas of intervention such as active aging by forming senior citizen clubs and youth clubs to harness the energies of young people in order discourage the use of alcohol and drugs. She said social workers must be respected by the community hence they must find their niche in a community.

She urged the Department to create clear communication channels. She said officials who attend meetings must ensure that report backs are done to all social workers and they must have access to decisions taken at national level. She said communications are not just about ensuring that I appear on TV but, more than that, it is about empowering our people because information is power. So, if you attend a meeting and nothing is said, this cannot be acceptable.

With regard to policies, the Minister was very concerned with the level of practitioners' understanding of policy matters. She said their level is poor and must be strengthened. She also urged that direction be given to young social workers so that they remain motivated to finish their studies.

The Minister had a message for the SACSSP as well; she said the Council will never be popular because there must be healthy tension and proper regulation. According to the Minister, transformation and transparency are very important and social workers must be part of the regulatory development.

In terms of innovation, the Minister said many projects collapse. She said social workers must find a way to start sustainable projects and must also mentor community based organisations. According to the Minister, IT must empower you to do your work thoroughly and with dignity. There are disciplines we can start now. Start negotiating and ensure that resolutions go hand-in-hand with improvements.

In conclusion, the Minister said that what is needed now is a plan of action. Then follow it and report back at district level six (6) months from now. She said the Department must approach the Treasury with a strong case and strong voice, using all the issues that emerged in the Indaba. However, she said some things at this Indaba were perhaps too liberal but all must be heard. In her own words the Minister said, "We have been empowered. We have listened to social workers. And we must go back and ensure that we are focused and achieve the easy things, the low-hanging fruit, and this must all be done as soon as possible".

In closure she thanked everyone who participated in the conference and she said a foundation has been laid and next year a letter to the President will be written to say "Give us a date when you can talk to the social workers!"

The Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Bogopane-Zulu, made some closing remarks by reminding the practitioners that even in the engagement process there is ruffling of each other's feathers but it is important to retain the dignity of the profession whilst engaging robustly but respectfully.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Commission 1 minutes

Appendix 2: Commission 2 minutes

Appendix 3: Commission 3 minutes

Appendix 4: Commission 4 minutes

Appendix 5: Commission 5 minutes

Appendix 6: Commission 5 minutes

Appendix 7: Commission feedback presentations

Appendix 8: Attendance register: Refer to the DSD

Appendix 9: Programme agenda: Refer to Indaba booklet

Appendix 10: Indaba conference evaluation report