



Message from the President

As we move toward the Second World Summit for Social Development, the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD) stands at an important moment in its 51 years — one that calls for deepening partnerships, stronger voices, and a shared commitment to shaping a more just and inclusive world. Our work is guided by the same values that inspired the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration: solidarity, dignity, equity, and participation. Today, these values are more relevant than ever.

In this spirit, the ICSD is strengthening collaboration with leading organisations across the welfare, social work, and development fields — building a global platform where ideas, evidence, and experience come together to inform policy and inspire action. We are committed to creating spaces where members and partners can engage meaningfully in dialogue, contribute to policy debates, and shape solutions that reflect lived realities. The vision and priorities outlined in the ICSD’s statement for the Summit reflect our collective belief that sustainable development must be people-centred, inclusive, and grounded in social justice.

This vision for collaboration is being brought to life through our partnerships with the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). We thank them for their openness to work together to advance our common objectives.

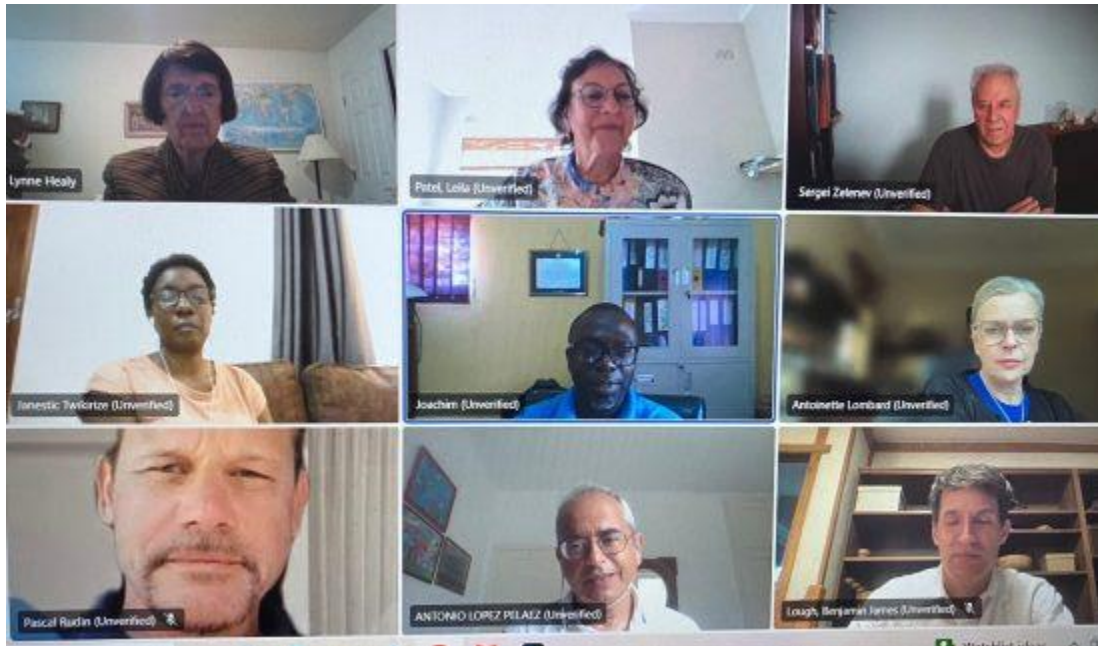
This newsletter highlights the breadth of ICSD’s engagement at the Summit — from our side events and exhibitions to podcasts, member blogs, and partnerships. Together, these efforts represent not only the strength of our network but also our shared purpose: to advance global social development through collaboration, innovation and the power of collective voice.

Finally I would like to invite any of our readers who are not yet members of the ICSD to join us. ICSD membership offers you a platform to engage in global

social development dialogues, now strengthened by the organisation's consultative status at the United Nations, which amplifies members' voices in international policy and practice. [Register here.](#)

Professor Leila Patel

President, International Consortium for Social Development



Caption: Presidents, Secretaries General and office bearers of the 4 Ios attend a virtual planning meeting ahead of the World Summit. Featured are Presidents Sergio Zelenev (ICSW), Antoinette Lombard (IASSW), Joachim Mumba (IFSW), Leila Patel (ICSD) as well as Ben Lough (ICSD), Janestic Twikirize Secretary General of IASSW; Lynne Healy, International representative of IASSW at the UN, Antio Lopez, Secretary General of ICSW and Pascal Rudin, interim Secretary General of the IFSW.

Branch News

ICSD approves the re-establishment of a North American Regional Branch

The ICSD Board of Directors has approved the re-establishment of a North American Regional Branch to complement the existing European, Asia-Pacific and Africa branches. This is a welcome development as it could strengthen the ICSD's presence in North and South America across 23 countries. The proposal was submitted by Prof Benjamin Lough, Dean of the School of Social Work, University Illinois Urbana-Champaign supported by 23 ICSD members in Canada, Chile and in the US with several US based members having strong academic and personal ties in countries such as Brazil, China, El Salvador, Ghana, Mexico and India.

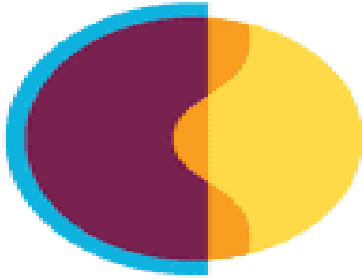
“This marks an important step toward more inclusive collaboration across the Americas, creating space for engagement and future southern representation aligned with our shared social development goals”, said Prof Lough. The next steps will involve calling for further expressions of interest from the region, constituting an organising committee to plan the inaugural meeting and to launch the branch at the ICSD's 25th Biennial Conference.

ICSD Africa Webinar: Housing and Social Work in the SDG Era

The ICSD Africa Branch continues its 2025 webinar series showcasing the work of African scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in social development. The session on 23 October featured Prof Mzwandile Sobantu, Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and Community Development at the University of Johannesburg and an NRF-rated researcher.

Prof Sobantu presented his paper, *The Relevance of Housing to Social Work and the Humanities: A Sustainable Development Goals Analysis*, drawing on his extensive research on housing, social development, human rights, and ageing.

[Download the presentation here.](#)



SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DOHA 2025



ICSD Statement on the Second World Summit for Social Development

In the lead-up to the Second World Summit on Social Development, the ICSD has released both a detailed consultative response and a public statement outlining its position on the Summit's five priority themes. These documents reaffirm ICSD's commitment to advancing social justice through research, advocacy, and action. They highlight achievements, identify ongoing challenges, and set out practical, evidence-based recommendations to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

ICSD's response calls for strengthened gender-sensitive social protection systems, inclusive employment and labour market policies, and renewed investment in care, education, and health. It also emphasises ethical and inclusive approaches to technology and artificial intelligence, and advocates for community-driven, equitable strategies to ensure a just energy transition. Together, these priorities reflect ICSD's vision of an integrated and people-centred approach to social development. Read the [full ICSD Response](#) and the [summary statement](#).



ICSD Podcast Series: Conversations on Global Social Development

Episode 1: “Reimagining Social Development” with James Midgley

The ICSD is launching a short podcast series in the buildup to the SWSSD2. New podcast series “Global Voices: Toward the Second World Summit for Social Development” launches with a special conversation between, Professor Leila Patel, ICSD President and Professor James Midgley, a pioneer in the field of social development on the topic “Reflections on Social Development – From Copenhagen to Doha”

Together, they revisited the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, exploring what that historic moment meant for global social progress — and what it means today as we prepare for the Second World Summit on Social Development in Doha, Qatar (Nov 2025).

Prof James Midgley said: “Despite the overwhelming sense of despair many of us now share about today’s global crisis, I remain stubbornly optimistic about the future. I do believe that social development has a major role to play in promoting human welfare. We can shape this future if we systematically address these challenges not only as an organisation but as individuals in our daily lives. The ICSD offers an excellent opportunity for us to collectively address these challenges.”

In the podcast the pair discussed:

- The legacy of the 1995 Summit and its ongoing relevance
- New global challenges and priorities for social development
- How ICSD is responding to today’s social crises
- What gives hope for the future of social development

[Listen to the podcast here.](#)

The International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD) will take an active and visible role at the Second World Summit on Social Development in November.

Building on its long-standing commitment to the principles of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals, 15 delegates from seven countries will be representing the ICSD at the summit. Stay tuned to our social media pages for live updates from the Summit.

The ICSD members attending are Benjamin Lough, Caroline Cheng, Igantius Chida, Mahesh Chougule, Father Saju, Lauren Graham, Karl Johnson, Patricia Mackey, Manohar Pawar, Marianna Colvin, Nurhadi, Leila Patel, Sanjoy Roy, Marianne Ulriksen and Vikash Kumar.

In addition, the ICSD will host and contribute to several high-level sessions showcasing solution-focused research, advocacy, and practice in social development.

The ICSD is organising two official side events



Side event 1: Accelerating Social Development — From Copenhagen to Beyond the Doha Declaration

This side event unites leading global organisations — including ICSD, UNRISD, the Centre for Social Development at Washington University, UNESCAP, and Development Pathways — to examine solution-focused strategies for advancing social development. Building on the legacy of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, it will showcase collaborative research, advocacy, and practice aimed at reducing poverty, promoting decent work, and strengthening social inclusion. A panel of

distinguished experts will explore innovative, multi-sectoral approaches to just transitions, inclusive social protection, and sustainable peace, identifying actionable pathways that link evidence, policy, and practice to accelerate social progress in an evolving global landscape. [Read more.](#)

Side event 2: ICSD Interactive Poster Exhibition: “Understanding Social Development – From Awareness to Action”

The ICSD’s interactive exhibition, “From Awareness to Action,” at the Second World Summit on Social Development will engage participants in exploring the core values, principles, and practices that drive global social development. Highlighting the intersections of social, economic, and environmental dimensions in achieving the SDGs, the exhibition will showcase ICSD’s research, partnerships, and practical contributions to the Copenhagen Declaration’s commitments. Through interactive activities — including a Social Development Values Wall, a Map Your Impact station, a Resources Kiosk, and opportunities to join the ICSD network — visitors will actively connect with concepts of equity, inclusion, and dignity, fostering collaboration and inspiring action toward more inclusive and sustainable societies. [Read more.](#)



The ICSD is also a partner on four side events:

- *“Strengthening Social Integration through Intergenerational Solidarity — A Foundation for Inclusive, Sustainable Societies”*. Taking place on Tuesday, 4 Nov 2025, 16:45–18:00 in room 4. This session is led by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in collaboration with IASSW, ICSD, and ICSW and will feature the ICSD’s Professor Benjamin Lough. [Read more.](#)
- *“Universal Social Protection as a Pillar of Just Society : Why it Matters and What Can be Done”*. Hosted on 5 November, 15:00 – 16:15 (Qatar time) this session is organised by the International Association of Schools of

Social Work (IASSW) and will include ICSD representative Mahesh Chougule, Thammasat University, Thailand. [Read more.](#)

- *“Integrated Social Policy as a Core Driver of Sustainable Development”*. Hosted on 5 November 2025 at 10:00 – 11:15 am this session focuses on how integrated social policy drives sustainable development by linking social protection, health, education, and labor markets. ICSD President Prof Leila Patel and ICSD Africa Branch Chair, Prof. Lauren Graham will deliver a joint presentation. [Read more.](#)
- *“Turning Global Commitments into Local Impact: Financing for a Just and Inclusive Transition”*. This virtual event takes place on 3 November, 15:30 to 17:00. Building on FfD4 sustainable finance commitments, the session links finance with social, digital and climate goals to reduce poverty, boost livelihoods, and drive inclusive, gender-equal green growth. The link to this event will be shared in due course.



In addition, the ICSD is a collaborating partner on two side events led by South Africa’s Department of Social Development.

1. *“Linking social protection with labour market programs, employment and services for better social development outcomes – solutions from around the world”*. Taking place on 6 November at 10:00 – 11.15 in Rm 105, this examines how countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia and Ghana are innovating to connect social assistance—especially cash transfer beneficiaries—with employment, entrepreneurship, and social services to accelerate poverty reduction. Moderated by ICSD President, Prof Leila Patel, it explores integrated social protection solutions that build resilience, human capabilities, and progress toward SDG 1. [Read more.](#)
2. *“Ensuring Just Energy Transition in Practice: Finding Equitable Solutions to Renewable Energy Projects”*. Taking place on 4 November 2025, 16:45–18:00 | Room 105, Doha. This session explores how countries – South

Africa, Denmark and Afghanistan – are finding solutions to achieve socially inclusive and equitable renewable energy transitions by addressing community-level impacts of energy projects. Drawing on experiences from Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs), including South Africa’s model of community ownership and social investment, the discussion highlights practical challenges and policy innovations. Participants will examine how governments, private investors, and communities can collaborate to ensure that the shift to clean energy supports livelihoods, reduces inequality, and advances truly just social development. [Read more.](#)

Member Blogs

ICSD Member Blog Highlights

As we prepare to engage at the SWSSD, ICSD members have been invited to share their insights and contributions on the key priorities. These articles reflect the voices of the ICSD’s thought leaders in our global community :

1. Ben Lough, Professor and Dean at the School of Social Work and Director of Social Innovation at the Gies College of Business, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign – reflects on the how thirty years after the first World Summit four leading international organisations are uniting to champion a shared vision of social justice, inclusion, and dignity for all. This historic collaboration brings together research, education, policy, and practice under one collective voice, demonstrating how global solidarity and shared purpose can strengthen advocacy and drive sustainable social change. As Professor Ben Lough reflects, “A central truth of social development is that we are stronger together.” [Read more.](#)
2. Liljana Rihter, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia — examines the critical role of multidisciplinary co-operation and collaboration in the achievement of sustainable development. She puts forward ideas for

strengthening multidisciplinary knowledge, skills and practices in social development. [Read more.](#)

3. Marianne, Ulriksen, Associate Professor, Public Administration, Welfare and Politics, University of Southern Denmark — Some countries in the global north and global south share a common commitment to advancing a just energy transition that balances environmental goals with social equity. While renewable energy projects can disrupt livelihoods and spark local conflict, Prof Ulriksen suggests that well-designed Just Energy Transition Partnerships can create equitable solutions that promote decent work, social integration, and sustainable community development. [Read more.](#)



Join Now

Join the ICSD Community

Membership in the ICSD connects you to a global network of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers shaping the future of social development. Membership provides you with the opportunity to participate in global conversations on social development, using the official platform of the ICSD. This influence is even more significant now that ICSD holds consultative status at the United Nations, amplifying members' voices within international policy and practice dialogues.

Benefits include: access to Social Development Issues – the ICSD's flagship journal, access to exclusive resources, international events, publications, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities.

[JOIN HERE.](#)

Stay Connected

Know someone passionate about social development? Share this newsletter with colleagues and peers who may be interested in our content or joining the ICSD community and contributing to global conversations that shape policy and practice.

Plus follow the ICSD for regular updates, events, and resources in the lead-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development.

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