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STATEMENT BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK IN AFRICA (ASSWA) ON XENOPHOBIA AND THE SITUATION OF MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA) expresses its concern regarding recent incidents of xenophobia, discrimination, violence, and hostility directed towards migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable populations in South Africa.

As a continental association committed to advancing social work education and social development in Africa, ASSWA affirms the inherent dignity, worth, and human rights of all people, regardless of nationality, migration status, ethnicity, race, religion, or country of origin.

ASSWA recognises the social, economic, and political challenges faced by many African countries, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, insecurity, and pressures on public services. While these challenges generate understandable frustrations within communities, they cannot justify discrimination, exclusion, violence, or the violation of human rights, such as has been occurring in South Africa recently.

Social work education is grounded in principles of human dignity, social justice, solidarity, inclusion, and respect for diversity. Social work educators have a responsibility to prepare future professionals who can contribute to peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, and evidence-informed responses to migration and displacement.

ASSWA therefore encourages social work schools, educators, researchers, and students across Africa to actively promote critical dialogue, anti-xenophobia education, intercultural understanding, and community-based responses that strengthen social cohesion.

Migration is a continental and global phenomenon that requires cooperative responses. ASSWA calls upon governments, especially the South African Government currently, educational institutions, civil society organisations, and professional bodies throughout Africa to work collaboratively to address the root causes of migration, displacement, poverty, and social exclusion. ASSWA further encourages African social work educators and institutions to strengthen regional partnerships, knowledge sharing, and research on migration, displacement, social integration, and social development.

ASSWA remains committed to promoting social work education that advances human rights, social justice, social development, and peaceful societies. The Association stands in solidarity with all individuals and communities affected by xenophobia, discrimination, and violence and supports efforts aimed at fostering inclusion, dignity, and social cohesion across the African continent.

Issued by the Executive Management Committee of the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA)

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