



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACSSP MOURNS THE PASSING OF ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS DESMOND TUTU

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) wishes to express condolences to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's wife and family on his passing on Sunday. "We have lost the nation's moral compass. He was a living example of compassion and strength for a just and fair society without racial divisions" says Langi Malamba, Registrar of the SACSSP.

The SACSSP and the social service professionals (social workers, social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers and auxiliary child and youth care workers) have appreciation for the tireless work of Archbishop Tutu on promoting social justice, fairness, human rights and ethical leadership for the people of South Africa and the world. He brought unity and reconciliation in situations and places where no-one thought it to be possible, and with humbleness, yet steadfast, used his position and voice to call for action and speak truth to the powers that be, when needed.

The Archbishop will be remembered for many great things, of which the SACSSP is entirely grateful and wishes to highlight the following that are of particular value for the social service professions:

- Standing up fearlessly against the injustice of Apartheid in South Africa
- Promoting the importance of truth, forgiveness and reconciliation, as an integral part of accountability
- Advancing women's right to equal opportunities and treatment
- Championing children's rights to protection, education, development and participation
- The fight against HIV/AIDS and challenging discrimination against people infected and affected by HIV
- Speaking out in support of the rights of the LGBT community
- Reminding the world of the devastating impact of climate change and the need for action
- Fighting for social justice and protecting human rights as an ongoing mission and not a once off event.

"Archbishop Tutu in particular promoted Ubuntu, which is very close to the work of social service professionals and also a component of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2020 – 2030" says Malamba. The Archbishop said "*It [Ubuntu] refers to gentleness, to compassion, to hospitality, to openness to others, to vulnerability, to be available to others and to know that you are bound up with them in the bundle of life*".

His compassion for the work of social service professionals was evident when during his engagement at a national conference in 2016 he referred to child and youth care workers as "VSPs" – *Very Special Persons* – for their work with vulnerable children in residential care and community settings.



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Malamba concluded that the motto of the SACSSP, *NON NOBIS – Not for ourselves*, reminds her of the lifetime of work and dedication of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, and that the SACSSP and the social service professionals registered with it has a moral and ethical obligation to continue to live and work in support of the legacy that Archbishop left to the country and the world.

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is an autonomous statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978. The SACSSP discharges its mandate, subject to the provisions of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 together with the Regulations and Rules thereto, as the determining, guiding and directing authority body for the social service professions of social work and child and youth care work in the country. The SACSSP fulfils this role through Council constituted in terms of section 5 of the Act and the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work established in terms of section 14A of the Act, by setting the standards for education and training of social service professionals (qualifications and continuous professional development); registration of social service professionals as a requirement to practice; setting standards for and exercise effective control over the professional conduct (including ethics) of social service professionals as well as by taking policy resolutions as guidelines for the practising of the social service professions under its auspices. Thus, protecting the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. It is a legal requirement in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 for a social worker, social auxiliary worker, student social worker, student social auxiliary worker, child and youth care worker (professional level), child and youth care worker (auxiliary level) and student child and youth care worker (at professional level or auxiliary level of study) to be registered and in good standing in terms of his or her registration as condition to practise.