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SPEECH BY THE GUEST OF HONOUR PROF. ANDREW ANTHONY CULA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK DAY CELEBRATIONS AT ALL SAINTS UNIVERSITY LANGO, LIRA CITY, NORTHERN UGANDA ON 15TH MARCH 2023

The President, National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU)

The General Secretary- NASWU

The Resident City Commissioner –Lira City

His Worship, the Mayor, Lira City

The Coordinator – NASWU Northern Uganda

Representatives of Organizations, Agencies and Learning Institutions

Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Lecturers of ASUL present

Social Work students, ASUL Students and Students from Sister Institutions

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I thank God the Almighty Father for bringing us to this day in Lira City, Northern Uganda. We have come from all parts of the country.
2. This is a great day in our life as we endorse the achievement of Social Workers in our country and the world over.
3. Ladies and Gentlemen, the world in which we live, the country and the communities in which we live are places of problems, difficulties and to some extent disasters. The problems make human life difficult to live. Nobody knows whether there has been a time without difficulties on earth.
4. As we gather here we have the talk about Climate change, the problem of diseases and sicknesses, the problem of Children, the problem in communities, youth, women participation in development issues. We also have social welfare systems, mental health and psychosocial issues and many others that confront us.

5. The question is; who shall help us to overcome such problems OR who has been responsible for cooling such situations? The answer is that, human beings have been and are responsible for helping themselves come out of their problems.
6. A moment ago, I said we are here to celebrate the achievement of social work. The group that has always spearheaded the move to ensure people in trouble are helped, have been social workers.
7. It is not easy to understand leave alone touch the achievement of social workers. However, if we are told about their activities, we should be able to understand why a day like this is set apart to celebrate their successes.
8. If you inspect the work of social work agencies, I know some of them are here, you will understand that social work has achieved so much for mankind.
9. Ladies and gentlemen, many of us have heard or have seen the work of social workers in areas such as; Child Abuse and Neglect, Mental Illness, Substance Abuse, Workers' Rights and Poverty. All these cover almost all areas of life so that for instance, we have School Social Workers, Family Social Workers, Military Social Workers, Medical Social Workers and Government Social Workers.
10. Social Workers have a wide variety of areas in which they can choose to focus on. So, we hear of for instance, Rural and Urban Social Work, Depression, Criminal Justice, Community-Based Services, School Alternative Programmes, Difficulties in School, Domestic Violence, Parent Education, Veterans Services, Child Welfare Services, Crisis Intervention, Gerontology Services, Advocacy, Family Planning and many others which they focus on.
11. In all that social workers do, they want to bring peace in the lives of people in problems. They want to bring peace with our neighbours, friends, communities and peace in the way we treat others and the way we are treated. They want people to live in harmony. They do not want people to live a disgruntled life, a life of hatred, anger and resort to violence.
12. Social workers are able to make a distinction even between statements that can lead to chaos and those that can bring peace.
13. Take for instance the following statements in history;
    i) The great questions of the time will not be decided by polemics and discussions but by iron and blood.
    ii) If we must die, we must not die like dogs.
    iii) I am because you are and since you are, therefore we are.
14. Social workers will want to find ways and means to help people out of the results of the first and the second statements and they will be comfortable with the last statement.
15. Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world of diversity of opinion, colour, social inclusiveness like ethnic variety as well as socio-economic differences in groups, society, communities or institution. The Theme of today's Social Work Day is; ''Respecting diversity through joint action''.

16. Social workers would not have succeeded without respecting diversity. Their action to ensure peaceful living and togetherness of purpose would not have been fruitful without respecting diversity.
17. Consider a situation in which a social worker is to create awareness of the merits of Parish Development Model for a community. Without respect for diversity in that community people will not understand what it is all about. Somebody can even say, ''I don't want your awareness. Keep it for me I am poor''. However, with the right approach full of respect such a person may cool down and get something good with the new approach to attack poverty.
18. There are situations in which social workers have to practice emotional resilience to handle crises and later return to a pre-crisis state. Working with vulnerable people is such a situation.
19. Social workers face many problems but they still continue to work. They are disciplined, committed and dedicated to their work. I feel strongly that they are guided by the heart of love for mankind. Otherwise they would have no option but to leave helping people.
20. Ladies and gentlemen, with what I have said, it is only fitting to set apart a day to celebrate the achievement of social workers. Today is our day in Lira City and in Northern Region as a whole.

    I wish you good celebration.Thank you for listening to me. Thank you. May God bless you.

    THANK YOU