



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 December 2015

Original: English

Commission for Social Development

Fifty-fourth session

3-12 February 2016

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: rethinking and strengthening social
development in the contemporary world**

Statement submitted by International Federation for Family Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Families, a meeting place for generations

The following Declaration has been approved by the 1,836 delegates from 43 countries attending the 19th International Family Congress, organized by the International Federation for Family Development in Mexico City, 16-18 October 2015, to emphasize that families have a crucial role in social development and to confirm our commitment to help families worldwide and to contribute to universal peace and respect of human rights through our Family Enrichment Courses and other programmes.

We, the families attending the 19th International Family Congress in Mexico City, held as the United Nations celebrates its seventieth anniversary and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in continuation with the previous Congresses and the full activity of the International Federation for Family Development in sixty-six countries, as well as the representatives of the political, academic and civil society named below, agree on this:

World Family Declaration

We acknowledge the right of men and women of full age have the right to marry and to found a family, as described by the art. 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we express our appreciation for the work fulfilled worldwide during the past years concerning the proclamation of, preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family and its twentieth anniversary in 2014, as well as the different resolutions and decisions adopted on this issue by the United Nations General Assembly and other international bodies,

We emphasize that, as basic and essential building blocks of societies, families have a crucial role in social development, bear the primary responsibility for the nurturing, protection, education and socialization of children, as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society, and are essential contributors to the new Post-2015 Development Agenda, so that one measure of success for the new Sustainable Development Goals will be its ability to strengthen and protect all families,

We welcome the mention in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to cohesive families for providing “inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels” and “for all people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and including persons with disabilities, all migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations”,

We recall the target of “recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family”,

We confirm our will to help families worldwide and to contribute to universal peace and respect of human rights through Family Enrichment Courses and other programmes, as well as our advocacy work at the United Nations and other

international institutions, and are grateful the work of the thousands of volunteers who are committed to it around the world.

And we address international organizations, governments, lawmakers and civil society representatives with the following recommendations as appropriate:

1. Empower families by promoting the integration of a family perspective into policy-making at the national, regional and international levels; by removing social, political, legal and economic barriers to their active participation in society; by enabling them to assert greater control over their resources and life choices, especially including decisions on investments in health, housing and education; and by providing instruments to recognize the time, effort and money that committed families invest in their children.

2. Focus poverty alleviation strategies on the family as a unit; acknowledge that family breakdown can be both a root cause and an effect of poverty; consider its prevention as a priority and promote the well-being of families and their individual members by addressing all their functions, including family formation, partnership, economic support, women's empowerment, reconciling work and family responsibilities, child-rearing and child development, to make sure that no one will be left behind.

3. Provide and communicate comprehensive, well-resourced and flexible parental leave entitlements, to promote skill development and learning systems throughout the life course of the family and in periods of transition, to facilitate parents' re-entering the labour market after having the desired number of children and to enhance dialogue and partnerships between social policy makers and relevant stakeholders, including families, family associations, business sector, trade unions and employers, to develop and improve family-friendly policies and practices in the workplace.

4. Develop active measures to support the psychological well-being of children and youth with sensitivity to family situations; prevent violence, addictions and juvenile delinquency; and promote school to work transitions and young adults' economic security to facilitate family formation and stability, particularly among those with insecure socio-economic resources.

5. Acknowledge and encourage the responsibility of fathers and the contribution of men to families, develop policies to address the impact of the absence of males on family well-being and promote active fatherhood and the right to family reunification of immigrants.

6. Facilitate intergenerational care and support and promote equitable access to resources that strengthen family ties, such as family enrichment courses, positive parenting classes or mentoring programmes, and encourage volunteering of older persons in schools and offering community service requirements for high-school students, requiring young people to help older persons with their daily activities.

7. Promote the annual celebrations of the International Day of Families (15th May) as an opportunity to increase awareness of issues relating to families and knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them; the Global Day of Parents (1st June) as an occasion to appreciate all parents in all parts of the world for their selfless commitment to children and their lifelong

sacrifice towards nurturing this relationship; and the Universal Children's Day (20th November) as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children and of activity devoted to promoting the ideals and the welfare of the children of the world.

8. Support data collection and research on family issues and the impact of public policy on families and invest in family-oriented policies and programme design, implementation and evaluation.
