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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:**

**priority theme: promoting empowerment of people in
achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full
employment and decent work for all**

Statement submitted by Universal Peace Federation, 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.



Statement

Introduction

The empowerment of people has its base in the family as the basic unit of society, essential for human development and social progress. The Universal Peace Federation would like to draw attention to the needs of the family and the resources that the family contributes in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and improved employment for all. Policies that recognize and promote families' unique potential to nurture, care, educate and protect the most vulnerable citizens and, therefore, their unique potential for social stability and productivity will add a natural resource needed for attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Overview

Whereas the break-up of the family is directly related to the rise in poverty affecting women and children, research and social policies should promote efforts to prevent the establishment of fragile, at-risk and abusive families and provide education and support to help to strengthen existing families. Policies and the enforcement thereof need to address abuse, so that at-risk women, children or older persons can find a safe way of leaving abusive situations.

The breakdown of the family often ends with women raising children on their own, having to sacrifice either their work and/or the care of their children. While there are policies that provide childcare and/or financial assistance to help two-career or single parents go to work, we would like to point out that these forms of social assistance do not, for the most part, reduce the initial problem of family disintegration and are insufficient. What are needed are proactive steps to address family breakdown itself, given that no Government can replace the capacity that families naturally provide. The unique and fundamental human need of secure and stable attachment can be found only in a stable family. Studies clearly show that well-functioning families are at a much lower risk of mental and emotional problems that can drain social and financial resources from individuals, families, communities and nations.

Evidence shows that children perform better academically and behaviourally when their parents are involved in their education and daily lives. Parents and grandparents should be seen as a resource for society and be empowered to take their natural role as primary educators, so that youth are more likely to incorporate virtues, skills and pro-social values that they can use to contribute to society. Culturally sensitive policies and programmes should be encouraged so as to help youth to make good decisions about partner selection and family formation and, wherever possible, to have parents take part or be encouraged to participate in such education of their children.

Accomplishments

The Universal Peace Federation has worked internationally to help to build greater recognition of and respect for different cultures, religions and social milieux in order to address problems and promote universal values that are nurtured in the fundamental unit of the family. Educational programmes, academic conferences, public events and family celebrations have been carried out globally to enrich

the understanding of the centrality of the family and promote social policies, methodologies and practices to strengthen the family and prevent its breakdown. Members of the Universal Peace Federation in 60 locations around the world celebrated the International Day of Families in 2013. We offer educational programmes for character education, parenting education and family and marriage enrichment. Some of our chapters have been active in working to combat violence against women and human trafficking.

Way forward

Although encouraged by our accomplishments, the needs of families around the world are staggering. We have much more work to do to help policymakers see families not only as receivers of services, but also as providers of unique capacity necessary for human development and social stability. We need to expand our ability to offer educational and academic research and practical resources through our global network. We look forward to making even better use of the Internet in sharing information, encouragement and best practice for strengthening the family. It is our hope that we can better support the goals and accomplishments of the United Nations as we strive to attain the Millennium Development Goals, with a special focus on the family.
