NGO FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL

FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL

Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
MAG. WOLFGANG ENGELMAIER
KOLPING AUSTRIA
PAULANERGASSE 11
A-1040 VIENNA
AUSTRIA
FAX: 00 43 1 587 99 00
EMAIL: CONTACT@VIENNAFAMILYCOMMITTEE.ORG

Dear Readers of Families International,

This 105th issue focuses on the 56th Commission for Social Development (CSD) of the United Nations, which convened in New York from January 29th to February 7th 2018 under the title: Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), accredited with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, have the opportunity to submit written statements, which become part of the official documentation of the CSD. CSOs also have the opportunity to make oral statements to the deliberations of the CSD. Included in this issue, is a selection of written statements, submitted to the CSD 2018, by seven CSOs, including the International Federation for Family Development and Make Mothers Matter, both of which are member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, as well as by COFACE Families Europe, which is a member of the online network maintained by the Committee at: www.civilsocietynetworks.org

Further included in this issue is a list of recent and upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Peter Crowley Ph.D.

Editor

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VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

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Office of the Chairperson
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
Mag. Wolfgang Engelmaier
Kolping Austria
Paulanergasse 11
A-1040 Vienna
Fax: 00 43 1 587 99 00
Email: contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Projects of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family have been supported since its inception in 1985 by:

- ❖ Austrian Federal Government
- ❖ Bank Austria Creditanstalt
- ❖ Berndorf Gruppe
- ❖ Country Womens Association in Lower Austria
- ❖ E.F.T. Transportagentur GmbH
- ❖ European Commission
- ❖ Government of Germany
- ❖ Government of Liechtenstein
- ❖ Government of Luxembourg
- ❖ Government of Spain, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands

- ❖ INGOs
- ❖ Lower Austrian State Government
- ❖ Niederösterreichische Versicherungs AG
- ❖ OMV
- ❖ Rotary International
- ❖ Schoeller-Bleckmann Oilfield Equipment AG
- ❖ Shell Austria AG
- ❖ Siemens
- ❖ United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

The following quotation from the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the General Assembly on November 21th 2017 (A/73/61-E/2018/4) documents the appreciation of the highest office of the United Nations for the endeavours of our Committee, and the Member Organisations and their representatives, for the well-being of families worldwide. "The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family continues to raise awareness of challenges faced by families and focuses on sharing good practices and innovative solutions at the national and community level. Recently, the Committee has focused on a number of issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal 4, including parenting interventions, adolescent well-being and engaging families in literacy and learning."

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2017

In a Full Committee Meeting representatives of the 41 International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who are members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and 22 associate member organisations, discussed various institution-building projects and activities and approved the Plan of Action for 2017. The Board of the Committee worked out a schedule for its implementation, which was realised in co-operation with the support of the member organisations of the Committee and their representatives. The worldwide network of civil society organisations, research and university institutes, government agencies and individuals, continues to be, not only a beneficiary of interactive exchange, but is in many cases, directly involved in the work of the Committee. The Committee understands itself as a bridge between families-oriented Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), The United Nations, Governments of Member States of the United Nations and Academia, as well as between CSOs themselves, through the various networks set up and maintained by the Committee.

The following projects were realised in 2017

1. Families International

Issues, Nos. 101 - 104 of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Committee were published online at www.viennafamilycommittee.org Special features included: 'Issues relating to families at the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development 2017'; The proceedings of an International Forum organized by the Committee held on June 12th 2017 at the United Nations Vienna International Centre entitled: 'Internet Use and Domestic Communication Cultures'; 'Knowledge Resources Relevant for Families from the United Nations'; 'United Nations Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Family Policies and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda'. Each issue of Families International also included texts submitted by member organizations of the Committee as well as relevant texts from international agencies. Over three hundred and thirty readers of 'Families International' are informed by the Secretariat of the Committee by e-mail, when the latest issue is available to download.

2. International Forum: Internet Use and Domestic Communication Cultures

The Committee organised an International Forum, which was held during a Full Committee Meeting, at the United Nations Vienna International Centre on June 12th 2017, with the theme: Internet Use and Domestic Communication Cultures, including a presentation by Dr. Corinna Peil from the University of Salzburg, in Austria. This International Forum was specially organised by the Committee to observe the

International Day of Families (IDF) set each year by the United Nations for May 15th. The text of the presentation by Dr.Peil, has also been published in 'Families International' Issue No. 102.

3. Co-operation with the United Nations Organisation

Further to the opening quotation above, the Board of the Committee keeps its various networks informed with documents of United Nations Resolutions and Reports of the United Nations Secretary General pertaining to family issues.

A background note prepared by the Focal Point on the Family, Division for Social Policy and Development, (DSPD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat entitled: 'Families, education & well-being, which was the theme chosen by the United Nations for IDF 2017, of a panel discussion on the theme, held at the United Nations in New York, was also included in Families International Issue No. 101.

The Committee forwarded to the Focal Point on the Family of the United Nations a fifteen page synopsis of a study update, as an input to background material for the above mentioned note for IDF 2017. The full 80 page report, of the study update, on which the synopsis was based, entitled: 'Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisation to the Well-Being of Families' by Dr. Peter Crowley, then Secretary of the Committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Focal Point on the Family, is available to download on the United Nations website at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/2014-3.html

4. Websites of the Committee

www.viennafamilycommittee.org

The homepage of the Committee had 30.691 visitors in 2017. This website is, amongst others, the main vehicle to publish our quarterly bulletin 'Families International'. Issues Nos.101 to 104, which were published in 2017, may be downloaded from our website without cost to the reader.

www.10yearsIYF.org

This website continues to experience interest and was visited 27.941 times in 2017. www.10yearsIYF.org is a resource archive for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004, with many relevant links to other sources, and resulted out of the participation of the then Chairperson of the Committee in a consultative meeting of international and regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) set up by the United Nations Secretariat in New York, in 2002, to implement a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to observe the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 2004. It was agreed to prepare a study, under the chairmanship of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family on: 'Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' since 1994. The original study, was published in book form with the financial support of the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities in 1994, under the title: 'Documenting Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' and was edited by P. Crowley, and submitted to the members of the special session of the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations on Dec. 6th 2004, in order to officially observe the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The United Nations Secretary General referred to the above publication in his Report to the 59th Session of the General Assembly (A/59/176, 2004). The contents of the book, which also includes a comparative perspective of international, national, and local families-oriented civil society organisations enhancing social justice, are also available to download at: www.10yearsIYF.org

www.20yearsIYF.org

To facilitate the implementation of an update of the study originally carried out at www.10yearsIYF.org a further website was set up at www.20yearsIYF.org to gather data entered by the participating CSOs in the study-update, from seventeen countries in four continents. The website further offers a knowledge resource on family issues for visitors to the website, by creating a so-called 'Cyber Street' of websites of families-oriented CSOs which deal with eight categories relevant for families: 'Children; Economic-Financial; Education; Gender; Health Issues; Organisation; Parents; and Subsistence-Services.' This website, which was visited 15.151 times in 2017, also includes a series of links, inter alia, to the United Nations Focal Point on the Family.

www.civilsocietynetworks.org

An Interactive-Internet-Forum for civil society organisations world-wide, including local, national and international CSOs, as well as academic and research institutions, was set up at the request of many organisations from around the globe, and went online in August 2004 at www.civilsocietynetworks.org This Forum had 143 member organisations from 25 countries in 2017. The network originally incorporated the Interactive-Forums the Committee had already set up with civil society organisations in Eastern African and in Central and Easter European Countries, and which was then extended and opened to a world-wide membership. Civil Society Organisations can join this Forum, free of cost, by contacting the Committee at: contact@viennafamilycommittee.org Each organisation receives an individual User-Identity and Password and is able to enter and change data as necessary. The Forum also includes a discussion board, internal e-mail and online conference facilities, as well as a newsletter function, for each individual member organisation of the forum. The website was visited 5.722 times in 2017.

5. Total Number of Visitors to the four Websites maintained by the Committee

The four websites maintained by the Committee had a total of 79.505 visitors in 2017. That corresponds to an average of over 217 visitors per day in 2017 to one of the above four websites.

These figures reflect perhaps the continuing momentum created by the observance of the 20th anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family in 2014, as well as the ever- increasing interest generated by issues relating to families. These figures also speak for themselves, with regard to the continued interest worldwide in the endeavours of the Committee, which observed in 2017, the 32th Anniversary of its inception in 1985.

6. The Present Members of the Board of the Committee for 2016-2019

Board Officers:
Chairperson: Mag. Wolfgang Engelmaier, Kolping International,
Deputy Secretary: Dr. Peter Crowley, International Council of Psychologists,
Treasurer: Ceja Gregor-Hu, International Inner Wheel,

Board Members:
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mazal, University of Vienna,
Dr. Maria Riehl, Women's Federation for World Peace,
Dr. Eleonora Teixeira Da Costa Rossoll, Federation of Catholic Family Associations.

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family   **January 2018**

www.viennafamilycommittee.org   contact@viennafamilycommittee.org

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31 January–7 February 2018
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all

Statement submitted by Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), 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

Investing in an integrated approach to the eradication of poverty — protecting the family in times of wars and conflicts

Introduction
Considerable evidence has shown that extreme poverty remains unacceptably high and in dire need of intensified efforts to address it. As such, the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2016, highlight that ending poverty in all its forms is pivotal to the achievement of sustainable development for all. Although, there has been tremendous effort towards eradicating poverty and enhanced peacebuilding, recent wars and conflicts in many regions have caused serious, far-reaching, and multi-faceted consequences on families and their members, in particular children, elderly, and women. Families and their members were forced into dealing with unexpected circumstances such as fleeing of their homes, living in the midst of war zones, losing loved ones and bearing intolerable circumstances. Evidence confirms that violent conflicts render families very vulnerable, changes their relations and alters their structure and composition. Destruction of essential public services such as health, electricity, water and sanitation deprives family members from basic services. Collapse of the rule of law during wars deprives families from security and protection especially for its most vulnerable members. The longer wars last, the deeper the crippling effects it has on increasing people's vulnerability. Evidence shows that the cumulative impact of wars and violent conflict aggravates economies and weakens the ability of the State, local authorities or private sector in providing services and opportunities of livelihood for families and their members. Wars and conflicts shift public resources away from social protection, productive activities and basic services provided by the state to the families, consequently increasing family vulnerability to poverty. Furthermore, the effects of armed conflicts can cause "double vulnerability" for families when farms, scarce water sources and other natural resources are

targeted. Conflict does not come to a halt when the fighting stops, instead, it continues to impact families' lives in the post conflict era. Within this context, those who were chronically poor during the war are likely to remain so during the peace era. Considerable evidence has shown that the number of children who have been directly affected by armed conflict is enormous and unprecedented. During these conflicts, children have been maimed, killed or uprooted from their homes and communities. Children have been made orphans and have been subjected to exploitation and sexual abuse. Children have been abducted and recruited as soldiers. War frequently deprives children of access to humanitarian assistance and protection and thus the realization of their rights to health and education. Children not only have rights to health, nutrition and education, they have rights to protection, freedom from violence and exploitation, and to "a safe and supportive environment" (World Summit for Children, 1990). Poverty permeates every facet of a child's life from economic and material disadvantages, through social and relational constraints and exclusions, to the personal and more hidden aspects of poverty associated with shame, sadness and the fear of difference and stigma. Evidence has also shown that poverty in childhood in times of wars and conflicts is the root cause of poverty in adulthood. The impact of armed conflict on children, especially infants and young children cannot be considered in isolation from women. Within this context, women, in particular, are severely impacted by wars and conflicts. Evidence shows that wars and conflicts alter women's lives dramatically and increase their economic burden, as their spouses are killed, injured, migrated or joined the armed/fighting groups. In the absence of rule of law and collapse of the institutions of the state, women's economic burden increases. As men leave to fight, women are responsible for maintaining the social fabric of their families and communities. During and after wars, women are instrumental in providing a sense of family that supports children's healing from war-related trauma. Evidence shows that women experience serious consequences, including displacement, loss of home and property, loss or involuntary disappearance of close relatives, poverty and family separation and disintegration, victimization through acts of murder, terrorism, torture, involuntary disappearance, sexual slavery, rape, and sexual abuse. Gender-based violence has also been exacerbated by wars and conflicts. Compounding these gender-specific

effects are the lifelong social, economic and psychologically traumatic consequences of armed conflict and foreign occupation and domination (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995). Women, therefore, must be safeguarded from gender-specific violence and, when it occurs, supported in their own psychosocial healing. Their peacebuilding efforts must be promoted at all levels: local, regional, national and international. In turn, children will be beneficiaries. Family policies play an important role in reducing poverty. Such policies have the untapped potential to contribute to the achievement of development goals at the national, regional, and global level.

Conclusion

It is evident that poverty and conflict interact in a negative, mutually reinforcing cycle. The increased frequency and intensity of fragility, conflicts and violence is a serious challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, to ending extreme poverty and addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable. The SDGs risk failing the most vulnerable in wars and conflict zones and the achievement of the first target of the 16th goal – "reducing all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere" - is threatened by the increased frequency of conflicts. Despite the enormous efforts to scale up involvement in peacebuilding and protecting families and their members, there is still a need for an integrated approach to prevent the recurrence of violent conflicts.

A rights-based approach to poverty, based on the notion that poverty is a violation of human rights, is one reason to tackle poverty in times of wars and conflicts. The significance of child poverty is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which articulates children's rights to include an adequate standard of living, and freedom from deprivation across crucial aspects of their lives including health, education, nutrition, care, and protection. A livelihood approach is another approach to alleviate poverty in conflicts zones. Livelihoods programs help affected families and vulnerable groups, such as people displaced by the conflict, young people, women, female-headed households and people with disabilities, avoid further destitution, marginalization and dependence on aid by providing emergency income to people who have lost jobs or businesses, repairing basic community infrastructure and service delivery and developing local capacity for early recovery.

Finally, a resilience-based approach builds on the existing abilities and skills of affected families and, focuses on strengthening the capacity of families to cope with the impacts of wars and conflicts through immediate emergency interventions, by bolstering livelihoods, housing, infrastructure and basic services; recovering from the socio-economic impact of these conflicts by regaining productive assets; and sustaining this recovery toward development through a functioning and peaceful socio-economic environment.

Recommendations

(a) Ensuring broader and more consistent application of the approaches that have proven to be successful to support families and their members by providing alternative care, protection, access to education, health, sanitation, housing and socio-economic infrastructure in fragile situations;

(b) Focusing poverty alleviation strategies on the family as a unit and acknowledge that family breakdown can be both a root cause and an effect of poverty and its prevention is a priority during and following wars and conflicts;

(c) Adopting an integrated approach to understand the impact of conflict on family, children and women's poverty by using a rights framework; effective livelihood, resilience-based and gender sensitive programming in pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict situations;

(d) Protecting refugee families and their members against violence and exploitation, guaranteeing the right of all refugee children to education and expanding efforts to incorporate human rights and peace and environmental awareness into that education;

(e) Scaling up, multi-sector support for families and their members to convert the policy shifts made by refugee - hosting countries into support for families through social protection systems;

(f) Eliminating all factors preventing children from going to school including by making schools safe and improving teaching and learning; ensuring pathways back into school for those who have dropped out; recognition of school certificates; and provision of support for children who have experienced war related trauma;

(g) Improving information gathering, data collection, research and analysis on families, children and women in conflict situations in order to improve programs implementation and policy.

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priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all

Statement submitted by the 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.

Statement

Families in Europe: Key Findings and Policy Recommendations to Eradicate the Intergenerational Cycle of Poverty

Since February 2013, the International Federation for Family Development has been part of a large-scale integrating project called FamiliesAndSocieties. It has served to address changing families and sustainable societies, policy contexts and diversity over the life course and across generations. The collaborative research project coordinated by Stockholm University has been financed in the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme to extend the knowledge on how policies promote well-being, poverty eradication, inclusion and sustainable societal development among families.

The main objectives of the project include investigating the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe; assessing the compatibility of existing policies with family changes; and contributing to evidence-based policymaking. The conceptual framework has embedded four transversal dimensions such as Gender, Culture (ethnic and cultural identities, sexual orientation),

socioeconomic resources and life stages. The interactions between these transversals with the fundamental processes shape the outcomes of the diversification of family life courses for individuals and societies; intergenerational cycle of poverty and (re-)produce inequalities across the life course and across generations; and shape the policy responses that are appropriate to promote positive objectives. Relying on this conceptual framework informed by a multidisciplinary approach, the project engages with the growing complexities of family configurations and transitions within and across European countries, along with their implications for men, women and children with respect to poverty and inequalities in life chances, intergenerational relations and care arrangements. How current policies address family diversity, and identifying future policy needs based on an integrated foresight activities approach, are also focuses within the project.

Thanks to a multidisciplinary approach, the project has combined a wide range of highly qualified expertise in social sciences, law and the humanities represented in the consortium of experts representing 25 research partners located in 15 countries, in addition to the participation of three transnational civil society actor organizations including our Federation.

The countries represented in the consortium covered four geographic areas: Northern Europe (Sweden, Finland, UK), Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland), Southern Europe (Italy, Spain) and Central-Eastern Europe (Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania). These countries also represented different welfare state and care regime models: the universal Scandinavian welfare regime (Sweden, Finland), the liberal regime (UK, Switzerland), the conservative welfare regime (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands), Mediterranean familialistic regime (Italy, Spain) and transition post-socialist welfare regime (Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania).

The consortium sought to achieve these main objectives by fulfilling five additional specific research aims: to explore the complexity of European families; individual goals, attitudes, decisions and trajectories; to gain insight into the differences in family situations and dynamics across European nations, and cultural and socioeconomic groups within nations; to examine the implications of family change for social relations, care, poverty, well-being and inequality; to analyse how policies address family diversity and its consequences; and to identify the likely paths of future changes in family compositions and needs to support policy-makers and stakeholders.

The analyses reveal the dynamic nature of families and family life over the life course, shedding greater light on the role of socioeconomic resources for family careers and their intersections with gender, culture and life stage. Family constellations with heightened risks for vulnerability, poverty and exclusion, namely: single parent families, large families, living-apart-together partnerships and stepfamilies, etc. are also highlighted in the project. The reconciliation of paid work and family life is a dimension shown to be of crucial importance for the well-being of families and children, enabling societies to counteract the reproduction of vulnerability and the intergenerational cycle of poverty. The examination of family dynamics among immigrants and their descendants reveals a remarkable diversity of partnership patterns and family forms, shaped by both mainstream society and minority subcultures.

The ways by which gender and family changes become intertwined are highlighted in the project, as now both women and men engage in earning as well as caring activities. This trend is often reinforced by increasing employment instability and precariousness, impeding any convergence to a singular pattern of family life courses within and across countries. A focus on new parents shows that the birth of a child is one among many turning points leading to changes in the distribution of care work in couples and the gendering of parenting roles. Analyses highlight the significant benefits children of lower-educated mothers, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in general, gain from formal childcare compared to home-based care; and the positive association between maternal education and childcare usage and child outcomes. With respect to the implications for child wellbeing of non-standard family arrangements, changes in family structure per se are not the main determinant as to negative outcomes for children. A more pronounced negative association between parental separation and children's educational attainment surprisingly exists in cases of children with more advantaged backgrounds. The associations of non-traditional family forms with child outcomes are relatively modest compared to other characteristics, such as parental education and income.

Critical interdependencies between family generations, and between men and women within families, as constructed in the daily interactions between family members, and built and reinforced by social policies, entail that the type of public social provision offered has consequences for gender and socioeconomic inequality. Cash payments strengthen a gendered division of tasks as compared to offering care services. The primacy of family members in legal arrangements can constrain interdependence between the childless and their network members, and there are strong contrasts between the actual family roles of men and women related to differences between de jure and de facto practices. The expansion of private care markets contributes to poverty, social inequalities, rendering them less likely to provide a viable solution to meeting the increasing care needs of aging societies.

The project contributes to broadening and improving the availability of comparative indicators of family-related policies. Significant cross-country differences are shown in terms of types of support, risks targeted, coverage and receivers of public aid to young adults to facilitate leaving the parental home, setting up an independent household and starting a family. Parental leave use by fathers indicates beneficial impacts to second childbearing and reducing partnership dissolution.

Regarding the evidence, three new databases have established within the project: i) Assisted Reproductive Technologies regulations (ARPNoVA), ii) legal family formats available for same-sex and different-sex couples in Europe (LawsAndFamilies Database), and iii) family-policy initiatives of the European Union (EUFamPol) related to fertility, which cut across core aspects of family life, such as employment, care and gender.

FamiliesAndSocieties is organized into twelve interrelated and complementary work packages (WP). The first two work packages, management and dissemination, served all the working papers providing a frame for the research activities. The main topics that the research focused on are: important aspects of the family life course (WP2–4), new family configurations, life goals and transitions (WP2), the new roles of women and men (WP3) and the new role of children, and more specifically, childlessness and ART (WP4), implications of family life course changes for sustainable societies by focusing on poverty and inequalities in children's life chances (WP5), childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences (WP6), intergenerational links (WP7), migrants and questions of social inclusion and exclusion (WP8), and policies (WP9). The last two working packages focus on a foresight and the synthesis of research results. Two working packages, on family configurations and on policies, are central and interlinked with the other WPs. The new gender roles are interlinked with children and ART and intergenerational links, in addition to links with the two central working papers. Children and ART and intergenerational links are also interlinked with childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences. Research on children's life chances is interlinked with both childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences, and migrants and questions of social inclusion and exclusion.

This statement discusses the main findings of the FamiliesAndSocieties project key, addressing first the growing diversity of family life courses and their main mechanisms of change. Then it focuses on linked lives and interdependencies through the lens of changing gender and intergenerational dependencies. Last, societal and policy contexts are addressed, those in which family transitions and everyday decision-making takes place, as influenced by institutional and policy settings.

Key policy recommendations

The following key policy recommendations are highlighted for policymakers and based on main findings of the project:

– Policy makers ought to be aware of the remarkable diversity of family forms and relationships in contemporary Europe, and aim for a better understanding of the nature and mechanisms of family constellations beyond married couples with children.

– Policy measures aiming to prevent/reduce the reproduction of vulnerability, poverty and exclusion in families ought to be broad, complementary and embedded into a comprehensive strategy. They should comprise services addressing the needs to particularly vulnerable children as well as reconciliation policies, educational policies and other policy measures.

– More direct supports to youth are needed in most European countries, with the state playing an active role in enabling young people in their transition to adulthood. Financial independence is fundamental. However, the achievement of self-sufficiency is a process preferably supported with a social package encompassing education, housing, job market access, family benefits and social aid.

– Law, policies and practices have to assess the effects of any privatization or transfer of care (for children, the elderly, frail individuals) back on the family as to all persons concerned, those receiving the care and the caregivers. Reconciliation of care and work should be supported by implementing care leaves not limited to young children, reducing working hours and allowing for greater flexibility in work time for adults in need.

– To be able to design policies for sustainable societies we need to extend our knowledge on the new roles of men and women and their implications for families and societies. Family-friendly policies, such as parental leave, should consider both parents, as each of their time investments matters for child development. Affordable childcare, out of school care and recreation should be available, given the positive association between formal childcare and positive child outcomes, which is stronger for children living in more disadvantaged environments. Early and universal access to formal childcare is also one of the most efficient interventions to reduce disadvantages among immigrant children.

– Education and information are key policy issues. Education of children reduces inequality in children's life chances when they reach adulthood. Information and counselling for parents helps them to cope with parental roles, and raising awareness of employers — and society at large — enhances the understanding of challenges faced by parents.

– Both labour market and family policies aimed at better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities are required to be supportive for the reallocation of paid and unpaid work between women and men, to diminish gender inequality in economic positions across the life course, and to promote rewarding contacts between generations. Policies aimed at reducing social and economic inequalities that favour the reconciliation of family life, private life and professional life will also help reduce children's disadvantages and challenges associated with parents' divorce or separation.

In a nutshell, the main key findings and policy recommendations derived from the research conducted within the project will help policymakers to better address family perspective legislation in the multilateral discussion. The policies should acknowledge the diverse situations of families; gender equality and social equality are necessary aspects of societal sustainability; and economic, social and legal security are crucial for the well-being of families and individuals in Europe.

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Statement submitted by the Confédération des organisations familiales de l'Union européenne, 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

Making Europe's invisible workforce visible: Results of the 2017 stocktaking study on the challenges and needs of family carers in Europe.

Introduction

COFACE Families Europe is a pluralistic network of civil society associations representing the interests of all families without discrimination. With 58 member organisations in 23 countries, COFACE Families Europe represents more than 25 million families in Europe. It advocates at European level for policies of non-discrimination and equal opportunities between persons and between family forms, and specifically supports policies to increase equality between women and men, with a special focus on reconciliation between work, care and family life. COFACE is supported under the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

The COFACE Disability platform has been advocating for many years for the recognition of family carers who provide care to their relatives with support needs, through a number of rights and social benefits. COFACE Disability published the European Charter for Family Carers. According to the Charter's definition, a 'family carer is a person, woman or man, who is not a professional caregiver but by default or choice cares for a dependent person in his/her immediate circle'. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States Parties under Article 16 to take appropriate measures to prevent all forms of abuse or violence 'by ensuring, inter alia, appropriate forms of gender- and age-sensitive assistance and support for persons with disabilities and their families and caregivers'.

In 2017, responding to the lack of information on what family carers consider as most useful measures, or policies to better reconcile their work, care and personal life whilst respecting the choices and rights of the person they care for, the COFACE Families Europe network decided to launch a major data collection. The target group of this study is specifically family carers from different EU Member States, who are fulfilling a caring role towards a member of their family, or someone in their immediate circle. We find that the voice of family carers is often missing from policy discussions. COFACE Families Europe sees this study as an opportunity to channel the voice of family carers directly to European level policymaking and build an evidence-based advocacy strategy for the rights of family carers and persons with support needs in the future. We also see this as an essential contribution to making progress in Europe on SDG5 goal 5.4: "Recognize and value 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 as nationally appropriate."

Main results: key emerging challenges and needs for family carers in Europe

With more than 1,000 answers collected from family carers from 16 European countries, the study provides a better understanding of the situation in Europe and offers policy recommendations from family carers to better meet their needs and tackle their social exclusion. Family carers are Europe's invisible workforce, and they represent one of the most silenced, socially excluded groups. This study takes a closer look at who family carers are, and what are the main challenges they face, when it comes to accessing resources, services and flexible time arrangements.

One thing is clear: the current situation, in which 80% of care work in Europe falls on family carers, who are left without adequate financial compensation, social rights, or a pension scheme, is simply not sustainable.

Family carers are mostly women (85%), aged between 35 and 64, who are often part of the 'sandwich generation' and provide care for multiple people (27%). In our study, 1 of every 3 carers provide very high intensity care of 56 hours per week, or more, which explains that 43% of the family carers are economically inactive. There is often no one who would help them in fulfilling the caring role (31%). The testimonies given by family carers provide a comprehensive overview and also point to some core common messages:

1. Family carers face significant challenges when it comes to reconciling their professional and personal life, accessing community-based services, their financial situation, health, administrative procedures, and social recognition. It is especially concerning that 73% of the respondents do not receive any financial compensation for their work, as carers and almost ⅔ of them don't have access to any kind of social benefits.

2. There are no countries in our study that would do significantly better than others in terms of providing adequate resources, high-quality support services, or flexible time arrangements to family carers to better reconcile their professional, care and personal life.

3. Being a family carer often results in isolation and social exclusion: 1 of every 3 respondents said that they are having a hard time to make ends meet, as a consequence of their caring role.

In most countries, carers reported that they felt isolated with no time, or possibility to leave their house, or take part in social activities.

4. In-home support services, in-home nursing care, respite, or personal assistance are preferred forms of support service provision by family carers. Respondents mentioned that the availability of such services would relieve them from the intensive care responsibilities and would ensure that their relatives can live independently in the community while receiving high-quality support.

5. There is a great demand towards person-centred, flexible solutions: Some family carers expressed their intention to return to the labour market, whilst others would not mind staying at home, if their work as carers was recognised and financially compensated. Policy makers should take into account the choices and preferences of family carers and their relatives with care needs.

Conclusions: Recommendations from family carers to policy-makers

Meeting the needs of family carers contributes to the quality of care, or support and also helps to preserve a quality family life. Investment in 21st century community-based support services and family support measures, with special regard to work-life balance policies would contribute greatly to the social inclusion and wellbeing of all families.

First-hand recommendations from family carers include the following:

1. Provide access to community-based services: Caregivers and family members of a person with support needs require support in daily activities (e.g. in-home services and personal assistants), and also need to take a break from their caring role by accessing respite care or day-care centers. It is very important that community-based services are affordable, so that the access is not only restricted to few. In this way, both carers and persons with support needs can choose the kind of support they want to give, or receive.

2. Financial support and social security: Not being able to work or working part-time has financial consequences, which is why a form of financial contribution to the carer is indispensable. For a sustainable solution, it is furthermore very important to recognise caregivers legally, so that they are covered by social security and have access to an adequate pension.

3. Administrative changes: When carers do not know about their rights or existing services, the uptake is very low. Thus, a central focal point, as many suggested, could be a valuable solution to

provide the necessary information. Trainings and counselling should further support carers. In terms of administrative procedures, fast and simplified structures need to be put in practice, so bureaucracy will not create an additional burden.

4. Reconciliation measures: Providing reconciliation measures is essential for employed family carers to fulfil both professional and care responsibilities. Additional days of leave, flexible working hours and the possibility to telework would improve their situation. It is important to offer flexible solutions to caregivers, since their needs and the needs of their relative may vary significantly from family to family.

5. Involvement, inclusion and awareness raising: Respondents were rarely involved in policy making, or in the evaluation of services; Nevertheless, there was a strong request for such involvement of carers and persons with support needs. They felt that policy makers do not take them into account. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness of persons with disabilities and other support needs and their families to fight discrimination and isolation in society. 6. Health prevention: Considering the impact of caregiving on family carers physical and mental health, it is crucial to apply preventive health measures. Caregivers especially demand access to psychological support, which can ease the mental stress that they are exposed to.

See full study on the COFACE website www.coface-eu.org .

NGO FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL

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Statement submitted by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial 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.

Statement

Poverty versus Population: The Causes and Challenges to Achieve Sustainable Development

Poverty and Population can be described as two sides of the same coin. Although there are many other causes which shall be listed below, yet the challenges differ from country to country, community to community and place to place. The United Nations has made tireless efforts in eradicating the poverty yet nearly one billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 800 million endure hunger and malnutrition. The United Nations has set 2030 as its target to eradicate the poverty. The problem of poverty has engaged the attention of individual scholars, institutions, governments and above all state and society in tackling it in their sphere of activity. This is one such complex human problem which has vast literature generated through the surveys and studies and related activities and should have induced the desired speed in arresting this problem. But one finds discernible gap between powerful rhetoric and equally important pronouncements in its accomplishment.

The purpose of this presentation is to share with the stakeholders the outcome and impact of the following surveys, studies, publications, lectures, seminars and conferences organised by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID) from the grassroot to the state, national and international level focusing on the eradication of poverty linked with the sustainable development:

Socio-Economic Status (Intern Religion and Inter Caste Analysis):

This was a field based study carried out in the rural area forming the part of district Saharanpur in the district of Uttar Pradesh, India. It was emphasised that a sincere attempt may be made to relieve poverty and alleviate human conditions of living in marginalized villages so as to improve the status of health of masses. The Eighth Five Year Plan emphasized that the galloping growth of the country's population not only nullified economic progress, but also accentuated other problems such as illiteracy, housing shortage, environmental degradation, pollution, food shortage, malnutrition, poor health, unemployment and poverty. Socioeconomic characteristics influence the reproductive and child health status of a community, society and also the state. An analysis of the socio-economic status of different castes and religious groups is

therefore imperative because these locations influence the health status and demographic behaviour of the population. The other factor is the education status being a source of information about every aspect of life. This is one of the basic indicator of socio-economic development. Educational inequality in India is a far most serious problem than inequality. Hundred years ago Swami Vivekanand declaimed "The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and the intelligentsia of the land... among a handful of men". Education is, therefore, a vital means to achieve the goal of development. Education in general, and of women in particular, influence the size of the family and ultimately the eradication of poverty.

This study was published by Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID) in a book form in 2005. It was widely circulated and had received enthusiastic response from the readers as well as reviewers.

Chandigarh Slums (Issues of poverty and human rights)

A field based project to study the Chandigarh Slums (Issues of poverty and human rights) was assigned by the Union Territory of Chandigarh. The objectives of this project were to study the growth of the slum colonies in the planned city of Chandigarh; suggest policies to be adopted by the Chandigarh Administration for the rehabilitation of slum dwellers; to analyse the dimensions of poverty in the urban slums in the areas of health and education. Finally, the key question to examine "Whether housing poverty leads to a large burden of diseases and low education"? Since, the present study focused on providing the strategy to reduce urban poverty, the first step was to define the urban poor. The project suggested in making its recommendations to build the houses for the slum dwellers by the Chandigarh Administration. The shifting of the thousands of the slum dwellers to the housing colonies built had the following impact; proper health conditions, sanitation, children education and in providing these clean living conditions. These contributed in their social mobility thereby the acceptance of their skill, experience in providing the employment.

The project received historical recognition with the Prime Minister of India inaugurating the first lot of colonies built for the slum dwellers. This project was later supported by UNESCO. The letter of Prime Minister is reproduced below to convey the recognition of the efforts made by the CRRID.

"I am glad to learn that the project on poverty eradication undertaken by CRRID has been chosen by UNESCO to be among the best such projects. My best wishes to you and your team at the Centre on this important achievement. I am sure that CRRID will continue to earn more laurels in times to come".

Strengthening the processes of Cooperative Development, Peace and Security in India, South and Central Asia

The CRRID has been engaged in promoting Cooperative Development, Peace and Security since 1995. The first such initiative was supported by Japanese Foundation in India. In 2011 in the September session of Parliament, a budget head was created to promote the processes of Cooperative Development, Peace and Security in South and Central Asia. The CRRID was assigned the five-year programme on this very theme. A multidisciplinary team of experts, diplomats, public and media men was constituted. In the words of Professor Manmohan Singh "There cannot be development without peace and peace without development" The United Nations and several other countries and many experts have underlined that development, peace and security are the necessary conditions to eradicate poverty to achieve sustainable development. The impact of this programme can be perused from the reproduction of the message of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh "I am glad to know that the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development is organizing an International Conference on Peace and Development. Peace and development complement each other. While peace is essential to optimally harness human and material resources for promoting development, development based on sustainable practices and equity and justice reinforces peace. Efforts to eradicate poverty, preserve environment, enhance productivity, ensure gender equality and above all to establish a caring economy are in the direction of serving the cause of peace and development. Historically, India has been pursuing this goal by employing peaceful means. The path shown by Mahatma Gandhi by adopting nonviolent methods continue to guide the destiny of the nation. Rest of the world has realized that there is no alternative to this path. I hope that the deliberations in the Seminar will inspire the participants to rededicate themselves for the cause of peace and development".

The outcome of the lectures, seminars, conferences have been published by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development in the book forms. These publications have been widely circulated and reviewed by reputed journals in India and abroad.

Promotion of Small Family Norms through Innovative Methods

A multidisciplinary project on Promotion of Small Family Norms through Innovative Methods was assigned by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The specific objectives of this project were to bring awareness amongst the sections of population known for producing more children than they can economically afford thereby resulting into raising the level of poverty; to train the available manpower including women in the skills required by the local enterprises in the small, medium skill industries as well as service sector; to constitute the team headed by the medical officers assisted by medical staff and coordinated with the social scientists. This project established how the larger size of family and economically not maintainable was attributed to the 'Will of the God'. So was the religious belief held by the population that poverty was the 'Will of the God'. This is how I call poverty and population have diverse relationship. The project was replicated elsewhere in India.

Ongoing project

The other initiative which is an ongoing activity carried by Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development pertains to raising the level of farmers in promoting them as processors of their processed agriculture produce and by providing them the market and also promoting the dairy farming to supplement their income. These two major steps in eradicating the poverty in the rural sector has been widely acknowledged.

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Statement submitted by Make Mothers Matter (MMM) and IUS PRIMI VIRI International Association, non-governmental organizations 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

Empowering mothers: a key strategy to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development for all

To eradicate poverty, it is essential to have a global and multidimensional approach, address the root causes of poverty, listen to the experience, needs and guidance of the people living in poverty and act together with them. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted this on the 2017 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Strategies must target all these aspects and empower people not only to help them out of poverty, but also to thrive.

As stated in the UN 2015 report The World's Women, Trends and Statistics, women and especially mothers are particularly concerned, being more likely to live in poverty than men. And among these, single mothers and older women living alone are among the most vulnerable to poverty. And yet, mothers are key levers of change, an untapped resource to achieve sustainable development for all. Every mother cares about her children and her family. Tackling poverty issues is very much linked to the empowerment of women and mothers; it is about them getting the adequate support for health and education issues, also for the achievement of their economic autonomy, and thus helping them to make their family thrive.

Listening to what mothers have to say and ensuring their participation in policy making is therefore crucial. Policies designed for and with mothers, can have a double positive impact, for themselves and their children, and potentially break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

Make the invisible poor visible

The latest October 2017 World Bank report on new-poverty-lines-see-whereyour-country-falls notes significant progress in poverty reduction for the past 20 years: the number of people living in extreme poverty felt from 1,7 billion in 1999 to 767 million in 2013. However, people living in extreme poverty with less 1,9$ a day still represent 10.7 % of the world population.

How does this approximate estimation in numbers of people living in poverty enable to reach out to them and develop appropriate policies? How can economic projections and strategies be devised by the states when part of this population is missing?

Indeed, the World Bank's "Identification for Development" (ID4D) programme explains that there are 1.1 billion stateless people across the world, mostly in Asia and Africa. More than one third of them are children who are thus denied an identity. This implies that they can be denied access to education, health, and other public services, that they are not taken into account in strategies and policies to eradicate poverty.

The European network on statelessness further points out that a baby is born stateless every ten minutes, a situation that leaves them stuck in poverty and insecurity. Not only they are left behind: they remain unaccounted for, excluded and invisible – most of the time in their own countries - to policy makers.

All the people living in poverty basically suffer from exclusion in one way or another. They are un-viewed and unheard, especially in anonymous urban environments. They suffer from the lack of integration in communities and often have no family support or re homeless. Their reinsertion is society is vital. They need to be heard and helped to recover their dignity. Giving them a voice must be part of the solutions.

The multidimensional facets of poverty related to the role of mothers

UNDP and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative have developed the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). This new measure allows each country to better understand how poverty affects their population and what can be done to reduce it. The MPI covers 3 dimensions, representing different facets of poverty:
• Health (nutrition, child mortality)
• Education (school attendance, years of schooling)
• Living standards (sanitation, drinking water, cooking fuel, electricity, floor, assets).

It is interesting to note that each of these facets relates to mothers' abilities of ensuring the basic health and education of their children, preliminary to escaping poverty. Living standards also relate to the time mothers spend on unpaid family care work, and their own economic empowerment.

Beyond the tools, which help countries to set their priorities and design adapted policies to eradicate chronic and intergenerational poverty, the participation of the people concerned by these policies including mothers is essential for their relevance and success.

Mother and child health to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty

Children need healthy parents to both survive and to thrive. Child mortality is strongly linked to maternal health. This point is well diagnosed by NGO We Care Solar among others, which provides "mothers and new-borns with skilled health facilities and adequate lighting and power to save lives". More than half of child deaths occur within the first month of life and the vast majority within the first week of life. Providing skilled care to mothers during pregnancy and around childbirth is essential for child survival and wellbeing. Inclusion of the reduction of maternal mortality in addressing poverty alleviation is a major point; if a mother doesn't survive childbirth, her infant is less likely to survive the first year of life. Her children are more likely to be malnourished, less likely to be immunized, less likely to go to school. The family itself will be less likely to prosper. (HLPF July 2017: Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world: Addressing multi-dimensions of poverty and inequalities)

After a continuous decline over the past decade, world hunger has increased again: in 2016, 815 million people went to bed hungry compared to 777 million in 2015. Many studies have shown the dramatic impact of under-nutrition on brain development, and therefore on the future workforce. Breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty requires investing in the early years by answering mother and children nutrition and care needs.

Maternal mental health issues also affect child development, at least as much as malnutrition – as highlighted in recent studies on brain development. Virtually every mother can develop mental disorders during pregnancy and in the first year after delivery, but poverty, migration, extreme stress, exposure to violence (domestic, sexual and gender-based), emergency and conflict situations, natural disasters, and low social support generally increase risks for specific disorders. According to recent WHO figures, about 20% of mothers in developing countries experience clinical depression after childbirth. This is much higher than previous prevalence figures which were mostly from high-income countries.

Since a mother affected by mental illness cannot properly care for her children, this issue must be addressed as part of a strategy to eradicate poverty.

Mothers and their families are in particular profoundly affected by conflicts and natural disasters that not only generate fear and stress linked to insecurity, but also destroy subsistence means and jeopardize food security.

Mothers' economic empowerment

Ensuring that mothers can achieve some form of economic independence is also key for the eradication of poverty: we know that mothers – much more than men - invest their money and time in the welfare of their family, in the health and education of their children.

It is therefore essential to address the issue of the unequal distribution of unpaid family care work, which is at the root of inequality between men and women. In all countries, this essential work of caring for children and other dependent persons is mostly done by women, mothers in particular. In turn, it too often results in time poverty and it reduces opportunities for mothers to engage in income generating activities.

The discriminations that mothers face in the labour market also matter. For example, the Institute for Women Policy Research has found that paying working women the same as men in comparable situations – i.e. same age, same level of education, same number of hours, same urban/rural status - would reduce poverty among working women by more than half.

Empowering mothers as a strategy to address poverty and break its intergenerational cycle – MMM recommendations:

• Address statelessness by, among others, allowing mothers to transfer their nationality to their children, and put in place birth registration systems that are accessible to them. This is a necessary step for identity, dignity and recognition of a child as a citizen, a first condition for not being left behind.

• Acknowledge the multiple dimensions of poverty by promoting the use of the Multidimensional Poverty Index worldwide to better understand the different needs of each country: each situation is different and must take in consideration culture, history and context. Climate change for instance is a recent but burning issue in many countries.

• Invest in maternal health and early child development: according to the World Bank, "Investing in the early years is one of the smartest things a country can do to eliminate extreme poverty, boost shared prosperity, and create the human capital needed for economies to diversify and grow. Early childhood experiences have a profound impact on brain development—affecting learning, health, behaviour and ultimately, income. An increasingly digital economy places even greater premiums on the ability to reason, continually learn, effectively communicate and collaborate. Those who lack these skills will be left further behind."

• Integrate maternal mental health into general health care including women's health, maternal and child health care, reproductive health care and other relevant services.

• Promote food and nutrition security interventions that aim to support gender equality and peace building, as well as building the resilience of populations to future economic or political shocks such as developed in the Food Administration Organization framework and directions about food security, sustainable peace and gender equality.

• Promote mothers' agency and economic empowerment by:

a) Addressing the unequal distribution of unpaid family care work – and the underlying social and cultural norms - while recognizing its essential value and contribution to the economy and society

b) Promoting work and family balance policies for all

c) Addressing the discrimination that women, especially mothers, face in the labour market and in accessing economic resources.

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Statement submitted by World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), Poverty Elimination and Community (PEACE) Foundation, and Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), non-governmental organizations 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

Fighting the war on poverty with Early Childhood Education

In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Member States commit to "protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status, and giving primary consideration…to the best interest of the child… and to comply with the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain numerous goals and targets relevant to the protection of children on the move, including #1, "End Poverty in all its forms everywhere". Yet, poverty among these children constitutes an overlooked emergency.

The effects of poverty are well known and addressed to some extent in social policy. Less is known about the kinds of poverty affecting migrant and refugee populations in transit and destination countries. Because forced migrants and refugees often go uncounted in population censuses and poverty surveys, they are left out of policy development planning. They face harsh forms of poverty, resulting from deprivation during the years of displacement and relocation. Their poverty includes economic and psychosocial damages such as loss of home, safety, and security, social role and status, culture and community. Relocated families' inability to integrate socially in the host country relates directly to their extreme poverty.

Worldwide, 250 million — 43% of children under 5 years of age — are at risk of poor development due to poverty and related social injustice. This staggering statistic does not include the millions of children who have migrated across borders or who are forcibly displaced. The lack of reliable disaggregated data about these children often relegates them to the fringes of migration and displacement debates and decisions. Migrant and refugee children are virtually invisible, as is the poverty that surrounds them.

They face too many losses, including parents, extended family members and friends; their homes, childhood normalcy; learning, school attendance; cultural identity, and social integration. Many times, they even lose hope for the future.

Migrant and refugee children face too many obstacles: limited access to basic social services, especially nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, education and information, social exclusion, discrimination and lack of protection — with devastating impact on their mental, physical and emotional development. They are at greater risk of exploitation, trafficking, and violence.

The poverty these children experience denies their basic rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Childhood poverty is closely and consistently associated with measurable disadvantages both for individuals and for the societies in which they live.

Particularly at risk are children 0-5 years of age. This period is critical for physical, cognitive, language and social development. Research clearly shows that early life experiences determine the capacity of the brain and functioning throughout the lifespan.

A child's overall well-being cannot be compartmentalized into sectors of health, education, emotional or psychological development. Analysis from a whole child perspective requires a life-cycle approach respecting the universal needs of early childhood, primary childhood and adolescence.

An urgent need exists for effective policies to improve living conditions and promote long-term benefits for migrant and refugee children, as well as for their countries of origin, transit and destination. Monitoring and analysing all levels of child poverty, its psychosocial and economic aspects, and its determinants, is crucial for designing and implementing these policies.

State priorities and investments determine to a large extent whether children, including migrant and refugee children, have access to quality basic services, safe environments for play and leisure, and education. Research by leading economists leaves no doubt that investing in children breaks the cycle of poverty, and enables our youngest citizens to develop to their full potential.

Along with UNICEF, The World Bank, and the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), the Early Childhood Peace Consortium emphasizes that early childhood development (ECD) is among the most productive and costeffective strategies for breaking cycles of generational poverty, violence, and underachievement. ECD incorporates all aspects of human development, including physical, language, intellectual, social, emotional and ethical domains, as well as early education in its various forms. ECD reduces the risks of developing mental health disorders and provides a sense of routine, stability, structure and hope for the future. High quality ECD is culturally

sensitive and includes parents and families as significant players in children's wellbeing. Intra - and inter-family and community relationships also promote social cohesion and contribute to peacebuilding.

The civil society "Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts" underscores the need to respect and fulfil the rights of refugee and migrant children, including the right to early childhood development and education.

"The Acts for the Global Compact" represents a civil society vision for a transformative agenda for human mobility, migration and development. It emphasizes the importance of access to basic services and support for developmental, education and care programs for children prior to school-entry age.

ECD centres that target the most disadvantaged children and bring communities together to foster child-wellbeing serve as a platform for reducing poverty-related risks and preventing conflict from escalating into violence. The following programs exemplify this point.

The iACT Little Ripples education program for Darfuri refugees implemented by the International Association of Counselors and Therapists and Jesuit Refugee Services: trains and employs refugee women to support the socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children ages 3 to 5 through play-based learning; provides nutritional support, promotes parent involvement, and creates a foundation for peace and recovery for communities exposed to trauma and poverty.

The International Rescue Committee and Sesame Workshop collaborate on the Early Childhood Development Humanitarian Response Initiative to produce and deliver breakthrough programming for children affected by the Syrian crisis, to enhance caregiver-child interactions and improve children's learning and socioeconomic outcomes.

In Syria, Bangladesh, Uganda, Myanmar and India, Children on the Edge, working in partnership with local communities, helps marginalized and forgotten children, who is living on the edge of their societies, by providing their basic needs, including education.

In Rwanda, the ECD & Family Program, supported by the Government, provides for the holistic development of children under six, through the provision of integrated health, nutrition, early learning and protection services for families and children.

In Lebanon, the Arab Resource Collective pilot project addresses the particular needs of young refugee children birth to five and their parents,

utilizing early intervention to mitigate the negative effects associated with families' refugee situations, promoting communication and understanding between refugee parents and parents in host communities.

In Jordan, the Collateral Repair Project, with the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO) and other partners, assists refugees and victims of conflict: over 1,000 children can attend school-2017.

The Childhood and Early Parenting Principles provide a framework for multisector, multi-stakeholder engagement with governments at all levels to ensure that every child grows in a safe, nurturing environment. The goal is to break intergenerational cycles of poverty and adversity.

Recommendations:

• Implement the rights guaranteed to all children according to international and human rights and humanitarian law, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

• Collect disaggregated quantitative and qualitative poverty data on refugees and migrants, including children, to guide policy development, funding, and program implementation;

• Define child-specific indicators that represent multiphase and interrelated deprivations. A holistic approach in measuring child poverty is represented by the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis;

• Establish "Safe and Play Spaces" for pregnant women, mothers, caregivers and young children, for both forcibly displaced and host populations, where children's developmental needs can be met communally to facilitate integration into the host culture;

• Provide ECD programs and train social service providers to assist migrant and refugee children age 0-5 years old;

• Maintain family and/or extended family integrity during all stages of the migration experience and promote family reunification;

• Promote close collaboration among humanitarian and development agencies, NGOs, like OMEP, and other international partners to transform humanitarian crises into development opportunities;

• Publicize existing efforts by Member States to address the needs of migrant and refugee children and their families.

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Statement submitted by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Association of World Citizens, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Global Education Motivators, Global Family for Love and Peace, Institute of Inter-Balkan Relations, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, Nonviolence International, Service for Peace, Inc., Sisters of Charity Federation, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Soroptimist International, and United Religions Initiative, non-governmental organizations 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

Global Citizenship: A conceptual and practical prerequisite to the eradication of poverty

How do we create a global culture where poverty alleviation is no longer a necessity because its root causes are successfully managed? This joint statement is submitted on behalf of the Coalition for Global Citizenship 2030 (CGC2030), an ad hoc coalition dedicated to the oneness of humanity, working at the United Nations to better the world by affirming the interconnectedness of all and by helping to activate people and institutions to make choices on the basis of common good. CGC2030 develops and promotes values that can further wellbeing including inner and outer peace, collaboration, cooperation, partnership and equitable access to resources. The coalition works to manifest for every sentient being the UN's five core values — peace and security, justice, equality, human dignity, and environmental sustainability.

Accordingly, CGC2030 promotes global citizenship as the state of consciousness and being wherein we recognize, relate, and respond according to the reality that we are tied in a single garment of destiny.

In Agenda 2030, our leaders resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and to heal and secure our planet. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) articulate a collective journey of global partnership and correction of present inequalities. The concept of global citizenship translates the interconnectivity between the goals and the people and systems who now must journey toward those goals.

Global Citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to a common humanity, to a broader world community, whose political, economic, social, and environmental policies that reflect our interconnectedness. It encompasses an understanding that, "the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put

in place to deal with illness are the social determinants of health.

These conditions in which people live and die are, in turn, shaped by political, social and economic forces." (WHO, 2008). Global citizens actively seek to align their habits and behaviours with their values and engage in the self-driven growth and reflection necessary to empower themselves and their communities. The shared reality of global citizenship is that unless we become more conscious of the way our actions influence others and the world we live in, we will continue to cause suffering to those we love and those we do not know.

Eliminating poverty requires developing our ethical foundations to the point that poverty is no longer acceptable in any form. In a world where there are enough resources for all to live dignified lives, poverty is not inevitable. Initiatives that fight poverty superficially are important but not sufficient. We must reorient our notions of existence to focus on universality, shared destiny and greater good. While most interventions treat the symptoms of an unjust world, the concept of global citizenship emphasizes the need to address the root causes of poverty.

A state of poverty is not only related to economics and social services, it is inextricably tied to the impoverishment of values which leads to greed, ignorance of privilege, violence, militarism, and fear-based decision making. The poverty of the human spirit is both a cause and effect of flawed mental, economic, health and social models, as well as decisions based thereon. In order to achieve the SDGs by 2030, we must evolve away from the present paradigm's narrowly individualistic and economic concepts of success and instead, should work towards a collective consciousness built on relationship, responsibility, reciprocity and respect with/for one another.

Too often, discourse and action at the United Nations is focused solely on what is urgent, but neglecting the structural, social, and global mindset necessary to develop in a deeply sustainable way. Global mindset allows citizens to make positive contributions to their communities by connecting with others across boundaries and creating new forms of value. While many poverty eradication projects provide shortterm solutions that have important impacts, until the community of nations realistically and comprehensively addresses the causes of the need for such programs, we cannot achieve sustained eradication of poverty, cultures of peace, or the transformation of society toward a world where all children go to bed safe, fed and warm.

The promise of the SDG's begins with a holistic education for global citizenship, Goal 4, Target 7, that are rooted in our common humanity and that acknowledges the equal value of each individual. Mentorship and guidance for all ages and levels of society are necessary to break through the societal constructs wherein the definition of happiness is tied up with material gain and hierarchies of power dictate treating one individual as more important than others. We must ensure that educational programs have a balanced focus on self-initiative and global interdependence and that they are cleansed of the corrupting influences of educational models that perpetuate materialism and individualism. Emphasis on creativity and character building through formal and informal global citizenship curricula (see UNESCO's and APCEIU's resources on education for global citizenship) will produce currently unimaginable solutions to critical world problems, including poverty. Global citizenship education develops a sense of responsibility to engage in and to assume an active role in facing and resolving global challenges, and of being a pro-active contributor to a healthier, more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.

The SDGs demonstrate that the expression of global citizenship takes many forms. If we promote gender equality and ensure that all are invested in it — men, women, old, young — and provide equal pay for equal work, we can tackle the deepseated causes of poverty, war and unsustainable development. Satisfying the common rights of all humanity for clean water and a healthy environment strengthens our ability to feed, educate, innovate, and work. A new, global understanding of our common humanity will have the important impact of reducing the corruption in public and private sectors that siphons resources from the poor. In sum: the concept of global citizenship illuminates the interdependence and interconnectedness of all the SDGs United Nations agreements make great rhetorical steps towards global citizenship which do much to ensure no one is left behind.

The United Nations recognizes the importance of retaining and learning from the diversity of indigenous practices and knowledge and of the eight Programme of Action areas for the Culture of Peace. Such steps demonstrate that we have accrued the intellectual capital needed to strengthen the diverse tapestry that makes our humanity so rich and they provide much to draw from to empower global citizens as part of the solution to eradicating poverty.

The concept of global citizenship serves to operationalize accrued intellectual capital in order to move humanity beyond current models of domination, oppression and aggression, and beyond the currently pervasive us-versus-them mentality, systemic models that sustain poverty. Economic, environmental and social systems must be characterized by peoplecentred approaches focused on compassion and justice in order to promote the common good such that one's zip code is no longer a better indicator of longevity than one's genetic code. Developing a happy and well global citizenry, one that has evolved itself beyond current poverty alleviation needs, requires a fundamental re-evaluation of global economic and social systems.

We can best respond to poverty by living in accordance with shared universal values and by making conscious choices in favour of the good of all. In this light, we call upon:

• The United Nations and its Member States to focus their attention on the root causes that underlie the exigencies — including poverty — the world faces today, and on the structural, spiritual and social solutions that address these root causes. They must concurrently focus on changing the unjust structures of society while also working within them to manage immediate crises.

• Member States to promote, introduce and implement a plan that puts education for global citizenship at all levels and life stages of the population by redirecting excessive military funding toward global citizenship consciousness raising.

• Governments to support and improve efforts to ensure cooperation and integration among international educational systems, civil society, the private sector and socio-economic structures, as well as to emphasize global solidarity by embedding SDG17 in all deliberations.

• Civil Society and all stakeholders to include global citizenship in their advocacy, discourse, political initiatives, and social programs.

• Establish "Safe and Play Spaces" for pregnant women, mothers, caregivers and young children, for both forcibly displaced and host populations, where children's developmental needs can be met communally to facilitate integration into the host culture;

• Provide ECD programs and train social service providers to assist migrant and refugee children age 0-5 years old;

• Maintain family and/or extended family integrity during all stages of the migration experience and promote family reunification;

• Promote close collaboration among humanitarian and development agencies, NGOs, like OMEP, and other international partners to transform humanitarian crises into development opportunities;

• Publicize existing efforts by Member States to address the needs of migrant and refugee children and their families.

FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

IFFDpapers familyperspective.org

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A necessary and promising progress

The new Resolution of the UN General Assembly on family issues

1 January 2018

The novelty is not the fact of having a resolution on this topic, but the new inputs this one provides and the path it initiates for future steps.

When the International Year of the Family was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, it was agreed that "IYF will constitute an event within a continuing process. Measures will be needed to ensure appropriate evaluation and progress made and obstacles encountered both prior to and during IYF, in order to ensure its success and adequate follow-up." [3]

Consequently, "programmes should support families in the discharge of their functions, rather than provide substitutes for such functions. They should promote the inherent strengths of families, including their great capacity for self-reliance, and stimulate self-sustaining activities on their behalf. They should give expression to an integrated perspective of families, their members, community and society." [4]

But progress on this matter has been difficult to achieve since then, because even though the role of the family is considered essential in promoting social stability and economic development, and there is agreement in recognizing that families should be afforded the same rights, importance, and dignity as individuals, there is no universal agreement on the definition of 'family'.

The United Nations General Assembly has recently passed a new resolution on family issues, entitled 'Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond' [1].

Why is the family given this particular attention? Because "the family constitutes the basic unit of society and therefore warrants special attention. Hence, the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to families so that they may fully assume their responsibilities within the community, pursuant to the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women." [2]

Ignacio Socias, Director of International Relations at the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD).

"States retain some leeway in defining the concept of family in national legislation, taking into consideration the various legal systems, religions, customs or traditions within their society, including indigenous and minority cultures." [5]

The functional approach

In 2010, a Report from the UN Secretary General stated that "at the international level, the family is appreciated but not prioritized in development efforts. The very contribution of families to the achievement of development goals continues to be largely overlooked, while there seems to be a consensus on the fact that, so far, the stability and cohesiveness of communities and societies largely rest on the strength of the family. In effect, the very achievement of development goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals. Thus, policies focusing on improving the well-being of families are certain to benefit development." [6].

It seems therefore much more productive to focus on family functions and to assess the impact of policies, and that is what different initiatives have promoted within the UN system since then. It is interesting to realize that, even before that Report, the minutes of a Consultative Meeting on 'Mainstreaming the Family Issue' organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, mentioned that "most participants felt that it would not be useful to adopt any single definition of the family" and that "consideration of the family should instead focus on the caring, support and affiliation functions that families provide for their members." It also stated that "family perspectives are now an important factor in the development process, a fact that is increasingly reflected in national

development plans". They made a "distinction between efforts to 'strengthen the family', which is a vague concept, and efforts to strengthen and support the functions that families perform." [7]

This is what many of the resolutions on family issues have focused on lately. "Recognizing that the family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children and that children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding" [8]. These or similar words have been repeated during the last years. Also, in his Report already mentioned, the Secretary General says that, "as basic and essential building blocks of societies, families have a crucial role in social development. They bear the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of children as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society. Families provide material and non-material care and support to its members, from children to older persons or those suffering from illness, sheltering them from hardship to the maximum possible extent." [9]

20th anniversary of the International Year

The new resolution, adopted by the General Assembly on 17 November 2017, acknowledges first that "the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year in 2014 provided a useful opportunity to continue to raise awareness of the objectives of the International Year for increasing cooperation on family issues at all levels and for undertaking concerted action to strengthen family-centered policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development".

As quoted by the Report of the Secretary General on the observance of that anniversary, "worldwide, civil society has been actively engaged in the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year. The civil society declaration on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year, proposed and disseminated by the International Federation for Family Development, was sponsored by 27 international entities and signed by over 542 civil society representatives from 285 national organizations, as well as by elected officials, academics and individuals. The Federation actively promoted the objectives of the anniversary, mobilizing support for its declaration and organizing a number of awareness-raising events throughout the year. It also carried out several communications projects to promote a family perspective among governments and international organizations, including a website listing events organized worldwide in observance of the twentieth anniversary and issuing research papers focusing on topics relating to the themes of the anniversary." [10]

Besides, IFFD also participated in another important initiative for this preparation — "the Doha International Family Institute organized an international conference in observance of the anniversary... It served as a non-governmental gathering and a global platform for discussion and debate where policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, experts, academics and Government officials shared their views regarding the centrality of the family and its role in society." [11] The outcome document of this Conference is a 'Call to Action' directly addressed to governments with very specific recommendations "to continue to make every possible effort to realize the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes and to integrate a family perspective into national policymaking." It is the best way to summarize the contents of the Declaration and the outputs of the Conference, showing that a worldwide consensus has been reached on the occasion of this 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and making totally explicit what civil society demands from governments as a consequence of it.

A comprehensive approach to development

Still in the preamble, the resolution quotes repeatedly how the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes are "part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development". They can contribute to most important goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda: "ending poverty [12], ending hunger [13], ensuring a healthy life and promoting well-being for all at all ages [14], promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all ensuring better education outcomes for children [15], achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls [16] and eliminating all forms of violence, in particular against women and girls." The most recent Report by the Secretary General mentioned that during last year's sessions, "Member States noted the recent progress in the development and implementation of family policy. Many delegations noted the link between family policies and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals." [17]

Then, the resolution gets into the operative clauses, with seven interesting inputs:

1. *Work-family balance as conducive to the well-being of children*, as it will help to "the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, inter alia, through flexible working and leave arrangements, parental leave, affordable, accessible and good quality childcare and initiatives to promote the equal sharing of household responsibilities, including unpaid care work, between men and women."

2. *Intergenerational living arrangements*, "encouraging extended family members to live in close proximity to each other, has been found to promote the autonomy, security and well-being of children and older persons, and that initiatives to promote involved and positive parenting and to support the role of grandparents have been found to be beneficial in advancing social integration and solidarity between generations, as well as in promoting and protecting the human rights of all family members."

3. *Parenting education.* Many studies show that parenting is the ultimate long-term investment. The happiness of couples can be at risk when they become parents, and even get worse before it gets better, but in the long run it is usually the most rewarding choice in life. It is also interesting noting the change from 'parental education' in the original version of the resolution, to 'parenting education' in the final one, in an attempt to make clear that it is helping parents in their task what really matters.

4. *Inclusive urbanization*. To ensure that no one is left behind in the New Urban Agenda, strategies that have proven to be effective and measurable need to be taken, and there is no better holistic approach than a family perspective. The family unit has proven to be the main agent for development within societies and thus cornerstone for sustainable cities.

5. *Universal and gender-sensitive social protection systems*, "which are key to ensuring poverty reduction, including, as appropriate, targeted cash transfers for families in vulnerable situations, such as when headed by a single parent, in particular those headed by women, and which are most effective in reducing poverty when accompanied by other measures, such as providing access to basic services, high-quality education and health services."

6. *Intergenerational solidarity*. It exists when generations have a positive view of one another or there is consensus between generations on the way forward. Some new factors affect negatively to it, like family changes (smaller, with more women in the paid labor force and more health issues), and work changes (prolonging working lives, stronger link between contributions paid into pension systems and benefits paid out, more non-standard work schedules, increasing precariousness of work).

7. *Social cohesion*, described by Larsen as "the belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other." Following this definition, which is in line with the academic origin of the concept, "social cohesion is a non-material phenomenon to be observed in the cognitions of citizens. And following this line of reasoning, phenomenon such as equal objective chances of citizens, employment and the rule of law are indeed important, maybe more important than social cohesion, but they are in themselves not indicators of social cohesion." [18]

All these topics have been extensively studied and developed in publications and events by the International Federation for Family Development during the previous months.

The United Nations General Assembly allocates to the Third Committee agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world, and including the family in its Agenda item 27 (b).

At its seventy-second session, is chaired by H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, Ambassador of Iceland.

The resolution on the 'Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond' was sponsored by the Group of 77 (G77), as it has been for some years now.

Within the United Nations system, the G77 is a coalition of developing nations, designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations.

There were 77 founding members of the organization in 1964, but the organization has since expanded to 134 Member States.

Since China participates in the G77 but does not consider itself to be a member, all official statements are issued in the name of The Group of 77 and China. Ecuador has held the Chairmanship for 2017, so they were in charge of presenting it with the special help of Qatar acting as facilitator. They were joined by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Uzbekistan.

The focal point on the family

Also, the new contents of the resolution "requests the Focal Point on the Family of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to enhance collaboration with the regional commissions, funds and programmes, recommends that the roles of focal points within the United Nations system be reaffirmed, and invites Member States to increase technical cooperation efforts, consider expanding the role of the regional commissions on family issues and continue to provide resources for those efforts, facilitate the coordination of national and international non-governmental organizations on family issues and enhance cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to promote family issues and develop partnerships in this regard."

According to the UN website, the Focal Point on the Family, located in the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, builds an awareness of the global situation of families and promotes family-oriented policies and programmes.

The mission of the Focal Point includes:
- Promote the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes.
- Advocate to integrate a family perspective into national, regional and international development agendas.
- Promote the integration of a family perspective into policy-making at the national, regional and international levels.
- Provide substantive servicing in the areas of family and family policy to United Nations intergovernmental bodies, particularly the General Assembly, the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council.

- Encourage and support coordination on policies and programmes within national governments and within the UN system.
- Support research on family issues.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building for family policy development and projects for family wellbeing.
- Exchange good practices in family policy making; disseminate information and support networking on family issues.
- Engage in dialogue with Governments, UN agencies, civil society, the private sector and academics, facilitating the exchange of good practices in family policy making.

This is the first time that this position is mentioned in a resolution on family issues, giving some kind of unprecedented consideration to it.

The path is marked

In conclusion, I think this new resolution of the General Assembly shows that progress is both possible and desirable, as long as it can help to support families worldwide not only in the fulfillment of their social role, but also in their own personal and common level of wellbeing and flourishment of their children. There are many more topics that can be covered in this functional approach, but now the path we should follow is well marked.

In fact, different concepts of the family have something in common —the conviction of being correct about it— and maybe only evidence can help us to narrow the differences and realizing what really works better for all of us.

[1] A/C.3/72/L.14. Any non-referenced quotes will be parts of this resolution.
[2] UN DESA website.
[3] Ibidem.
[4] A/RES/44/82.
[5] A/HRC/31/37.
[6] A/66/62–E/2011/4.
[7] Consultative Meeting on 'Mainstreaming the Family Issue', United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Division for Social Policy and Development, 10-12 December 2003.
[8] The first one was A/RES/67/142.
[9] A/66/62–E/2011/4.
[10] A/70/61–E/2015/3.
[11] Ibidem.

[12] SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
[13] SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
[14] SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
[15] SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
[16] SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
[17] A/73/61–E/2018/4
[18] Expert Group Meeting on 'Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development', United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Division for Social Policy and Development, 17-18 July 2014.

MMM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MOTHERS' RIGHTS

MMM written statement for 56th UN Commission on Social Development: Empowering mothers: a key strategy to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development for all.

To eradicate poverty, it is essential to have a global and multidimensional approach and address the root causes of poverty. It is also essential to listen to the experience, needs and guidance of the people living in poverty, and act together with them. Women are particularly concerned, being more likely to live in poverty than men – especially when they are single mothers or older women living alone.

And yet, mothers are also key levers of change, an untapped resource to achieve sustainable development for all. Every mother cares about her children and her family. Tackling poverty issues is very much linked to the empowerment of mothers; it is about them getting adequate support for health and education issues, also for the achievement of their economic autonomy, and thus helping them to make their family thrive.

Listening to what mothers have to say and ensuring their participation in policy making is therefore crucial. Policies designed for and with mothers can have a double positive impact, for themselves and their children, and potentially break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

In its written statement to CSocD56, MMM further highlights and provides **recommendations** on:

- the critical importance of birth registration;
- the multidimensional facets of poverty which all relate to the role of mothers;
- the criticality of mother and child health to ensure the development of children to their full potential and thus possibly break the intergenerational cycle of poverty;
- as well as the imperative of empowering mothers economically: mothers much more than men, invest their money and time in the welfare of their family, in the health and education of their children.

Ref. UN Document: E/CN.5/2018/NGO/67 (http://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2018/NGO/67)

MMM written statement for the 62nd UN Commission on the Status of Women: "Challenges and opportunities for mothers in rural areas"

Rural women are key actors in agriculture, food security, and more generally sustainable development. Their contributions are, however, too often unremunerated and invisible as the work in family farms or in subsistence farming to feed their families – work that comes on top of domestic tasks, care work and their educational responsibilities within the family.

Women living in rural areas face many challenges, especially when they are mothers. These are first linked to the lack of public infrastructure and services like water and sanitation, electricity/energy, transportation, healthcare, etc. In addition rural women face discriminations when accessing resources like land (issue of poverty rights), credit and financial services, modern tools and machinery, etc. All these

challenges, which are also made worse by economic and food crisis as well as climate change, make mothers and their children particularly vulnerable to poverty.

In its statement to CSW 62, MMM draws attention to all these challenges that mothers face in rural areas, but also to the opportunities: supporting mothers in rural areas brings an important transformation potential, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda and its 27 Sustainable Development Goals.

This written statement has received support from seven other NGOs.

Ref. UN Document: E/CN.6/2018/NGO/147 (http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2018/NGO/147)

Joint campaign from European civil society to support swift progress on Work-Life Balance Directive

On 26 April 2017, the European Commission proposed a directive to "support work-life balance for parents and carers". This is a comprehensive package of legislative and non-legislative measures to support a better reconciliation for families.

It includes the first ever proposal for a comprehensive EU directive to improve work-life balance that preserves and builds on existing rights in particular under the Parental Leave Directive. The following new rights are proposed:

- possibility for flexible uptake (piecemeal and part-time) of the 4 months entitlement per parent to parental leave paid at sick pay level; the 4 months entitlement can be taken up until the child reaches the age of 12 and cannot be transferred between parents;
- an entitlement to 10 working days or paternity leave when a child is born, paid at sick pay level;
- an entitlement to 5 days of leave paid at sick pay level per year per worker to take care of seriously ill or dependent relatives;
- a right to request flexible working

arrangements for parents of children up to 12 years old and workers with caring responsibilities (reduction of working time, telework or flexible working conditions).

MMM has been calling for such an initiative for a number of years and welcomes the proposal because we strongly believe it could have a real positive impact on the life of families. We have underlined how the current legal and institutional framework fails to sufficiently address problems faced by parents and carers on a daily basis, and does not provide adequate solutions for the needs and challenges faced by modern societies (i.e., an ageing population, the motherhood penalty, gender pay and pension gap, and inequality in the labour market).

Therefore MMM has joined forces with nine other civil society networks and organisations representing millions of children, young people adults and families across the EU to create a coalition on work-life balance in order to support the swift adoption of the directive.

The proposal for a Directive on Work-Life Balance is the right way forward and it must now be swiftly approved and followed up with enforcement and monitoring. Some of the measures included are particularly helpful, such as the introduction of paid paternity leave of ten days, paid carers' leave, paid parental leave (at sick leave level), and the right to request flexible working conditions. Once adopted it can improve the life of families in all EU Member States.

During 2018, MMM focus on supporting the adoption of this important directive.

Response to EU consultation on access to social protection

In many EU Member States there are groups of employed people, particularly in new forms of nonstandard employment (work other than full time, open-ended employment) and self-employed, who are left without sufficient

effective access to social protection benefits and employment services or are even excluded. It is estimated that up to 50% of these people are left without sufficient access to social protection benefits (e.g., unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, maternity leave, disability benefits, pensions, etc.) and employment services (e.g., training, career counselling).

A public consultation on "Access to social protection in the framework of the European Pilar for Social Rights initative" was included in the European Commission's Work Programme for 2017 as a response to deal with these concerns. On 15th January 2018, MMM participated in the consultation to convey the needs of mothers which prefer to have employee status as opposed to self-employment precisely due to the insufficient access to social protection benefits and services. We also highlighted the need to legally recognize unpaid family care work as being a particular category of work giving access to social protection to caregivers who are mainly mothers.

The purpose of the consultation is to gather further views of interested stakeholders on the challenges, options, impacts and the development and implementation of a range of possible tools at EU level that could be used in the design of an initiative at EU level.

About Make Mother Matter – MMM

Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international NGO created in 1947 to raise the awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations, and thus transparently voices the concerns of mothers at international level with permanent MMM representatives at the United Nations (General Consultative Status), UNESCO and the European Union. MMM federates a network of about 40 grass-root organisations, working across the world to advance the rights of women and children.

Compiled by Irina Pálffy-Daun-Seiler, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, with input from Valérie Bichelmeier, MMM Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, and Olalla Michelena, Secretary General of the European Delegation of MMM.

Make Mothers Matter – MMM : 5 rue de l'Université 75007 Paris – Tel/Fax: +33-1-42 88 27 28
E-mail: mmmi@makemothersmatter.org – www.makemothersmatter.org

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Recent and Forthcoming events

2018

April
- 23-28: Big Sandy Family Conference (Big Sandy, Texas, USA)
  https://familyconferences.org/

May
- 24-27: WONCA Europe Conference (Kraków, Poland)
  http://www.woncaeurope2018.com/

June
- 13-16: FCEI 2018 (Bad Ischl, Austria)
  http://www.fcei.at

- 22-24: AHCF Family Meeting (Iselin, New Jersey, USA)
  http://ahckids.org

August
- 21-26: World Meeting of Families (Dublin, Ireland9
  https://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/

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PAULANERGASSE 11
A-1040 VIENNA
AUSTRIA
EMAIL: CONTACT@VIENNAFAMILYCOMMITTEE.ORG

Web: http//www.viennafamilycommittee.org

Editorial Committee:
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