

Sanya Declaration

World Declaration for a Comprehensive Family Policy “Achieving the Millennium Declaration With and For the Family”

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World Declaration for a Comprehensive Family Policy

“Achieving the Millennium Declaration With and For the Family”

1. Preamble

Fifty six years ago, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly, speaking to the World through the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, declared on its Article 16 item 3 that “**The Family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state**” (**GA Resolution 217a(III)**).

Around the Globe, families have always been recognized as the basic unit of society that perform essential functions and serve as sources of stability, continuity and development. Being as different as alike, and the cradle of the generations to come, families are essential to the world’s future and their strength and weaknesses reflects the fabric of the larger society.

Family, as the world’s oldest human relationship, primary agent of social integration and of behavior, is adapting constantly to changing socio-economic conditions and the progress of humanity.

In the light of the last decade, new global challenges and the deep changes of the ongoing development led to a new world vision, more adapted economic, social, and political structures, and institutions. Such changes are reflected in the family dynamics.

Therefore, to promote opportunity and equal rights and chances for women and men to assume their roles, responsibilities, and duties within the family and society, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, and to promote policies to bring about better life conditions to all families, respecting their diversity and peculiarity is **mandatory**.

The Proclamation of the year of 1994 as the **International Year of the Family** by the **UN/GA Resolution 44/82 of December 8, 1989**, reflected growing international recognition of and concern for the family perspectives.

The Year was conceived as the first step in a long-term effort to support families, in dialogue and partnership with Governments, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The observance of the Year in 1994 highlighted the role of families in human-centered sustainable development and raised awareness of the need to pay attention to the family dimension in development efforts.

The Year has accomplished much of importance thanks to the efforts of all stakeholders. It increased the awareness among policy and decision makers and the general public, emphasizing that a people-centered approach to development policy needed a family focus approach and that it was in the best interest of individuals and governments to promote families and family-friendly societies.

The International Conference on Families held in the UN General Assembly, 18 and 19 October 1994, endorsed the need for follow-up to the Year and long-term actions.

A number of specific proposals on the follow-up were made up by the UN Secretary General in his report submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session in 1995.

The UN/GA Resolutions 52/81 of December 12, 1997 and 54/124 of December 17, 1999, recognized the objectives of the follow-up of the Year and the importance of the Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004, as a new impetus to the work proposed in 1994.

Participants representing Governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), experts and scholars from all over the world who are concerned with family and development issues have been gathered in Sanya, China, from 6 to 9 December 2004 to attend the World Family Summit, and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. After three days of deliberations, participants adopted the Sanya Declaration in the spirit of human civilization, human rights, and sustainable development in order to promote the family focused approach and support families to achieve the MDGs. On the basis of the consensus reached, participants pledged to implement the Declaration through concerted efforts.

2. The Political Will

The Celebration of the International Year of the Family in 1994 was one of the many global initiatives in the past decade. But family perspectives were extensively covered in many global events and also in the plans of actions emanating from them as in **the World Summit for Children, Conference on Environment and Development, World Conference on Human Rights, International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Conference on Human Settlements, the Millennium Summit, the World Youth Forum, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Second World Assembly on Aging, the Interregional Expert Meeting on Disability, the World Summit on Sustainable Development.**

The recommendations of these various conferences provided a vital conceptual and policy direction. Peace, economy, environment, societal justice and democracy are now viewed as integral components of development. And at their centre is the human person. As the agents and beneficiaries of development, families are the human-centered link among its various elements, particularly the social ones. Greater understanding of the role of families and support for their empowerment have been recognized as crucial in enabling present and future generations to enjoy a decent quality of life and in achieving social progress.

Considering the above stated, the UN Resolutions about the Preparation and Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in this year of 2004, reaffirm the political will and the recognition that family centered components of policies and programs are part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to

development. Therefore all relevant actors, including Governments, NGOs, Academia, Parliamentarians, Local authorities, Business Community and the United Nations are invited to promote the role of families in development and to develop concrete measures and approaches to address national and local priorities to deal with family perspectives.

3. The Challenges/Threats/Opportunities

Since the proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly that 1994 be observed as the International Year of the Family, countries from all over the world have achieved progress in their efforts to promote and implement programs to support families and family members within the framework of the internationally agreed development goals. The Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration have recognized the need for family friendly policies as a necessary contribution to the goal of achieving sustainable development.

Families are essential to achieving peace, safety, justice, unity and prosperity in the world and they play a fundamental role toward achieving the MDGs.

While various forms of the family exist in different social, cultural, legal and political systems, the family is the basic unit of society and as such is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. It is important to ensure the human rights of families and their individual members, to sustain parental responsibility, and to promote equality of opportunity for family members, especially the rights of women and children in the family. Public policies should promote conditions that enable families to support individual members of the family to fulfill their aspirations and contribute to the development of their societies.

Ongoing global social and economic changes have exerted great stress on family life in many regions of the world. Despite a 2.5% rise in average global income, the current population with a daily income of less than 1 dollar has dramatically increased in the last decade due particularly to an imbalanced distribution of wealth. This has resulted in an increased gap between the rich and the poor and the emergence of a new poverty group. The phenomenon of globalization as well as conflict, political instability, persistent poverty, growing gaps in income within and among countries and lack of employment opportunities in developing countries have contributed to increasing levels of international migration. The estimated number of international migrants rose from 154 million people in 1990 to 175 million in 2000, exerting huge pressures on families. Difficult social and economic conditions, armed conflicts and natural disasters also impact negatively on families and family members.

The potential contribution of the family in education has yet to be exploited to the fullest. Illiteracy continues to be a major problem in some regions of the world, with nearly 1/3 of the world's adult illiterates being women and 57% of the 115 million children without access to schooling are girls.

With pervasive discrimination against women and girls within families, gender inequality remains a prominent problem. Domestic violence still violates the human rights of women, and threatens their personal safety, self-esteem, and health. A large

number of women and girls, especially poor, have seen curtailed their political and economic rights, since they have no access to education, health care, employment, or social security.

A considerable number of problems threaten women, children, and the elderly within families. Each year, over 500,000 women die from pregnancy and pregnancy related complications. Infant mortality reaches 61% in less developed countries. Every day, over 30,000 children die from preventable causes such as dehydration, hunger and diseases. Maternal and infant mortality are one of the greatest challenges facing both families and the society as a whole. The gap between less developed and more developed regions in terms of infant mortality is considerable with regard to their respective infant mortality rates of 61% and 8%. The 10-24 age group of the population entering adulthood has reached 1.400 billion. Psychologically and physically, this group is still in need of family assistance and support. Low fertility rate and extended life expectancy have led to aging of population. By 2050, the population aged 60 and above will increase to 2 billion, with an increase from 10% to 21%. Increasing dependence ratio of the elderly on the labor force will produce significant impact on social security and health care as well as place huge pressure on families.

Many families have no access to basic reproductive health services and therefore they have no way to exercise their reproductive rights. The quality of reproductive health services, especially family planning, is still poor, falling short of the demands of a considerable number of groups leading to unwanted pregnancies, high fertility rates and unsafe abortions.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to prevail worldwide. 42 million people are infected with HIV. The over 13 million orphans whose parents have died of AIDS impose a severe challenge on families, communities and societies. Due to deficient social policies and lack of universal access to scientific knowledge, HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma still exist in many communities.

Sustainability of the environment remains worrying. Unsustainable development and consumption patterns have led to an increased deterioration of the environment, the destruction of ecologic habitats, and the exhaustion of resources, threatening basic living requirements of individuals, families, and communities and weakening the foundation for sustainable development.

Global partnership for development is still far from contributing efficiently to the MDGs. It needs enhanced debt relief, more generous official development assistance and a stronger commitment to good governance nationally and internationally in order to effectively improve family every day life.

Cultural diversity is far from universal acceptance. Insufficient communication among different cultures has become one of the underlying causes of tensions and conflicts. Furtherance of multi-cultural communication presents both new opportunities and challenges to families and development.

4. The Proclaim

Therefore we participants of the World Family Summit assembled in Sanya, People's Republic of China, from 6 to 9 December, 2004:

Noting with satisfaction that Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in this World Family Summit is the biggest partnership towards bringing the present and the future world with more peace, security, justice, tolerance, solidarity, prosperity by mobilizing and promoting the basic unit of society – the Family,

Underlining the tremendous preparatory work for the Summit since 2001 including the regional and national meetings at the initiative of the World Family Organization in cooperation with the United Nations,

Highlighting the great efforts of the Peoples' Republic of China Government and their commitment for a successful Summit and concrete outcome for family development,

Emphasizing that the discussions and the deliberations of the Summit were under a comprehensive and integrated approach to development, drawing from all the family-related provisions of the outcomes of the UN Summits and Conferences of the 90's and the follow-up process of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Appreciating that the interaction, discourse and partnership among all stakeholders - Governments, Local authorities, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, Parliamentarians, Academia, Business Community and Families – led to reaffirming the political will to strengthen family contribution in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing that this Celebration constituted an important opportunity to reinforce and enhance the effectiveness of efforts at all levels to carry out specific family related programmes, to generate new activities and to improve the cooperation among all actors of society in support of families,

Encouraging all stakeholders to make every possible effort to achieve the objectives of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, to integrate a family perspective in planning and implementation processes within participatory governance, and to place family perspectives in the International Agenda,

Proclaim the following:

Article 1 – The Family – Role and Functions

The Family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state.

1. Families are primary agents of social integration, and of behavior. They provide the emotional, financial and material support essential to the growth of their members, particularly infants and children and care for the elderly, persons with disability, and those who are infirm.
2. Families are important units of production, creating employment and income. As consumption units, they have a direct bearing on sustainability.
3. Families are an important force in achieving world peace, safety, justice, unity, tolerance, solidarity and prosperity and play a fundamental role in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Article 2 – Family and Human Rights

Families are important in promoting Human Rights, within the family and also in the larger society.

1. Families must be empowered and enabled to ensure human security and meet the basic needs of their members. This must be founded and function on the principles of equality, the inviolability of rights and responsibilities of the individuals, mutual respect, love, and tolerance.
2. The principle of human rights and democracy should be learned, practiced and respected first and foremost in the family.
3. Democracy in society is directly linked to democracy within families.

Article 3 – Family and Poverty

The top priority of sustainable development is poverty alleviation through sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

1. It is necessary to adequately identify the reason of poverty, to break the chain by which poverty is transmitted, establish transfers of wealth and improve access to skills, credits and technology and land to all Families.
2. Setting priorities for sustainable development implies clear vision for the future, joint consideration of policies, economic opportunities, investment in human capital and social protection schemes. Families must be the focal agents and beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Article 4 – Family and Education

Education is a basic Human Right and is essential for sustainable development. Learning begins at birth and in the Family.

1. The Family is a setting for informal education, a base from which members seek formal education. The Family should be supported to fulfill this role.
2. The Family is the primary educator of children and has the main influence on the values and attitudes of each new Generation. The education process starts in the family and continues in the larger society. Efficient education is a joint effort of families, governments, private sector, NGOs and the United Nations
3. The Family is also an important vehicle for preserving and transmitting cultural values and building a cultural identity.

Article 5 – Family and Gender Equality

Equality between women and men is based on the fundamental and equal worth of each person and it is essential to the well-being of the Family and society at large.

1. It is recommended that governments ensure the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
2. It is necessary to promote the equality between the girl-child and the boy-child, and assure that the rights of the girl-child are respected in families.
3. Gender equality and equity in the family, as well as the full participation of women in political, economical, and social life, are essential for sustainable development.

Article 6 – Family and Health

Various aspects of health, such as nutrition, food security, clean water, primary health care, maternal and child health care, reproductive health care and rights are crucial to development and to families.

1. The Family is a key player in all aspects of health. It performs basic tasks for treating illness and preventing it, as well as for maintaining good health and promoting healthy behavior.
2. The affordable and easy access to primary health care and a family-focus service delivery including prevention and early treatment is a basic right.
3. Reproductive Rights rest on the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and the spacing of their children and to have the means to access and to exercise those rights.
4. Families have an important role in HIV/AIDS prevention. Families afflicted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other chronic, debilitating, or terminal illness are entitled to support programs and intra-familial support networks.

Article 7 – Family and Environment

A holistic view of families and the environment recognizes the interdependency between people, between families, and between social systems, and especially the relationship of families to the natural environment.

1. The understanding by families, the delicate balance between people and the physical environment in which they live is an important achievement.
2. By seeing themselves as an essential part of the global ecosystem, families can become efficient stewards of their environment.
3. Families have to protect the balance of the global ecosystem by practicing responsible parenthood, consumption, and resource use.
4. Families need to be empowered to respect and protect the richness of the planet's natural world.

Article 8 – Family and Social Integration and Protection

Families are agents of socialization. They strengthen social integration by promoting respect for pluralism and diversity leading to good citizenship.

1. Families are the most effective advocates for disadvantaged groups, by fostering an awareness of their special needs and pressing for services to meet those needs.
2. The contribution of families to social integration, especially in the case of poor families, minorities, single parent situation, migrants and refugees, must be recognized and addressed in any comprehensive approach to development.
3. Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability are important goals for economic and social development. Social protection has to be seen as a foundation for promoting decent housing, social justice and social cohesion, developing human capabilities and promoting family-focused economic dynamism and creativity.
4. Families are in the very heart of the implementation of the fourth commitment of the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development which states in full:

“We commit ourselves to promote social integration by fostering societies (families) that are stable, safe, and just, and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as are non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.”

Article 9 – Family and ICT

As outlined in the article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. The Family is in the very core of this concept.

1. Education, knowledge, information and communication are at the core of the human progress, endeavor and well-being.
2. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have immense impact on virtually aspects of the family lives. Affordable access to ICT to all families should be assured in order to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries.
3. ICT are tools that, under favorable conditions, can be powerful instruments, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability, health care and information, education and training, agriculture, transport, business, environmental protection, disaster prevention, sustainable production and consumption patterns and improving the quality of life of all individuals and families.
4. The preservation of cultural heritage is a crucial component of identity and self-understanding of individuals and families that links a community to its past and future. ICT and families are responsible to develop and preserve its cultural heritage for the future.
5. The importance of the ethics on information is fundamental because it fosters justice and dignity and worth of the human person. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family in order to be able to play its crucial role in society.

Article 10 – Family and partnership for Development

Partnership is a voluntary and collaborative agreement between one or more parts, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share the risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits.

1. It is within the Family, under a shared process of decision-making and joint problem-solving, that the concept of partnership has to be learnt and exercised.
2. The family is a fundamental source of social capital - one of the newest tools to development - and its voice, expressed directly or by its representatives, must be recognized when establishing any kind of partnership.
3. International and National Partnership for Development in many spheres of activities have an impact on families. It is important to pay attention to the impact of all policies on families, and to take all necessary measures to eliminate the long-term negative effects on family well-being.

4. The International Community, Governments, NGOs, Academia, Parliamentarians, the Business Community and Families are jointly responsible to develop a global partnership for development including a pro-family culture and new patterns of negotiation and cooperation at the national and local levels, promoting formal and informal networks and coalitions.

5. The Commitments

Being in full agreement of the above proclaimed, we participants of the World Family Summit commit ourselves to disseminate and call upon Governments, Civil Society, and other institutions to increase efforts to:

1. Include family perspectives in the international agenda and as priority when developing national strategies, formulating economic, social and environmental policies and programs, promote partnership between families and communities, comply with the principles of good governance and rule by law and render full support to families and development.
2. Urge governments of all countries to:
 - a. Act upon their commitments to achieve the MDGs and the goals and objectives of the ICPD Program of Action, and promote the integration of those goals in policies and development programmes;
 - b. Empower families and their members, in particular women and girls, and place them in the center of poverty-reduction policies;
 - c. Develop poverty-reduction policies that assist families, especially women-headed households and vulnerable families;
 - d. Promote universal access to education for all family members, especially for women and girls, achieve universal access to primary education, and prevent children from dropping-out of school;
 - e. Ensure equal rights among all family members with special attention to the rights of women and girls;
 - f. Ensure women's access to economic resources and ensure their right to inheritance;
 - g. Support family policies that foster the participation of men in sharing responsibilities of household chores, conciliate between professional and family life, and empower women to participate in public political, economical, and social life, and free them from neglect, exploitation, abuse and violence;
 - h. Ensure paid maternity leave, paid child-rearing leave, breastfeeding and availability of nurseries and encourage men to take responsibility in raising children;
 - i. Strengthen policies to reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity;
 - j. Empower youth and adults to participate in family and development life,
 - k. Encourage the participation of adolescents in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of adolescent programs, in particular health programmes that include health education focusing on sexual and reproductive health;
 - l. Support research on population aging and strengthen policy systems so as to

- m. create a positive and healthy living environment for the elderly;
 - m. Ensure to all families conditions of housing access.
3. Enhance political commitment and ensure sufficient resources to prevent HIV/AIDS and care as well as support families to better care for their infected members with HIV/AIDS, including protecting them from discrimination and stigma. Encourage people living with HIV/AIDS and their relatives to combat ignorance and panic; and take action to integrate HIV/AIDS prevention and care into reproductive health services.
 4. Support the role of families in environmental protection, promote the adoption of sustainable production and consumption patterns and protect all family members to enjoy a life that is environment friendly and harmonious with nature.
 5. Promote dialogue, communication, and cooperation among different cultures, based on respect, tolerance, understanding and trust. Promote social harmony and integration, through effective public policies involving communities and families.
 6. Promote partnership initiatives, projects/programmes between governments, the United Nations, NGOs, Academia, Local Authorities, Parliamentarians, and Business Community on comprehensive integrated and cross-sector programmes for family poverty alleviation and sustainable development, and ensure means to effectively and efficiently implement them.

At the same time, we, the participants, call upon

7. Members of the international community, governments of different countries, and civil society organizations to strengthen partnership with programs that focus on the family;
8. Reaffirm support to the ICPD and MDGs' commitments related to family perspectives, recognizing the role of families as essential in development efforts;
9. The inclusion of family perspectives into the 5-year Review of the UN MDGs;
10. Governments of all countries, to reinforce their political commitments towards implementation of family-focused policies and programmes, welcome the civil society organizations and families in general to participate in the formulation and implementation of those policies and programmes.

We, the participants, reiterate

That we will always bear in mind our responsibility to the family, improve well-being of the family and its members, enable families to achieve their optimal aspirations, promote interaction between the family and development and exert concerted efforts towards the MDGs.

Sanya, December 8th, 2004.