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FAMILY WATCH INTERNATIONAL
Since 1999

UNITING NATIONS FOR A FAMILY FRIENDLY WORLD

SPECIAL HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

ECOSOC CHAMBER, UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK
MONDAY, MAY 16, 2016, 10 AM – 1 PM

BACKGROUND

In celebration of the International Day of Families, the Group of Friends of the Family, jointly with civil society, is pleased to host a high-level event on the theme of the family and its irreplaceable role as society's most important institution.

An inter-governmental Declaration by the Group of Friends of the Family on the Family and UN Policy will be presented during the event. Hundreds of NGOs from around the world, representing multiple civil society platforms, will express their support for the Group and the Declaration.

The family is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society" and "entitled to protection by society and the State." All efforts to achieve sustainable development must necessarily emphasize the role of the family because of its essential function as primary educator, economic driver, and social safety net.

The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will depend on policies that promote the family, as recognized in the UDHR, especially if it is to ensure that no one is left behind. This special high-level event will explore the crucial importance of ensuring that the family remains stable and vital for the flourishing of the human person and the ultimate wellbeing of society.

The event will provide a platform for UN Member States to present best practices to safeguard and empower the family, in accordance with their international obligations. A broad representation of international civil society organizations and family policy experts will provide their experience on how best to protect and promote the family both in the field and within the UN system, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

OBJECTIVES

- ❍ To celebrate the International Day of the Family and highlight the family as a shared human experience and reality embraced across all cultures, religions, and moral traditions.

- ❍ To highlight the family as the "natural and fundamental group unit of society," as defined in international law, and the attendant obligations of Member States in binding international human rights instruments to protect and safeguard the family formed by

the union of a man and a woman in marriage.

❍ To highlight the family as an agent of sustainable social and economic development, and more specifically to recognize the essential role of the family for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

❍ To highlight the family's protective role, especially in protecting against poverty and violence, and in providing a loving and nurturing environment for the happiness, wellbeing, and integral human development of children and all family members.

ORGANISERS, VENUE, TIME AND FORMAT

Organisers: **Group of Friends of the Family** jointly with **Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam)**, **Family Watch International**, **and Foreign Service Fellowship**

Supporting Organizations:
Family Research Council, Human Life International, HazteOir.org, Citizen Go, and Derecho a Vivir.

Time & venue: Monday 16, 2016, 10 am – 1 pm, ECOSOC Chamber

Format   Participants are invited to focus their interventions around the above listed objectives to provide recommendations, share ideas and lessons learned from a pragmatic and action-oriented perspective. Succinct informal presentations (up to 5 minutes) will be followed by a discussion involving representatives of Member States, international organizations, civil society and other partners.

Moderator will facilitate the discussion.

PRELIMINARY SCENARIO

There will be two segments to the event, one ceremonial and one substantive.

Ceremonial Segment

Opening Video: Voices for the Family at the UN, Produced by Family Watch International (https://vimeo.com/163757301)

❍ Moderator (Ms. Afaf Konja, former spokesperson for the PGA, 68th session - confirmed)

❍ President of the 70th session of the General Assembly, UN Secretary-General, President of ECOSOC

❍ GoFF representatives introduce the Declaration of the GoFF.

❍ Civil Society Joint Statement of Support for GoFF Declaration and GoFF delivered by principal representatives of Civil Society (ADF International, C-Fam, FWI and UFI) – representing multiple family platforms from around the world and hundreds of NGOs.

❍ Statements by religious and civic leaders

❍ Children's Statement in Support of the Family

Musical Performance (Choral Music Performance organized by the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians of the Direct Archdiocesan District)

Panel Discussion (by topic)

Video: State of the Family – Produced by the Doha Institute

- Marriage and the Nuclear Family – Sherif Girgis (Princeton Ph.D. candidate) - confirmed
- The Family in International Law and Human Rights – Presentation of the "Articles on the Family and Human Rights" – Susan Yoshihara Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Research, C-Fam (confirmed)
- Recognizing the Roots of Society in the Family, Foundation of Justice - David Crawford, Ph.D., Pontifical John Paul II Institute (confirmed)
- Women, Family, Work - Helen Alvare, J.D., George Mason School of Law (confirmed)

Interactive Discussion with lead discussants

- Ambassadors of the GoFF
- Representatives of Civil Society

PHOTO EXHIBIT 17 MAY 18.30-20.00

A photo exhibit of Family Life (a separate concept will follow) will be presented to coincide with the commemoration of the International Day of Families—May 15 and with this high-level event. Member States will each contribute images that highlight family life celebrated in various cultures around the world. Entertainment and reception to follow.