



CONCEPT NOTE

Family policies and their contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Side-event organized by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations in partnership with the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Federation for Family Development (IFFD), NGO Committee on the Family in New York and the Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP) during the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development.

3.00 – 4.15 pm, February 11, 2019, CR12, United Nations HQ, New York

Context

The family is recognized by the international human rights instruments as a fundamental institution in society and as such plays a critical role in achieving sustainable, social, economic and cultural development. Parents of every race, religion, culture and nationality in all parts of the world are the primary caregivers, nurturers and teachers of their children, preparing them for a happy, fulfilling and productive life.

Families are at the center of sustainable development and it is important to ensure that they are an integral part of the development agenda. A transformative post-2015 development agenda could not be implemented without engagement of people through all levels of society.

The importance of this vital social structure that is the family is well reflected in a broad spectrum of national public policies which focus on families as a way to improve welfare and living conditions for future generations. The importance of the family is reflected in national public policies which emphasize family policies as a way to improve the living standards of future generations. Thus, families, and the national policies that support them, play an important role in national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Introducing family-oriented policies constitute a cross-cutting activity that can significantly accelerate progress towards achieving most of the SDGs, by, inter alia, ending poverty and hunger, malnutrition, ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being at all ages, achieving gender equality, ensuring educational opportunities throughout the lifespan and securing access to adequate and affordable housing, access to basic services to name just a

few. According to the former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the accomplishment of these objectives depends primarily on how families are empowered to fulfill their numerous functions. Thus, policies focusing on improving the well-being of households are certain to benefit sustainable development.

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki -moon stated in 2010 that “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.”.

In the context described above, and to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Year of the Family proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1994, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations in New York will organize a side-event during the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development focused on how the family-oriented policies can support the implementation of the SDGs.

Objectives, format and participants

The main idea of the event is to prove that from a policy perspective, taking families into account in the implementation of the SDGs has a significant potential to speed up the achievement of many targets relating to individuals' well-being. It aims at bringing together some several dozen participants, including senior officials from the Member States, representatives of the UN, practitioners in the area of family policy and a wide range of stakeholders from academia and civil society.

The event will introduce Polish broadly-based efforts geared towards further extending the framework of its pro-family policy, such as, but not limited to: *the Family 500+ programme*, a flagship child benefit scheme offering systemic financial support to Polish households; *the Large Family Card*, authorizing families with multiple children to more favourable access to a wide range of goods and services; *the Toddler+* initiative that supports creation and development of childcare facilities such as nurseries and children's clubs; *the Good Start benefit*, providing each student once a year with the net amount of PLN 300 for the purpose of purchasing a school starter kit; *Two hours for the family* campaign joined by many companies, which, in observance of the International Day of the Family, allow their employees to leave work two hours earlier in order to strengthen family ties. Other Polish initiatives, directly or indirectly benefiting families, include: free textbooks for students, significant increase in the country's minimum wage and introduction of the minimum hourly rate, increase in retirement benefits and pensions or the large-scale affordable housing scheme, called *Home+ programme*.

With a view to introducing an interregional perspective over the matter, Poland decided to invite Ecuador, which is a regional pioneer in developing inclusive and innovative pro-family policies, to co-sponsor the above-described side-event. We are also grateful for the support

and active participation of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), as well as civil society representatives, namely International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) and NGO Committee on the Family – New York.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to highlight the important role of the family in achieving sustainable and inclusive societies. It will also allow to facilitate exchanges and collaboration amongst various stakeholders, advance interchange of experiences and best practices, as well as identify and discuss challenges relevant in the context of both developing family-friendly policies and supporting the effective implementation of the SDGs.