



Bangladesh

Belarus

Comoros

Egypt

Indonesia

Iran

Iraq

Kuwait

Kyrgyzstan

Libya

Malaysia

Nicaragua

Nigeria

Oman

Pakistan

Qatar

Russian Federation

Saudi Arabia

Somalia

Sudan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Yemen

Uganda

Zimbabwe

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.

A statement by the Group of Friends of the Family on the Family and UN Policy will be presented during the event.

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

Organizers: **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 (moderated by **Ms. Afaf Konja**, former spokesperson for the PGA, 68th session)

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

- **Mogens Lykketoft**, President of the 70th session of the General Assembly (tbc)
- **Ban Ki-moon**, UN Secretary-General (tbc)
- **Oh Joon**, President of ECOSOC (tbc)
- **Valentin Rybakov**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus introduces the Statement of the GoFF.
- **Sharon Slater**, President, Family Watch International
- **Children's Statement** in Support of the Family

Panel Discussion (by topic)

- **Sherif Girgis**, Princeton Ph.D. candidate
- **Susan Yoshihara**, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Research, C-Fam
- **David Crawford**, Foundation of Justice, Ph.D., Pontifical John Paul II Institute
- **Helen Alvare**, J.D., George Mason School of Law

Interactive Discussion