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Oral Statement

49th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (2016)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The past months have been a very important time for our Federation, as we have been able to increase once more the number of our Family Enrichment courses in 66 countries. Also, more than 1,800 delegates from 43 countries attended our 19th International Congress in Mexico City last October, to emphasize that families have a crucial role in social development and to confirm our commitment to help families worldwide and to contribute to universal peace and respect of human rights.

Mr. Chairman, we are convinced that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can remove barriers to the active participation of families in society, especially decisions on investments in health, housing, poverty, and education. The long-standing efforts of United Nations to protect human Rights has empowerment at its core and has been enriched during the past years with the goal of empowering the world's women and empowering the next generation through the work on youth. Adding families to the agenda would be another step forward, provided it includes the removal of all barriers to the active participation of families in society, especially including decisions on investments in health, housing and education. Too often, the time, effort and money families invest in their children finds no social or economic incentive by the society benefitting from them, because there are no political instruments to implement it.

And this step would in return help also women and children, as they are part of the family. We need to realize the extent to which family breakdown has contributed to the feminization of poverty and the fact that family structure matters in the long term fight against poverty, in particular child poverty. If we are serious about reducing poverty, valuable short term solutions, like food banks and shelters, must partner with long term solutions, which include examining family structure and eradicating family breakdown.

That is why we think that all the contributions made by the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars are to be considered, and more specifically the six principles they establish for such reports:

1. **Family support and responsibilities:** policies and programs should aim to support and supplement family functioning and provide substitute services only as a last resort.
2. **Family membership and stability:** whenever possible, policies and programs should encourage and reinforce marital, parental, and family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved.
3. **Family involvement and interdependence:** policies and programs must recognize the interdependence of family relationships, the strength and persistence of family ties and obligations, and the wealth of resources that families can mobilize to help their members.
4. **Family partnership and empowerment:** policies and programs must encourage individuals and their close family members to collaborate as partners with program professionals in delivery of services to an individual
5. **Family diversity:** families come in many forms and configurations, and policies and programs must take into account their varying effects on different types of families.
6. **Support of vulnerable families:** policies and programs should identify and publicly support services for families in the most extreme economic or social need and give support to families who are most vulnerable to breakdown and have the fewest resources and target efforts and resources toward preventing family..

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.