



Side Event

“Quality over Quantity – How Parental Decisions are Impacting Fertility”

Organized by the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar
in collaboration with the
Doha International Family Institute
and the

United Nations Population Fund – Regional Office of Arab States (UNFPA)

United Nations 55th Session of the Commission on Population and Development

Priority Theme: Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth

Partners:

- Permanent Mission of The State of Qatar to the UN
- United Nations Population Fund – Regional Office of Arab States (UNFPA)

Date and time: 26 April 2022; 08:30 to 09:45 EDT (3.30pm-4.45pm Qatar Time) (TBC)

Location: Virtual Meeting

Purpose

The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations and the United Nations Population Fund- regional Office of Arab States, aims to organize a side-event at the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development of the United Nations. This side-event builds on DIFI's research on "Social Aspects of Fertility in Qatar". It seeks to discuss how parenting decisions impacting the global fertility decline with the aim of identifying policy measures and best practices available worldwide.

Background

According to the United Nation's projections, there are seventy-five countries whose fertility levels dropped below the replacement level which is 2.1 child per woman and this number is expected to increase to 120 by 2050.¹ The decline in the fertility rate represents a great challenge to countries because it leads to a decrease in the population. Equally, it leads to an increase in the number of elderly citizens and the diminish of the working force which is needed for national development and economic growth.

Factors impacting low fertility are diverse and multiple. In some countries it was fueled by the postponement of marriage and children bearing.² In others, it was induced by cultural factors,³ the working conditions of the labour market, the educational system, housing, youth unemployment,⁴ or prevailing gender norms, amongst other influential factors.⁵ Low fertility rates indicate that there is a glaring gap between fertility aspirations and actual family sizes. This gap tends to be greater for women who hold advanced university degrees, who find it harder to meet the needs of their careers and their family lives. As a result, increasing fertility rates has become a main objective for family policies.⁶

Family policies have a positive impact on parental decisions to bear children. Family policies such as parental leaves, financial provisions, flexible working arrangements, among others, are all useful tools that have led to a short term increase in fertility rates. They create a temporary baby boom leading to a spike in the Total Fertility Rate, impacting fertility timing, providing assistance to having children earlier and reducing the gap between the bearing of children. Nonetheless, the long term effect on fertility is limited. As such, family policies must attend to the particular needs of individuals in different life circumstances, including the time and the quantity of children and their viewed on preconditions to be parents. Indeed, family policies must respond to changing family circumstances and growing economic and societal trials.⁷

¹ UN DESA (November 2015) "Cross-cutting issues and policies in countries experiencing low fertility", Policy Brief No. 1, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Low Fertility, New York, 2-3 November 2015

² UN DESA (November 2015) "Fertility, family change and policy adjustments in the Czech Republic", Policy Brief No. 6, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Low Fertility, New York, 2-3 November 2015"

³ UN DESA (November 2015) "Regional variations in fertility trends and policies in Canada", Policy Brief No. 4, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Low Fertility, New York, 2-3 November 2015

⁴ UN DESA (November 2015) "Not so low fertility in Norway – A result of affluence, liberal values, gender-equality ideals and the welfare state", Policy Brief No. 13, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Low Fertility, New York, 2-3 November 2015

⁵ UN DESA (November 2015) "Cross-cutting issues and policies in countries experiencing low fertility", Policy Brief No. 1, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Low Fertility, New York, 2-3 November 2015

⁶ UNFPA (May 2019) "policy responses to low fertility: how effective are they?," working paper no.1, working paper series, May 2019.

⁷ UNFPA (May 2019) "policy responses to low fertility: how effective are they?," working paper no.1, working paper series, May 2019.

Objectives

This side-event aims to discuss how parenting decisions are impacting fertility decisions with the aim of identifying policy measures and best practices available worldwide. The event seeks to:

- Discuss the connection between parenting decisions and fertility.
- Shed light on experiences of countries in providing family policies to parents and how that impacts their fertility decisions.
- Identify policies/best practices and come up with recommendations for policymaking.

Agenda:

Moderated panel discussion followed by Q&A, among representatives of government, civil society and UN entities.

	<p><u>Welcoming Remarks</u></p> <p>H.E. Ambassador Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations</p> <p><u>Panel Discussion</u></p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Hayat Maarefi (TBC) Executive Director, Qatar Debate Center</p>
	<p>Speakers: Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al-Emadi Executive Director, Doha International Family Institute</p> <p>Dr. Luay Shabaneh Regional Director, United Nations Population Fund/Arab States</p> <p>Representative from UNICEF Headquarters (TBC)</p> <p>Professor Sara Harper CBE (TBC) Director and Cloe Professor of Gerontology, The Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, University of Oxford</p>
	<p>Discussion</p>