



GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY

Statement delivered
by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belarus
H.E. Mr. Yuri Ambrazevich
on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Family

Commission on Population and Development
Fifty-sixth session, general debate
April 10, 2023

Mr. Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 25 Member States of the Group of Friends of the Family that includes Bangladesh, Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen, Zimbabwe and my own country Belarus.

The Member States of the Group reaffirm **the centrality of the ICPD Programme of Action in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, and in light of the theme of the session would like to highlight the role of the family and family-oriented policies in development and in promoting education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Recalling that sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities, **the Group advocates prioritizing the family in global development efforts** through concerted action to strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development.

Mr. Chair,

As the Member-States of the Group of Friends of the Family, we recognize that, in the face of multiple and interrelated crises that exacerbate inequalities and undermine development gains today, **education is a key factor in sustainable development and a component of well-being**.

Bangladesh

Belarus

Comoros

Egypt

Indonesia

Iran

Iraq

Kuwait

Kyrgyzstan

Libya

Malaysia

Nicaragua

Nigeria

Oman

Pakistan

Qatar

Russian Federation

Saudi Arabia

Somalia

Sudan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Uganda

Yemen

Zimbabwe

Recognizing the interdependent relationship between education and demographic and social changes, we stress **the importance of education in raising the quality of life for all people** through appropriate population and development policies and programmes aimed at achieving poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, human resource development and the guarantee of all human rights, **including the right to development.**

We reaffirm our **commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all**, including early childhood education and universal access to complete, free and compulsory primary education as well as access to secondary, tertiary and vocational education and training and lifelong learning.

Considering **the importance of information, education and communication on the population issues**, the Group respects the sovereign right of each country to implement recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

Distinguished delegates,

It is well known that strong, supportive and well-functioning **families are primary educators for children** and are truly indispensable to their development and emotional well-being.

The family provides the natural environment in which children learn the values that will guide them for the rest of their lives, in which they form their first relationships, learn to communicate with others and interact with the world around them.

We commend **the vital role of parents in supporting the lifelong educational journey of their children** and attach great importance in this regard to the **parental education and developing parental skills**, which empower parents in their role as nurturers and educators and often have an untapped potential to contribute to the achievement of SDG4.

To this end, the Group reiterates **a prior right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children**, and emphasizes the ongoing need to educate children from a young age on the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

At the same time, the Group acknowledges that parental involvement and the ability of parents to play an active role in their children's education are directly related to their working conditions.

Since the work-family balance lies at the core of the ability of the family to provide economically and emotionally for its members, **the Group advocates for the strategies that promote work-family balance** in order to help men and women to reconcile parenthood with working life and to support parents in raising the next generation of children and ensuring harmonious family relations.

We attach great importance to the **work of the United Nations in raising awareness, increasing understanding and promoting policies that improve the status and well-being of the family**, and express the hope that the Organization will continue to play an important and active role in **strengthening international cooperation in family-related issues**.

In conclusion, let me, on behalf of the Member-States of the Group of Friends of the Family, **reaffirm our commitment to the full and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action** as a critical contribution to the 2030 Agenda, and reiterate our determination in this regard to provide **the family with the widest possible protection and assistance**, as we believe that **a strong family of today is a sustainable society of tomorrow**.

I thank you all for your attention.