



We, the parents attending the **20th World Congress of Family Enrichment** and the youth participating in the **1st World Congress of Personal Project** in London, held as the United Nations approaches its seventy-fifth anniversary and the world celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in continuation with the previous Congresses and the **full activity of the International Federation for Family Development** in seventy countries, together with **other representatives of the civil society**, agree on this

DECLARATION

We acknowledge the **right of men and women of full age to marry and to found a family**, as described by the art. 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we express our appreciation for the different resolutions and decisions adopted on this issue by the United Nations General Assembly and other international bodies, as guiding principles of our action.

We emphasize that, as basic and essential building blocks of societies, **families have a crucial role in social development**, bear the primary responsibility for the nurturing, protection, education and socialization of children, as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society.

We reaffirm that **family policies are a mainstay of national public policies** and the most meaningful vehicle for governments to influence the living standards of upcoming generations and that, as part of achieving the global ambitions of the Sustainable Development Agenda, family policies have an important part to role in meeting targets across many of its Goals.

We consider the **right of parents to decide if they wish to stay at home** and raise them for a longer period of time or return to the labour market as a basic principle of family policies. To this end, we especially recall the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development target of “recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family”.

We express our **gratitude to so many experts, practitioners and colleagues** — officials, academics, lawmakers and civil society representatives — from all over the world who have collaborated with us during these past years through their contributions and their commitment to the wellbeing of society.

We confirm our **will to help families worldwide and to contribute to universal peace and respect of human rights** through our courses and programmes, as well as our advocacy work at the United Nations and other international institutions, and are grateful to the work of the thousands of volunteers who are committed to it around the world.

And we address international organizations, governments, lawmakers and civil society representatives with the following recommendations, as appropriate:

1. Empower families and **promote the integration of a family perspective** at the national, regional and international levels by removing social, political, legal and economic barriers to their

active participation in society; by enabling them to assert greater control over their resources and life choices, especially including decisions on investments in health, housing and education; and by providing instruments to recognize the time, effort and money that committed parents invest in their children.

2. **Focus poverty alleviation strategies on the family** as a unit; continue to promote inclusive and responsive family-oriented policies for poverty reduction, to confront family poverty and social exclusion, recognizing the multidimensional aspects of poverty, focusing on inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all, health and well-being for all at all ages, full and productive employment, decent work, social security, livelihoods and social cohesion, including social protection systems and measures, such as child allowances for parents and pension benefits for older persons, and to ensure that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members are respected.

3. **Promote work-family balance** as conducive to the well-being of children, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, inter alia, through improved working conditions for workers with family responsibilities, flexible working arrangements, such as telecommuting; leave arrangements, like parental leave, affordable, accessible and good-quality childcare and initiatives to promote the equal sharing of household responsibilities, including unpaid care work, between men and women; and encourage the responsibility of fathers and the contribution of men to families, develop policies to address the impact of the absence of males on family well-being and promote active fatherhood.

4. **Promote equitable access to different forms and modalities of parenting education** as a tool to enhance children's well-being, such as family enrichment courses, positive parenting classes or mentoring programmes, and **facilitate intergenerational care and support** such as intergenerational living arrangements and support for grandparents to better promote social inclusion.

5. **Develop active measures to support children and youth** with sensitivity to family situations; prevent violence, addictions and juvenile delinquency; and promote early childhood development, school to work transitions and young adults' economic security to facilitate family formation and stability, particularly among those with insecure socio-economic resources.

6. **Continue to develop research projects, support and disseminate data collection** on family issues, the impact of public policies on families and the investment in family-oriented policies and programmes design, implementation and evaluation. Especially promote the Venice Declaration, as an appropriate instrument to show that families are crucial development agents and that they need the environment provided by inclusive cities, especially in terms of investment in infrastructure.

7. In full co-ordination with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNICEF and other civil society organizations, **promote the preparations for and observance of the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2024**, as an opportunity to increase awareness of issues relating to families and knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them, and the organization of events to communicate relevant findings and recommendations to all stakeholders.

London, 20th October 2019.
