



## **OPENING REMARKS OF THE 2017 IFFD BRIEFING BY IFFD WORLD PRESIDENT, MARIO ARMELLA**

His Honour Minister Michael Farrugia,  
Her Excellency Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

Child poverty is a global issue and not just one for the developing world. In a review of child wellbeing across 35 industrialized countries, UNICEF found that approximately 30 million children — one child out of every eight across the OECD — are growing up poor. Despite this, child poverty has been largely absent from the post-2015 development debate. And there is an alarming consistency to the global problem: poverty rates are usually highest among children, no matter which region or poverty measure is used.

A lot of effort and work has been done since the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force, more than twenty-five years ago. But it has been also stated that, even as we celebrate the progress, we cannot ignore the millions of children, in every country of the world, who are being left out and left behind. Trafficked, forced into early marriage, exploited, abducted, terrorized; without access to health services, adequate nutrition, and learning opportunities; discriminated against because of their gender or their religion, their ethnicity or disabilities, their color or their sex; living in poverty; living without parental care; living on society's margins. Their capabilities diminished and their choices limited. Their rights to survival, protection, freedom and identity violated.

We simply cannot – and will not leave these children behind. Because of what is at stake – the lives and futures of the world's children, and thus, the future of the world – we must find new ways to reach the children we have not yet reached. There is hope to be found and nurtured, we are certain, in the human spirit that crosses and defies all divisions in its search for transformation. This is the spirit that speaks to us as we recommit our efforts to make the world a just and better place for all children.

Also, we need to consider that children well-being is multidimensional, relative to their changing living conditions and not only to material re-sources or poverty. Complex interactions of the body, mind and emotions are involved. In other words, psychological well-being includes the ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy, be resilient and attentive. It is different from emotional well-being — this includes being happy and confident and not anxious or depressed — or social well-being — has good relationships with others and does not have behavioural problems, that is, they are not disruptive, violent or a bully.

What is the role of the family in all this? How can we break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, considering all these dimensions of well-being? How can local and national authorities help families to play their ultimate role?

I hope this event can contribute to find the correct answers to these questions.

And I have to thank the Permanent Mission of Qatar for co-organizing it, and the United Nations Commission for Social Development to allow us to celebrate it and to suggest such a significant priority team. And to all of you here today, because your presence shows both your commitment to this cause and your potential to be part of the solution for it.

Thank you very much!

United Nations Headquarters – New York, 18 February 2017.