



INSTITUTO DE POLÍTICA FAMILIAR

FAMILY, MOTHERHOOD & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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FAMILY, MOTHERHOOD & DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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FAMILY, MOTHERHOOD & DEVELOPMENT GOALS.



1. The Need for a New Environmentalism Embracing Human Life

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Dr. Mary Taylor
Consulting Editor of *Communio International Review*

The Millennium Declaration of the year 2000 can be praised for bringing the human person to the forefront of international attention. It recognizes “the responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity.” It resolves to “fully uphold the Declaration on Human Rights” (which says that “The family is the natural and fundamental unit of society... entitled to protection by society and the State”). It encourages implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which quotes the corresponding Declaration saying that “the child ... needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.”

After 15 years, the Millennium Development Goals (the MDGs) have been unevenly met, if they have been met at all in some areas, and there have been a number of critiques, so they are now being revisited.

Our topics - family and motherhood - deal with very important, issues, issues for which there is a wealth of social science research. Why then, has someone with a doctorate in philosophy been asked to address them? In this case, isn't philosophy extraneous - shouldn't we get right to the pragmatic level?

Well, all the goals require actions to meet them. Our actions – what means we choose to reach our ends – are our ethics - a branch of philosophy. Our ethics are strongly

linked with what we take to be the true nature of the human person (philosophical anthropology, as distinguished from social science anthropology) and depend on what we think we can know about persons and the world and what we take to be ultimately real (the branches of epistemology and metaphysics or ontology).

So I do think philosophy is pertinent. Our other speakers will cover the extremely vital empirical data; however, as the introductory speaker, I thought that by way of background I might bring the deeper level, which grounds our pragmatic concerns, into sharper focus through three interconnecting images: Gandhi's Watch, the Smile of the Mother, and the Book of Nature. All three will, I hope, illuminate important truths about all of the MDGs, including my topic – the 7th goal of environmental sustainability.

GANDHI'S WATCH

The Millennium Development goals specify end results but are silent on the means to reach those ends. That alone is not a necessarily a fault, but it might lead one to believe that we simply need to find the most efficient way to reach the goals - whatever works.

Gandhi used a concrete example to illustrate the problem of means and ends. Imagine there is something you desire, something you see as good that you want -- a beautiful watch. In order to attain the watch, you could threaten the owner, fight him for it and steal it from him by force. (I will add that you could also get a law passed that says you have a right to confiscate it). Or you could offer a higher price than anyone else and buy it from him. Finally, you could ask him for it. The "end" result APPEARS the same – in all three cases, in the end you are in possession of the watch.

But, Gandhi says, according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation (a gift). Thus we see three different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?¹

If I may add my own expansion to Gandhi's image, what does the pursuit of the end do to you as a person, and your relationship with the original owner? In the first case, you become a thief, and your relation to others is one of coercion and force. In the second, the relation is purely a market one – you are a consumer, and the other is a seller – and your relationship has been reduced to a strictly economic, utilitarian contractual exchange. In the third case you are the recipient of a gift – and your relationship is quite different: that of a friend. Now of course, Gandhi knew perfectly well that sometimes you just want to buy a watch - nothing wrong with that. But he was using the image to make a larger point: what is the true end we seek, and how do the means affect the result? Martin Luther King said that the true end is "reconciliation,"

1 Gandhi, M.K. "Brute Force." Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule. 1909. Available online at <<http://www.mkgandhi.org/swarajya/ch016.htm>>.

“redemption,” “the creation of the beloved community. It is only this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends.”²

Gandhi’s Watch tells us that the means we use to meet the goals really do matter. Solving the MDG problems of poverty, equality, sustainable development etc. cannot proceed by deficient means, for example by top-down dictates that often break communities apart into antagonistic opposers rather than joining them together as friends, or by attacks on the dignity and freedom of the person or family, or which brings us to our next image.

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THE SMILE OF THE MOTHER

When we look at the goal areas - poverty, lack of education, equality and development, disease, environmental problems etc. – it is easy to see that they are all symptoms, all are related and all center on the person. And so the solutions must be integrated, and based on an integral philosophical anthropology, one that takes into account the whole person in all his or her reality: as a mother, a father, a friend, a worker, a citizen – not just one aspect. When I spoke of Gandhi’s Watch I said that the MDGs do not specify the difference between the ends and the means to reach them; here, my point is that they hold up the person and dignity without specifying what they MEAN by “person” and “dignity.”

Persons have come under attack in so many ways: they have been reduced to pawns of powerful states on an international chessboard, to end consumers for corporations, to psychological subjects or egos, to entities that must have rational consciousness (so that the unborn, or the mentally ill, or those with Alzheimer’s or Down’s Syndrome are NOT persons). It is as if they had no standing, no dignity, unless it was granted to them by the state. If the meaning and dignity of a person is so capricious and arbitrary, depending on external evaluations, then like the thief or the consumer in Gandhi’s story, the advantage would fall to whoever is stronger or richer.

How is the person seen in Gandhi’s third example? Hans Urs von Balthasar gave us the image of “The Smile of the Mother” to illustrate some truths about ontology and phenomenology. Here it is enough to say that this original face-to-face encounter cannot be reduced to psychology alone, but unfolds the very meaning of being, especially that in this experience we first awaken to a reality that we did not create and which precedes us. It also makes it clear that persons are neither isolated units, nor replaceable, interchangeable cogs in mass social “populations.” The child knows himself or herself as one with the mother, in a very real sense, while also coming to see that he or she is different from the mother. Because persons are ontologically constituted by a kind of “unity-indiversity,” the paradox is that the more we are in relation, the more we are fully, uniquely ourselves.

² Martin Luther King, Jr. “The Role of the Church in Facing the Nation’s Chief Moral Dilemma.” In King, 1991, p. 140.

All human development unfolds from this point, extending from the mother, to wonder at other persons, to all of nature. The roots of the MDGs begin inside the family: we first learn the dignity – being unique and irreplaceable and beloved - in the family; our families are our first educators; and our equality – our equal worth, even though we have different roles -- is first manifested within the family.

And compare the relations of force, utility, and covenant. A thief, dictator, or bureaucrat, can hold a real or metaphorical gun to your head to get what they want. That's a relationship of coercion. A buyer enters an exchange, a contract --- sell me that watch, and I will pay you \$500 --- and once we each have what we want, the relationship is over. That is a relationship of utility (and even a bit of coercion: because contracts are external to the person, they require laws to enforce them). In the family, a covenantal relationship, an alliance of care and affection that is promised without regard to what we get in return, is based on shared goals and the giving of oneself, not simply exchanging an item, in coercion or utility.

No one is suggesting that we eliminate utility, law, or contracts; rather, we should see them inside something larger, what the Millennium Declaration calls "the common house of the entire human family." The point of "The Smile of the Mother" is that the MDGs will not be attainable if families and their innate dignity are reduced in any way, and even the necessary market functions will not succeed without the social cohesion of the family and the community, without mutual trust and true solidarity.

THE BOOK OF NATURE

Some philosophies simply are not adequate to reality: one extreme sees animals and the rest of nature as nothing more than resources for exploitation, and another is so concerned about the environment that it demeans the work and dignity of persons. Persons and the environment are often pitted against each, and there are ideological antagonisms directed against human life and dignity.

The third image, "**The Book of Nature**" has been used for thousands of years by theologians, philosophers, poets and naturalists to say that in a very real sense we can "read" reality from the world around us, a reality that is, like the smiling mother (Dante spoke of the "smile of the universe"), really there, that we do not have to be skeptical about. Benedict XVI said, "The book of nature is one and indivisible" and added that we should neither see nature as an untouchable taboo, nor should we abuse it. We need to take into account integral human development: both the environment and life, the family, social relations.

It is not simply that it would be "a good thing" to have sustainable development hand in hand with respect for life and the family ---- you cannot have one without the other. What I would like to do here is juxtapose two quotations, continuing with Benedict XVI:

The deterioration of nature is ... closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when "human ecology" is respected ... environmental ecology also benefits....It is contradictory to insist that future generations

respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves.... Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society.... Openness to life is at the centre of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good.³

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For the second quote, it is interesting that some ecologists and other scholars have come to the same conclusion. They observe that when grassroots movements arise for environmental justice, they are often motivated by the impulse to protect the home, the family, and the community, and they even bring us back to the "The Smile of the Mother."

The mother cradles the infant during feeding, and during this time the baby is ... perfectly positioned to gaze into the mother's eyes.....research on mother-infant interactions and their importance for both subsequent social relationships and interest in physical environments can provide ecocriticism [ecological philosophy] with a paradigm of how we begin to perceive the nonhuman world...the first relationship, resulting in the strong attachment of the primary caregiver (usually but not necessarily the mother) and child, establishes the foundation for exploration of the environment....⁴

The Book of Nature and the Smile of the Mother merge here: both quotes point attention to the priority of the family in promoting environmental development and motivating environmental protection: "There is no relationship to nature without human attachments first."⁵ Or as Wendell Berry said about the environment, "People exploit what they have merely concluded to be of value, but they defend what they love."⁶

CONCLUSION

The task list of the 7th goal, "Ensure Environmental Sustainability" uses the very generic term "populations." The family, and particularly the mother and child, are almost entirely missing from most work on sustainability. Children are occasionally mentioned in terms of the need to educate them about recycling or global warming, but sadly, there seems to be a rising contempt for them.

They are often reduced to rivals to other biological entities and so this contempt is often in the context of population control, especially in its most aggressive forms (the

³ Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate* 51, 28.

⁴ Nancy Easterlin, "Loving Ourselves Best of All: Ecocriticism and the Adapted Mind." *Mosaic*. Volume: 37.3, 2004.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Wendell Berry. *Life is a Miracle*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2001. P. 41.

pushing – and funding – of abortion to countries of the southern hemisphere, and tying development aid to abortion policies).

Wealthy countries tell the world's women that motherhood is an obstacle to their dignity and rights, rather than a constitutive part of their very identity as members of families and communities.

Finally we come to the end, where we turn into the kind of people we should not want to be: I have seen “thank you for not breeding” bumper stickers at environmental events, and a famous ecologist said about saving the environment that “the freedom to breed is intolerable.... If we love the truth we must openly deny the validity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”⁷

I may be a philosopher, but I do understand that environmental sustainability is extremely important – this isn't about bike paths for affluent Americans, but the destruction of communities by major mudslides from deforestation, massive, destructive, industrial pollution and much more. I collaborate with friends and colleagues working on issues of development and sustainability on almost every continent. They start with the intriguing question, “What if we turned things upside down, rethought the goals – what if we didn't start with what the Sustainability Report calls “cadres” of trained bureaucratic experts, or with institutionalized responses, but with subsidiarity, with the lowest levels first – that is, what if we saw that **families are the key drivers to sustainable environmental development?**

If I may close with my three images:

GANDHI'S WATCH: Gandhi said,

The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. They say, “means are, after all, means.” I would say, “means are, after all, everything.”⁸

Means matter, and should take onto account the relational truth of human persons and families in all their dignity.

The goals should begin where everything human begins – with our most primary family relationships, exemplified by THE SMILE OF THE MOTHER. It is the relationship between a giver and the recipient of a gift, not a thief or consumer. All the goals should be met by accompanying families on their journey, no matter how difficult. The

⁷ Garrett Hardin. “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162 (1968): 1243-1248. And James Lovelock, creator of the “Gaia Hypothesis,” said, “We need a more authoritative world. We've become a sort of cheeky, egalitarian world where everyone can have their say. ... It may be necessary to put democracy on hold for a while.” Interview with Leo Hickman. *Guardian* 29 March 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2010/mar/29/james-lovelock>

⁸ Gandhi, *op. cit.*

former president of Uruguay said, regarding abortion, that “it is best to look for solutions based on a solidarity that supports the woman and the child, granting them the freedom of being able to find other options, and in this way, to save them both.”⁹

This applies as well to the environmental MDG. The BOOK OF NATURE is one and indivisible.

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The natural world makes human development possible in all of its aspects – spiritually, physically, economically, individually and in families. And authentic human development includes and requires respect for the natural world. You cannot deny one and have the other. We can, and must, save them both.

⁹ Tabaré Vázquez. “Statement of the President of Uruguay.” <http://www.hazteoir.org/node/15519>

2. Towards a Renovated Feminism: Embracing Women's Roles in Motherhood and the Family



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UN Representative. CitizenGO

The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states the following: "The recognition of the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world." It is with this principle in mind that Dr. Gudrun Kugler, the Austrian theologian and jurist, affirmed that: "a human right does not violate another human right." And necessarily so.

However, women's rights, as conceptualized by modern feminists, pits the mother's human rights against her child's, whereas the rights of the mother are a life-and-death matter for the unborn, threatened with extermination by abortion. The inherent dignity of human beings is thereby contingent on age, specifically requiring that a child be in the post-natal stage of development and not in the pre-natal. If it is true that human rights are universal, then the womb must—instead of being part of a woman's body, as it is time and time again claimed to be— it must lie somewhere outside the currently known universe, in some non-person zone existing only in an individual woman's mind. If I think I want the baby, then yes she exists. If I think that I don't want the baby then no, she does not exist. I think, therefore...the baby is. Question mark. In any case, the mother's position of seniority and strength are the sole basis by which she is allowed to decide the fate of her more vulnerable counterpart. She gets to "choose"...because "might makes right," after all.

Leaving philosophical considerations aside, let's move forward again, as a civilization, by affirming that the inherent dignity and equal and unalienable rights described in the

Universal Declaration, are not contingent on a date of birth because LIFE IS NOT A CONCEPT. Life is a reality. "I think therefore someone is, and if I don't think, then someone is not": this can't be the attitude of a responsible adult, a responsible woman. On the contrary, it is a way of thinking remarkably similar to the skewed perspective of...a full-blown narcissist.

Instead we should declare that no child should be discriminated against on the basis of size or location. Whether a child is in the pre-natal or post-natal stage of development or whether she finds herself inside or outside a woman's womb...this can no longer be the criterion by which we grant or take away "equal and inalienable rights." Instead, as females, as adults, we need to recognize the rights of other persons, no matter how young or how small they may be. A renovated feminism therefore, is not narcissistic but respectful, making no exceptions concerning the reality of life.

A renovated feminism will be universal.

Indeed, a renovated feminism understands that the same justice that demand's women's full participation in all areas of life, requires us to recognize women not only as contributors to society but also as mothers. (More on the invaluable contribution to human society a woman makes as a mother, later.)

Any way you look at it, the choice a pregnant woman makes today has a bearing—a directly proportional bearing—on whether one more or one less human being walks (crawls, runs) on the earth tomorrow. This is why women need to accept the scientific fact that abortion ends the life of a human being. Full stop. And feminists need to care about what happens to humanity. When a woman is pregnant, she is already the mother of a child, and the child is hers unless placed in her womb by science. In any case, a child—boy or girl—has a woman as a mother, and a man as a father. Perhaps in the "Brave New World" we shall auto-replicate, but that world is still not fully upon us. And yet as a society we continue to glorify science and scientific facts—the same science so many call upon as the solution for longevity, youth, and even happiness—yet we continue to deny the biology of motherhood. As in: "My body, my choice." How can this be? Question: Is the mother at the origin of the fetus in her womb? (Fetus, by the way, is Latin for "offspring.") In other words: Did she fashion the fetus by her hands, by her own creative powers? ...In the image and likeness of herself?

Science and basic observation have both taught us that only women can be mothers. So as feminists, when we talk about women, let's also include intellectually honest discussions about motherhood, and about maternal care. In the current high-profile battle against breast cancer, for example, there is little public mention of abortion and oral contraceptive-use as major risk factors. And yet there is clear evidence to suggest it. An Indian study published in December 2013 showed that women who had an abortion have a 626% greater risk of developing breast cancer, and the consumption of oral contraceptives increases the risk to 950%. If these sorts of studies are scientifically flawed, then evidence should be provided to support the claim, by their detractors. Instead, better cancer screening, and an increased investment in cancer care are being promoted as the only solutions. Almost the only solutions: because the response of

many feminists to the greater incidence of cervical cancer has been to promote an even greater access to abortion and the wider-spread implementation of preventive measures like the HPV vaccine. This is akin to prescribing chewing gum and smoking as cures for lung cancer.

Also ignored, is the high incidence of ovarian and liver cancer, because women have had abortions and not because they have had "too many children," "when they were too young," or "when they were too old." The death toll during legal abortions and the many, many well-documented cases of unsafe practices in abortion clinics around the world have likewise been deemed taboo by feminists in their public discourses...As if legality provides women with automatic guarantees.

Furthermore, the "pro-choice" crowd has been unwilling or unable to reconcile itself with another alarming fact: no post-abortive woman is spared from emotional and psychiatric problems the likes of clinical depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, difficulty with mothering, anxiety, sexual problems, and self-hate, which too often lead to suicide. This, all of this, is inhumane. Full stop. Feminists say they care about women, but do they really? Moneymaking is not more important than women, women are! If someone is trapped in a corner, you don't hand her another wall.

A renovated feminism, on the contrary will be scientific. A renovated feminism will be humane.

Another statement one often hears from feminists is that the lack of public funding for abortion makes abortion a privilege and not a right, "putting minority women at a disadvantage." This sounds bad a priori, but let's examine the facts. United Nations headquarters are in New York, so let's look at the abortion statistics of minority women in the city. A city known elsewhere as: the abortion capital of the United States. According to the report "Summary of Vital Statistics 2012 The City of New York, Pregnancy Outcomes," prepared by the New York City of Health and Mental Hygiene, the ratio of abortion among African American women with viable pregnancies was 55.9% [in 2009 it was 60%.] This means that in 2012, there were more African American children killed by abortion in NYC than born. What's more, black babies made up 42.4% of the total number of babies killed by abortion in this city...when African American people number only 2.2 million in a total population of 8.3 million in 2012. "Minorities won't have equal access to abortion," someone said...? Feminists cannot be racists. Feminism needs to care about the effects of poverty and the solution to economic disadvantages cannot mean: "death to the unborn."

A renovated feminism will be humane.

Many countries still allow abortion to "save the life of the mother." When and where shall we be given a list of conditions for which abortion is the medical therapy of choice? In other words: Abortion cures what?

A renovated feminism will be scientific.

In any case, if the unborn child is a parasitic disease feeding off the mother to the demise of the latter, it needs be some kind of foreign organism or object—and not part of a woman's body. And as for the reverse-morality of "my body, my choice," in itself: even if a child is to be considered an extension of the mother—in a narcissistic conceptualization of the other, it would surely be so—how can its inalienable rights be strictly a question of her choice? Does she inflict suicide on part of herself? (In spiritual terms, this may very well be so.)

As feminists we talk a lot about "Mother Nature," yet we insist on rejecting our own gifts of motherhood as no longer being a dignified means of contributing to human society. *But how can we contribute to "all areas of life," if we belittle or dismiss the giving of life, as only a woman can?* It is strictly unnatural to assert that a woman's roles in the human family are of no consequence for the feminine ideal.

A renovated feminism will be rational.

A renovated feminism understands that the same justice that demands women's full participation in all areas of life, requires us to recognize women as contributors to society, also in the role of mothers in heart of the family. A renovated feminism will be universal, scientific, humane, rational.

I will conclude by asserting that as feminists, we shouldn't be sexist either. It would make us hypocrites and not revolutionaries. There is currently a worldwide movement with big-name supporters around the globe, for a new species of democracy that goes by the name of "parity-democracy." In a nutshell, parity-democracy advocates that women should necessarily occupy 50% of leadership roles in public life and in the business sector. But not that we should arrive at this ideal through a continued transformation of our society, but that women should be placed in positions of power by legally imposed quotas, and in direct violation of free-enterprise and the liberties of individuals.

In short, the implementation of a parity-democracy will be a deathblow to the notion of a meritocracy and will open the door to reverse discrimination. The fact of being a man would thereby be transformed into a liability and a handicap. This is sexism...I am reminded of what Erich Fromm said about the rebel, differentiating her from the revolutionary: "All martyrs of religious faiths, of freedom and of science have had to disobey those who wanted to muzzle them in order to obey their own consciences, the laws of humanity and of reason. If a man can only obey and not disobey, he is a slave; if he can only disobey and not obey, he is a rebel (not a revolutionary); he acts out of anger, disappointment, resentment, yet not in the name of a conviction or a principle."

A renovated feminism will be revolutionary.

3. The Family a Key Driver for Sustainable Development: A Human Ecology Approach



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Dr. Lola Velarde. Director for UN Affairs.
Institute for Family Policy

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been the biggest effort ever made to bring together people from all the different lands, cultures and religions in order to agree on certain basic truths which would help humanity reaffirming the faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person and promoting economic and social development for all.

I'd like to bring to your attention Article 16.3 of this Declaration, which states that *The family is the **natural** and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.* Let's focus on this word: "natural". Why did they agreed on this word... "natural".

Natural means "from nature; not artificial or involving anything made or caused by people" (Cambridge dictionary).

So the family is not artificially created, but rather belongs to what nature itself has developed for the human being.

Can we say that the family is the natural habitat of the human species? Is therefore the family the most suitable environment in which humans can be born and optimally develop their potential?

We all understand that nature is ruled by certain laws, what we call the Law of Nature, which have not been created by us but which were already there, and that we must study and investigate in order to better know them and be able to better respect them, because otherwise experience has too many times shown that the consequences can be catastrophic.

Ecology is the science that studies the relationships between living things and the environment they inhabit, so that knowledge of these relationships allows us to obtain information on the nature of species.

Humans are not separated apart from the rest of Nature. There are also certain laws of human nature, of the human ecology, which we have not created but have been given to us, and that we ought to know and respect, because otherwise, we will also get undesired consequences.

In addition to the irrational destruction of the natural environment, is the destruction of the human environment receiving the attention it deserves?

People are rightly worried — though much less than they should be — about preserving the natural habitats of the various animal species threatened with extinction, because they realize that each of these species makes its particular contribution to the balance of nature in general but, is the same effort made to safeguard the conditions for an authentic "human ecology"¹⁰?

The characteristics of the space where they live directly affect the way of life of a certain species. This is what is called the habitat of the species, the set of characteristics and environmental factors that define an area and directly affect their lifestyle.

The habitat is therefore the environment occupied by a particular species in the ecosystem. It is the space that meets the appropriate conditions so the species concerned can live and develop. That habitat has certain characteristics that identify it and distinguish it from other habitats in which the same species may not develop properly.

In order to study the human ecosystem, we need to contemplate in one hand the physical environment, or the territory in which human life takes place (similar to what the biotope would be in biological communities), to whose study human geography - and other related disciplines are engaged, and in the other hand, in terms of the relationships between living beings of that habitat and specifically with their own kind, the social and psychological environment in which life develops, here incorporating the knowledge of the social sciences.

And what do social sciences show about the human ecosystem?

¹⁰ John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus* (38-39)

First let's have an idea of the public perception on the social functions of the family. A survey made by the Institute for Family Policy (with a sample of 800 people in the region of Madrid, Spain¹¹) showed the following outcomes:

Three out of four (73%) respondents considered the family as the most important institution for society; 88.5% considered that it is the institution that meets their duties more effectively; the family was perceived as the most supportive institution, in the opinion of 80.4% of respondents, followed distantly by NGOs; according to almost nine out of ten respondents (86.2%), the family was considered as the most effective institution to teach values; almost all respondents (95%) saw in the family the best basis for support in case of personal or emotional problems; more than 9 in 10 respondents saw the family as the best basis for support in the event of economic problems; and almost unanimously, 98% of respondents believe that governments should support the family.

In Mexico, a much bigger sample study of over 8,500 interviews, showed similar results: The family is the most trustworthy institution in society (8.8 rating); It is the main support when economic problems arise (56.6% of respondents); it is the main support of people with disabilities (86.4% of respondents); it is the main support for caring for young children (84.2% of respondents); it's the main source of emotional support for "the love that is received" (76.2% of respondents); and finally the family is the main area of political socialization (50.8% of respondents).

The former gives us an idea on the perception of people, but what do social sciences say about the actual results of family performance?

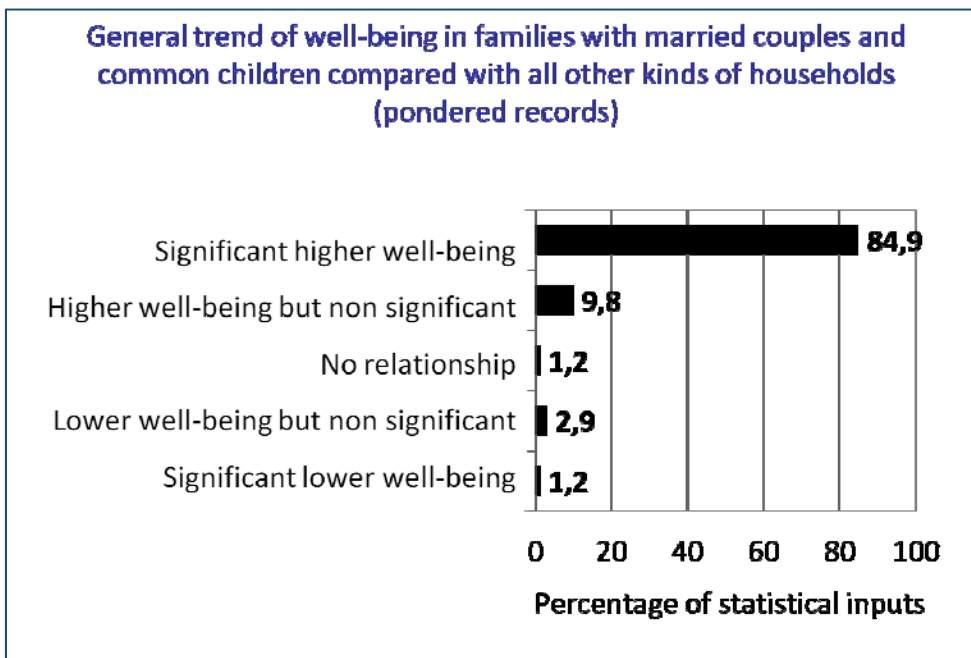
There are many and very solid social studies about the issue of the family and its outcomes both for adults and for children, but I have chosen the one I think is the most comprehensive one so far.

So let me briefly present the results of this review study by Dr. Fernando Pliego (Mexico), because it is the widest review made so far, gathering 351 scientific studies published on peer reviewed scientific journals, from 13 different countries: Australia, Brasil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, United States, Spain, The Netherlands, Japan, Norway, Mexico, Peru and United Kingdom. All the studies are based either on representative surveys with a minimum of 800 interviews, or on census records.

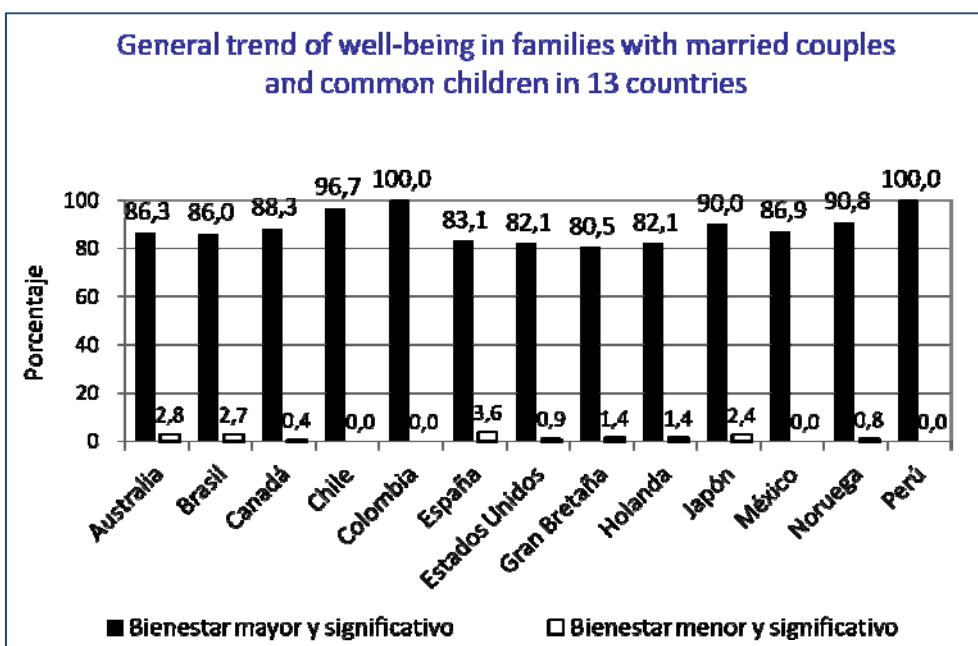
The 351 studies provided 3,318 records of statistical information from 13 countries on the following indicators: Education; Physical safety; Parent-child relationship; Couple performance; Sexual health; Mental health; Physical health; Income and employment; Housing; Addictions and Life satisfaction (happiness).

¹¹ <http://www.ipfe.org/Espa%C3%B1a/Documento/31>

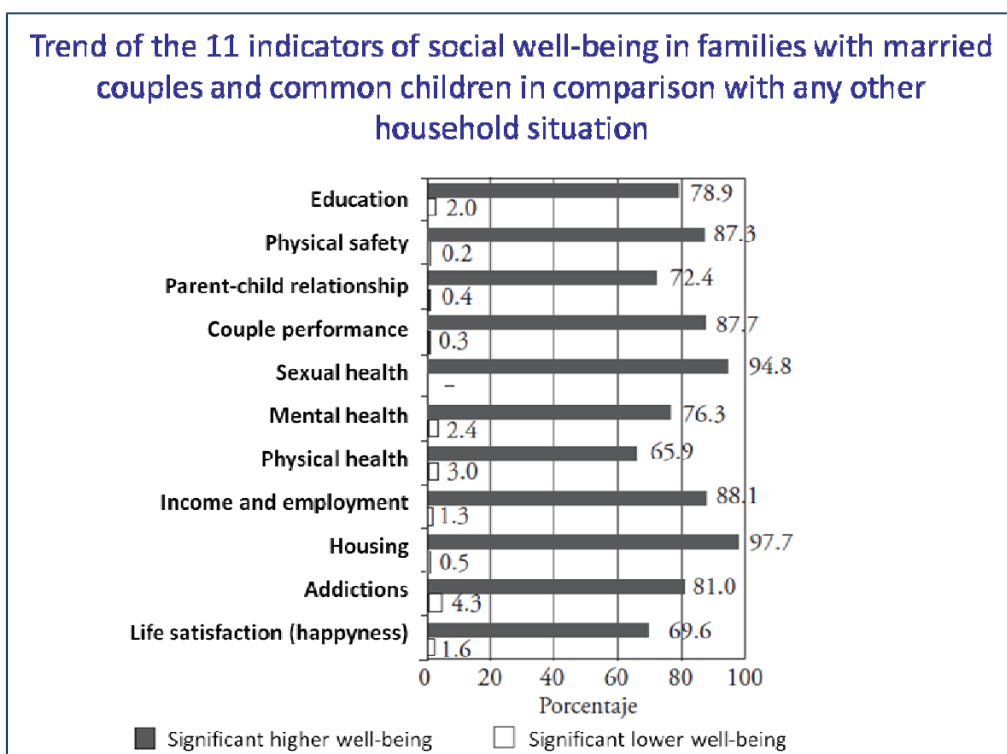
The general trend of well-being in families with married couples and common children compared with all other kinds of households (after the records had been pondered) is shown in this graph, where in 85% of the cases the family accounts for a significantly higher well-being.



The second graph shows the trend among the different countries, and we can see the same result, ranging from 80.5% in Great Britain to 100% in Colombia and Peru, the cases where the family accounts for a significantly higher well-being.



The third graph shows the results according to the 11 different indicators. In all of them: education, physical safety, parent-child relationship, couple performance, and so on the family accounts for a significantly higher well-being, ranging from the 66% of the records in the case of physical health to the 98% of the records on the case of access to housing.



In a similar way to sustainable environmental management, which looks for:

- 1) the preservation of ecological values in those environments which are the healthiest and
- 2) the care of those vulnerable habitats which are entitled to protection and restoration;

Fostering sustainable family environments requires to:

- 1) Acknowledge that the family plays a key role in social development and as such should be strengthened, and
- 2) Note that single-headed households, child-headed households, intergenerational and intragenerational households are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion, and are entitled to special care and protection,

as has been recognized by the Commission for Social Development in its recent *Resolution on the observance of the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond. (Feb. 2014)*

By the way, let me add that habitat fragmentation (due to infrastructure development) is currently the biggest threaten for biodiversity worldwide; and we might accordingly consider whether family breakdown may be also one of the biggest threats for human ecology.

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Therefore, echoing the recent resolution by the Commission for Social Development (Feb.2014) we would like to also:

- Encourage *Governments to make every possible effort to realize the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes and to integrate a family perspective into national policymaking;*
- Encourage *Member States to continue their efforts to develop appropriate policies to address family poverty, social exclusion, work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity and to share good practices in those areas;*
- Urge *Member States to give due consideration to advancing family policy development in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;*

Thank you.

4. Mainstreaming a Family perspective in the Post 2015 Development Goals



Mrs. Sharon Slater.
President. Family Watch International

A Window of Opportunity

This year, the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, presents a unique opportunity to focus on the family as the world comes together to plan the post-2015 global agenda. As Member States embark on this process, they would do well to keep in mind the words of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in his 2011 landmark report, in which he asserted that “the majority of the Millennium Development targets, especially those relating to the reduction of poverty, education of children and reduction in maternal mortality, are difficult to attain unless the strategies to achieve them focus on the family.”¹²

No development effort can fully succeed unless the family is expressly placed at the center. This is because, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “[t]he family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society,” (Universal Declaration (1948), Article 16(3)), and “the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children”, who “for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an

¹² SG Family Report 2011 (A/66/62-E/2011/4).

atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding” (Convention on the Rights of the Child, preamble).

As the UN Secretary General emphasized in his report, “[t]he stability and cohesiveness of communities and societies largely rest on the strength of the family.”¹³ The recent Resolution of the Commission for Social Development on the Observance of the XX Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond¹⁴ recognizes *that the family can contribute to eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.*

It also acknowledges *that the family plays a key role in social development and as such should be strengthened, with attention to the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members.*

And therefore, it *invites Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system as well as other relevant stakeholders to take into account the role of the family, as a contributor to sustainable development, and the need to strengthen family policy development, in their ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and future United Nations development goals.*

Throughout history, governments have recognized the premiere status of the family. Indeed, 110 countries have formally recognized its importance in their constitutions¹⁵ and commitments were made both at Beijing and Copenhagen to enact policies *“that strengthen the family and contribute to its stability.”*¹⁶ Yet, to date, these government commitments remain largely unfulfilled.

Could it be that the global community has not been as successful as hoped for in eradicating poverty, educating children, preventing disease and death, and achieving the full and fair participation of women in society because of this one primary reason: we have largely ignored the most fundamental mechanism for achieving those goals?

The Cost of Family Breakdown to Governments

Historians, social scientists, and economists warn that when families fail nations are weakened and economies decline. This is because when families break down, governments must pick up the pieces and provide the financial and social safety nets for the individual family members. In contrast, when families are strong, nations are strong as the children produced by stable families become positive contributors to the economy and to society at large.

Children are the greatest assets of any nation, but when children are deprived of a stable family environment, they can be burdens instead of contributors. No government program can adequately substitute for the role of strong, stable families in producing quality human capital.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Recommendation of the Commission for Social Development to the ECOSOC (E/CN.5/2014/L.5).

¹⁵ See Appendix A for list of countries and excerpts from their constitutions. Information researched by E. Douglas Clark, J.D., and presented in “The Family,” a chapter in: Roylance, Susan, et al., *The Family and the MDG: Using Family Capital to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, 2012.

¹⁶ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, World Social Summit for Development, 25.

Consider the astronomical costs to governments from family breakdown. For example, the Relationships Foundation's annual "[Cost of Family Failure Index](#)," which is now widely quoted both in the UK and internationally, looked at the cost of family breakdown in tax and benefits, housing, health, social care, civil and criminal justice, and education. They found that, in 2013 alone, the cost of family breakdown in the UK was an alarming £46 billion, up from £44 billion in 2012.¹⁷ A similar analysis done in the United States showed that the cost of family breakdown is as high as \$112 billion each year.¹⁸

Nations can no longer afford to ignore the role of the family in development if they wish to have an effective global agenda moving forward.

The Family Creates the Human Capital That Drives Development

Children and youth are the future and, when properly nurtured and developed, they become robust human capital and innovators that build economies and nations. While most governments recognize that investments in youth can pay off economically and otherwise, if the family is not specifically recognized and respected as the unit in which children best develop, such programs can actually contribute to family breakdown and thus can hamper, rather than facilitate, development.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that a child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding and that the introduction to the culture and norms of a society begins in the family.

Responsible reproductive and sexual behavior, healthy attitudes towards women, disease prevention, food production and preparation, sanitation, income-generating skills, and sustainable treatment of our environment—all these are attitudes, habits, and skills that are largely shaped within the family as a child develops. How well children acquire these positive skills and attributes will determine the quality of human capital that is available to contribute to economic and social development.

Researchers Elena Cohen, Theodora Ooms, and John Hutchins have identified the "primary business" of families and how families contribute to society in the following four areas:

1. Families provide individuals with their basic personal and social identity and capacity for love and intimacy.
2. Families are responsible for providing economic support to meet their dependents' basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing.
3. Families rear and nurture the next generation to be productive and socially responsible members of society. This includes promoting and safeguarding the health, education, and safety of children.
4. Families provide protective care and support for their disabled, frail, ill, and vulnerable members of all ages who cannot care for themselves.

While many of the capital assets that families create are obvious, families also have "unrecognized resources and strengths that can be mobilized to contribute to

¹⁷ Relationships Foundation, "Counting the Cost of Family Failure: 2013 Update," available as a free download at www.relationshipsfoundation.org. Accessed March 6, 2014.

¹⁸ Kohm, Lynne Marie and Rachel K. Toberty, "A fifty-state survey of the cost of family fragmentation." Accessed online March 6, 2014.

community betterment activities.” As government leaders and NGOs recognize the resources and strengths of the individual family unit, they will be better able to access the family capital that can help achieve the Millennium [and the Post-2015 Sustainable] Development Goals (Cohen, 1995).

An Evidenced-Based Framework for Focusing on the Family

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The Family Impact Institute, a research organization based in the United States, has found that a family-centered approach that uses “a family lens” for developing and implementing policies yields much better results in many areas, including poverty reduction, health, and education.¹⁹

The Institute’s evidence-based framework for focusing on the family in laws, policies, and programs (without defining it) is outlined in great detail in its paper, *The Family Impact Rationale: An Evidence Base for the Family Impact Lens* by Karen Bogenschneider and Olivia Little.

This paper outlines concrete steps governments can take to (i) “identify ways to make laws, policies, programs, agencies, and organizations more sensitive to and supportive of families;” and, (ii) to effectively evaluate the culture, policies, and practices of agencies or programs to identify ways in which they support families and what gaps exist. This model can easily be adapted to the global level.

Families—A Nation’s Most Powerful Resource for Achieving Development Goals

Not only are nations better off when they ensure that their laws, policies and programs strengthen families rather than contribute to family breakdown, nations are also better off when they empower families to become contributors rather than takers. When families are empowered they contribute to the achievement of the development goals in very significant ways.

A dramatic example of this is Care for Life’s *Family Preservation Program* (FPP), which has operated in Mozambique, Africa, since 2005 (<http://www.careforlife.org/what-we-do/family-preservation/>).

The Family Preservation Program is a holistic approach to development that focuses primarily on working with families as individual units on: 1) education, 2) health and hygiene, 3) income generation, 4) food security and nutrition, 5) psycho-social well-being, 6) sanitation, 7) home improvement, and 8) community participation.

Over 14,000 people have completed or are currently participating in this program, which has targeted the poorest of communities with a high concentration of people living with HIV/AIDS. The program teaches families new skills; and with the help of microcredit, which families can receive after meeting certain goals, they learn to rely on their own ability to earn income instead of expecting government aid. The Family Preservation Program also instructs families on how to break the chain of abuse in the home and targets drug and alcohol abuse.

An independent evaluation of the program found that communities achieved the following unprecedented results after participating in this family-centered program:

¹⁹ Bogenschneider, 2006; Bogenschneider et al., 1993; Moen & Schorr, 1987.

	<u>Before FPP</u>	<u>After FPP</u>
Using treated water	3%	97%
Latrines	10%	96%
Adult literacy	40%	80%
Own a family business	8%	55%
Families sleeping under mosquito net	31%	91%

Maternal death – not one in over 1,000 births!

Evaluators also found that where the Family Preservation Program was implemented, school attendance was 30% higher than the national average. However, one of the most exciting successes of the Family Preservation Program is that the positive results have not only been sustainable, they have actually improved over time, even after families complete the program. Once families and communities have learned the skills and habits they need to be successful in the targeted areas, they continue to improve and can pass on this new way of living from generation to generation.

The Family-Based Stay Alive HIV Prevention Program

The Stay Alive HIV/AIDS prevention program is another family-based solution to a world problem, namely the HIV/AIDS crisis. Introduced in 2001, the Stay Alive program has reached over 2,000,000 African children and their families in fourteen African countries. Within Kenya alone, over 400,000 children and their families have received the program, which focuses on the importance of the family unit and involves parents in all of the discussions. Family and parental involvement in this program in Kenya resulted in a 61% reduction in pregnancy rate among teens. This program was developed by United Families International and is administered by Reach the Children (See StayAlive.org).

Family-Based Care for Orphans

The orphan crisis has reached an alarming all-time high with an estimated 180 million children growing up without a family. And, while traditionally governments have institutionalized orphans and vulnerable children, studies show that when children age out of institutions and are forced to live on their own, the outcomes are generally dismal, with many ending up on the streets, becoming prostitutes, or getting involved in drugs and crime. Institutions are also known to be magnets for pedophiles, and studies show that children who grow up in orphanages experience physical and sexual abuse at high rates.

On the other hand, children who are provided with substitute families generally fare much better. The Families for Orphans project in Africa supports families that take in children by giving them small cash payments to help cover food, clothing and school costs. With the support of a family, these children thrive and generally do better in school and in other areas of their lives.

The Role of the Family in Preventing NCDs

Too often the family unit is neglected or overlooked in health education and in disease and death prevention programs. This is despite the fact that the family may have the greatest influence on health outcomes for individual family members. For example, the lives of mothers and newborns can be saved when families are educated with a basic knowledge in maternal and neonatal health care, such as danger signs during pregnancy and how to address them, child resuscitation and CPR, or basic first aid.

In addition, one of the largest areas where families can make a difference in reducing health care costs and in preventing deaths is in the area of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

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The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) reports NCDs to be, by far, the leading cause of death in the world, representing over 60% of all deaths. Of the 36 million people who died from NCDs in 2005, half were under age 70 and half were women.²⁰ In 2008, of the 57 million global deaths, 36 million were due to NCDs.²¹ This means NCDs caused approximately 63% of total deaths worldwide.

Again, as mentioned, it is in this area that the family has a significant influence. [Risk factors](#) such as a person's background, lifestyle and environment are known to increase the likelihood of most NCDs. Many of the unhealthy lifestyle habits that lead to non-communicable diseases are learned within the family and passed on from generation to generation.

NCDs affected both males and females, young and old; yet, if the known risk factors were controlled, at least 80% of heart disease, stroke and diabetes and 40% of cancers are preventable. The social and personal costs, combined with the financial implications of NCDs, are sufficient and necessary justifications to include the family in policies having to do with health care and disease-prevention.

For example, the family can influence such lifestyle practices as tobacco use, diet and nutrition. Every year, at least 5 million people die because of tobacco use and about 2.8 million die from being overweight. High cholesterol—tied primarily to dietary habits—accounts for roughly 2.6 million deaths and 7.5 million die because of high blood pressure—which can also be linked to diet and nutrition.

Overweight and obese individuals and those who are less physically active are more likely to develop NCDs. Western-like diets and an increasingly sedentary lifestyle—all modeled and promoted within the family—are associated with development of NCD risk factors in different populations. Therefore, lifestyle modification interventions aimed at families to help them prevent NCD risk factors and outcomes are likely to be most effective.

Since food selection, preparation and consumption, as well as physical activity levels, are largely developed within the family, the family is particularly significant in light of the fact that unhealthy diets (especially those which have a high content in fats, free

²⁰ “Report on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)” presented at U Conference of Ministers of Health (CAMH6), Sixth Ordinary Session, 22-26 April 2013.

²¹ World Health Organization, “Death from NCDs,” Global Health Observatory. Accessed online at http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/mortality_morbidity/ncd_total_text/en/ on March 6, 2014.

sugars and salt) and physical inactivity are among some of the leading causes of NCDs, including cardiovascular diseases (CVD), type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.

The WHO stated that, worldwide, in 2004, “2.7 million deaths are attributable to diets low in fruits and vegetables”²² and “the intake of fruits and vegetables is estimated to cause about 19% of gastrointestinal cancer, about 31% of coronary heart disease, and 11% of stroke.”²³

As families are empowered with education and knowledge that can lead them to healthier lifestyles, non-communicable diseases can be prevented and costs can be greatly reduced. In addition, such behavioral changes can be sustainable as families pass on healthy habits to their progeny.

Therefore, a goal of NCD prevention programs should be to improve the lifestyle and habits of families through family-focused education programs and interventions.

A Call for a Stand-Alone Goal on the Family

As illustrated in the examples above, since the family plays not just an important role but a vital role in accomplishing the SDGs, strengthening the family should therefore be considered as a stand-alone-goal in the post-2015 agenda. Also, in the same way that gender equality is being promoted as both a stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting goal to be taken into consideration under each SDG, the family is also a crosscutting goal and thus merits equal attention in the SDG process. Once the sustainable goals are finalized, targets focusing on the role of the family in achieving each goal should be developed.

By empowering the family in the post-2015 global agenda, we can ensure that children are protected and provided for in the environment that will best help them become positive contributors to society, and we can empower nations to more effectively achieve all of the development goals.

Proposed Sustainable Development Goal: Strengthen the role of the family as a driver of economic and social development

- Proposed Target A: Establish national procedures to analyze the impact of laws, policies, and programs on family stability and autonomy.
- Proposed Family Target B: Mainstream a family perspective in the sustainable development goals by establishing, where appropriate, measurable family-focused targets under each goal and identifying and implementing evidence-based /family-based /and family-sensitive approaches for achieving them.

²² World Health Organization. The world health report. Reducing risks, promoting healthy life. Geneva, 2002).

²³ The global burden of disease. World Health Organization, Geneva, 2008.

A Call to Action

This document has identified various ways in which families can provide significant contributions to the achievement of the post-2015 sustainable development goals. It has also shown that when families are respected and empowered, efforts to achieve development goals are much more likely to succeed.

If we hope to lift people out of poverty, ensure the education of our children, eradicate maternal and child mortality, eliminate disease, elevate women and create a fair, equitable and sustainable world for all, we must shift the rhetoric from merely appreciating families to prioritizing them as worthy of study, investment, and partnership.

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During this the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, it is time to put the family at the center of the global agenda because as the family goes, so go the children, so goes the nation, so goes the world. It is time to invest in the family.

We, therefore, call upon all UN Member States, UN Agencies, and civil society to put the family at the center of the post-2015 development agenda by adopting a stand-alone goal to strengthen the role of the family as a driver of sustainable economic and social development and to establish a family-focused target under each of the other goals.

Tuesday, 18th March
12:30 - 2:00 pm

United Nations New York

**58th Commission on the
Status of Women -
Parallel Event.**

Hardin Room, Church Center
United Nations (CCUN); 777
United Nations Plaza; New York,
NY 10017

FAMILY, MOTHERHOOD & DEVELOPMENT GOALS



2014 - TWENTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE FAMILY



Organiser:
Institute for Family Policy (IPF)

Summary

2014 marks the 20th Anniversary of the International Year for the Family, and the priority theme of the 58th session of the Commission is "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls".

Challenge 1.

A renovated environmentalism considers the "Book of Nature" as one and indivisible, and emphasizes the dignity of each human life, unique and unrepeatable. Our duties to people and to the environment are inseparable.

Challenge 2.

A renovated feminism understands that the same justice that demands women's full participation in all areas of life requires us to recognize women not only as contributors to society but as mothers.

Challenge 3.

Human ecology, based on the best empirical evidence, reminds us that the ideal habitat in which humans can be born and optimally develop their potential is a stable family - and thus founded on a permanent commitment (marriage) - in which the love of man and woman (father and mother) create the suitable living environment.

Challenge 4.

We call upon all UN Member States, UN Agencies, and civil society to put the family at the center of the post 2015 development agenda by adopting a stand-alone goal to strengthen the role of the family as a driver of sustainable economic and social development.

Speakers:

Dr. Mary Taylor

Consulting Editor, *Communio International Review* North American Edition.

***The Need for a New Environmentalism
Embracing Human Life.***

Ms. Alejandra Fabris

UN Representative. CitizenGO.

***Towards a Renovated Feminism
Embracing Women's Roles in
Motherhood and the Family.***

Dr. Lola Velarde

Director for UN Affairs. Institute for Family Policy.

***The Family as a Key Driver for
Sustainable Development: A Human
Ecology Approach.***

Mrs. Sharon Slater

President. Family Watch International.

***20th Anniversary of the International
Year of the Family: A Proposal for a
stand-alone Sustainable Development
Goal (SDG): Strengthen the role of the
family as a driver of development.***

Co-Sponsoring:

Institute for Family Policy · CitizenGO · Family Watch International · Be Woman · Construye · European Center for Law and Justice · International Solidarity & Human Rights Institute · Priests for Life · Fundación Madriona · Profesionales por la Ética · Society of Catholic Social Scientists

