



FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 18TH INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CONGRESS

The families from fifty-one countries attending the 18th International Family Congress in Valencia and the national, regional and local family organizations which they represent sign the following

Declaration

Considering the importance of the family as the main actor for human rights, the welfare and stability of which guarantees the future of society and the State ¹.

Recalling that, as stated by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/24, 7th Session, 10 October 1994), “the family is an essential agent for creating awareness and preservation of human rights, and respect for human values, cultural identity and heritage, and other civilizations”, because it is the place where these values and rights stem from, are respected, conveyed and where they acquire their true status ².

Convinced that the rights of the family cannot be limited to only the rights of its members and therefore, as a social subject, the family has its own rights that society and the State have a duty to recognize and protect.

Bearing in mind that the family, as a community of life and love, is able to renew society as a school for the fundamental rights of justice, peace, solidarity, acceptance of diversity and true equality ³.

¹ As established in the Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR Art.16.3), “The family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by Society and State”. And also in Art.23 International Covenant on civil and political rights (CCPR, 1966), “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.”

² As established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989, Art.18), “States parties shall use their best effort to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents shall have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.”

³ As established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989, Preamble), “Convinced that the family, as the fundamental unit of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particular children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community... Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding”. And also art.29, “Education of children should be directed to... full respect of human rights, development of his personality, talents and abilities, respect for child’s parents, his cultural identity language and values, and natural environment, preparation of the child for responsible life in free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.”

Address

To the United Nations Organization, international bodies and the governments of the various States and request them to implement the following

Proposals

According to the Report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (13 July 2009), “recommend that Governments establish an institutional mechanism, if they have not already done so, such as a Ministry of Family or focal point for family policy within an existing Ministry, with sufficient organizational, fiscal and human resources capacity to promote the family as a policy priority; develop family protection measures; ensure that all legislation considers the roles and rights of the family and family members; and promote partnership with all family stakeholders at different levels of governance.”

Moreover, according to such Report, “invite Governments to recall that, in its resolution 59/111, the General Assembly decided to celebrate the anniversary of the International Year of the Family on a 10-year basis and further invite Governments to begin preparations for the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 and use the anniversary to advance family policymaking.”

To encourage and promote the fulfillment of the mission of the United Nations Programme on the family, in particular regarding “promote the integration of a family perspective into policy-making at the national, regional and international levels” and “support family research and diagnostic studies.”

To request that this family perspective is considered in the projects to achieve the Millennium Development Goals 4 and, as already mentioned in the Declaration of Rome, at the previous International Family Congress, “awareness-raising and educational campaigns should be carried out in member states in order to enable parents to carry out their role as the first and foremost educators of their children. In order to achieve this goal, steps to provide a work/life balance to help rather than penalise parents for spending time with their children should be promoted, family stability and cohesion among family members should be promoted, and initiatives to advise and train parents should be supported.”

In Valencia, on 2 October 2010.

⁴ For this reasons and in order to monitor and encourage this objectives, we urge also UN Secretariat to allocate more resources, economic and personal, to the UN Programme on the Family to be able to undertake this responsibilities, and also request that States should inform about the measures they undertake to protect family, as it is established in the Human Rights Committee, General Comment 19, Art.23 (Thirty-ninth session, 1990), “Ensuring the protection provided for under article 23 of the Covenant requires that States parties should adopt legislative, administrative or other measures. States parties should provide detailed information concerning the nature of such measures and the means whereby their effective implementation is assured. In fact, since the Covenant also recognizes the right of the family to protection by society, States parties' reports should indicate how the necessary protection is granted to the family by the State and other social institutions, whether and to what extent the State gives financial or other support to the activities of such institutions, and how it ensures that these activities are compatible with the Covenant.”

And moreover, States should report to the Committee on the rights of the Child about how they respect and promote the parent's and family responsibility with their children.