



معهد الدوحة الدولي للدراسات الأسرية والتنمية  
**Doha International Institute for  
Family Studies & Development**  
*Member of Qatar Foundation*



*Since* 1978  
**IFFD**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



2014 - TWENTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF THE FAMILY

**5 June 2012**  
**9:30-1:00**

**Room JDE 51**

Raise Awareness Meeting

## Poverty, work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity

convened as part of preparations for the  
Twentieth Anniversary of the  
International Year of the Family, 2014

Hosted by

EUROPEAN UNION



**Committee of the Regions**



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*Speech by Mrs.  
Marina Robben  
President*

Honourable members of the European Parliament,  
Distinguished Authorities of the European Commission and the Committee of the  
Regions,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

As one of the organizers of this event, I am glad to represent here the International  
Federation for Family Development and to be able now to confirm our strong will to  
support United Nations in the preparations for the 20th Anniversary of the  
International Year of the Family and every initiative to promote the role of family in  
society and, particularly, the vital mission of parents in child rearing throughout the  
World.

As you probably know, our Family Enrichment Programs started back in the 1960s and are based on the case method, which applies the concept of participative methodology. This helps us to avoid patronizing or stigmatizing, but also to help parents to build their own tools and face their task in their own way, the way their children need. Our experience tells us that this is also very useful:

- to motivate fathers to get involved in an actual co-parenting education,
- to show grandparents their right place and
- to prevent conflicts in the same way as modern health systems are able to improve quality of life by preventing diseases before they actually appear.

Each year, more than 500 courses are conducted accounting for approximately 18,000 participants as well as over 600 events encompassing another 34,000 attendants. The Family Enrichment courses and activities directly benefit over 50,000 people annually in 65 countries on the five continents.

All this background was considered by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations when they decided to approve the reclassification of consultative status, from Special to General, some months ago. We don't see this new status only as a honour, but more as a duty, as the responsibility of contributing even more to the work of United Nations, with our know-how and experience and with the voice of so many thousands of families from all over the world, in a constructive way that makes easier the building of a more human and fair society.

In doing so, we totally support the United Nations General Assembly in its decision

"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",

as the Resolution 59/111 proclaims.

And we also put into practice today the conclusions of our last International Congress, which included

"To encourage and promote the fulfilment of the mission of the United Nations Programme on the family, in particular regarding promote the integration of a family perspective into policymaking 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 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."

Finally, I want to thank Mrs. Renata Kaczmarscka, the United Nations Focal Point on the Family, as well as Her Excellency Mrs. Noor Al-Malki Al-Jehani, for their presence here today and also for the contribution of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development to this event and to the Expert Group Meeting that will take place during the next days in this same venue.

Let me make a special mention of the Committee of the Regions and our gratitude to them for hosting us today.

Thanks very much also to all the speakers and to all of you for your concern and dedication to these preparations and to the well-being of families in Europe and in the whole world. I am convinced this is the best issue in which we can invest our efforts for a better future.

Thank you very much.