

INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) recognized the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society.

In every culture, the family has been the fundamental building block of society and societies continue to recognize the family as the primary means for people to live together and provide mutual nurturing and support.

Five years ago in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, the Doha international conference on the family was convened in 2004 under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned.

The Doha declaration was then, adopted reaffirming many of the agreed international commitments including those in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as an effort to encourage dialogue among countries and civilizations on questions related to family as well as to strengthen family sensitive policies and family support systems.

A strong family is indeed central to overall effort to improve social and economic development, create sustainable communities and increase global prosperity.

Today, however, a number of challenges have major impacts on families and which families, in turn, will also have a potential influence. One of these challenges is the evolving changes in family structures, particularly to have smaller families; with a weakening of extended family relationship based on mutual obligation and shared responsibility.

Other challenges include demographic ageing, migration, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, armed conflicts, financial crisis, media and internet safety, domestic violence, poverty, etc... Each of these issues is affecting the family to a greater extent in every country around the world.

to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Doha Conference and to address those new trends and challenges, DIIFSD (Family Policy Division) organized a conference on "the Empowerment of the Family in the Modern world: challenges and promises ahead"

During two days, experts from all around the world, representing Governments, United Nations, relevant international organizations, universities and NGOs gave attention and emphasis to strengthening and empowering the family as Institution through family sensitive policies since existing ones and programmes are more focus on individuals, with few adjustments to take into account the family structure.

The conference served as a forum for discussion and debate on family issues at all levels and for exchange of views and experiences.

One of the objectives of the conference was to strive to build on the Doha Declaration, to provide answers and guidance to National and International institutions by integrating a comprehensive family approach in policies and programmes.

The conference discussed six (6) themes: Strengthening the family as institution, Trends affecting the family, new challenges, family around the world, Family and rights and finally the Moral regeneration.

DIIFSD believes that the family will continue to be essential for human well-being and particularly for the well being of children as future generations.

It is important that in this modern world characterize by so many challenges we reaffirm and recognize the important role of this institution in the society and seek to support and enhance it.