



Launch at the United Nations

“ The Family and the MDGs”

Using Family Capital to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

14 May 2012

A New book on The Family and the Millennium Development Goals

A new book proclaiming the importance of “family capital” to help achieve the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be officially released on May 14th by the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD). *The Family and the MDGs*, with the sub-title of *Using*

Family Capital to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, will be presented to government leaders and policy makers at a book launch in Conference Room E at the UN, from 10 a.m. until noon. The launch is sponsored by the Qatar Mission to the UN.

The introduction to the book is written by Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. She states, “I am pleased to introduce this book, which explores how the substantial resources generated within the family—or family capital—can be harnessed to achieve the well-defined and specific objectives of the MDGs.”

The book was published with a grant from the DIIFSD, a member of the Qatar Foundation, based in Doha, Qatar. A companion booklet, with excerpts from the larger book, is printed in Spanish, French, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and English.

Created and authored by Susan Roylance with nine other chapter authors, *The Family and the MDGs* clearly demonstrates the family is the basic building block for development. “This book is not meant to be an academic treatise on family capital, rather, the focus is on practical examples that can be replicated by families throughout the world,” states Roylance.

Although written in an easy-to-read format, the scholarship is backed by extensive research, complete with footnotes for anyone desiring additional information or corroboration. Each author has also spent considerable time working in their field of expertise, not just studying abstract ideas from a distance. These are real-world solutions, using *family capital*, to solve real-world problems.

The chapters ring with authenticity and experience. Because of its unique new perspective, this book is a valuable resource.

Her Highness said, “This book begins an important dialogue with policy makers, agencies, administrators and members of civil society on strengthening society through reliance upon—and support of—society’s most fundamental unit: the family.”

Within the book, there is a chapter for each MDG, with specific ideas and solutions *family capital* can offer the international community. Preliminary chapters by

Roylance and E. Douglas Clark, J.D., combined with a foreword by Richard G. Wilkins, J.D., set the idea of *family capital* firmly in place, providing understanding of the key concept to the reader.

“Foreword,” by Richard G. Wilkins, J.D.

Wilkins details the benefits to society of a stable family life for all ages. He also gives information concerning the tremendous costs associated with family instability, both to individuals and society as a whole. He issues a “call to action,” citing numerous sources to encourage readers to focus on the power of families and the value of *family capital*.

“What is Family Capital?” by Susan Roylance

Roylance answers the question: “What is family capital?” and stresses that *The Family and the MDGs* is not meant to be an academic treatise, but rather a source of practical examples that can be replicated by families throughout the world. She emphasizes that *family capital* influences the future of children and also communities. She says, “The family, as the basic unit of society, can exist independently – on a very elementary level; however, it is beneficial to both the individual family unit and to the community-at-large to utilize *family capital* in a cooperative way.”

“The Family,” by E. Douglas Clark, J.D.

Clark’s chapter on “The Family” provides the historical context for the recognition given in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the family is at the center of all rights. He goes on to cite numerous international documents which recognize the family as the “natural and fundamental group unit of society.” Clark declares the family as “the starting point – the indispensable and irreplaceable foundation for all successful development.”

“MDG1 – Overcoming Poverty and Hunger,” by JastusSuchi Obadiah

Writing from Africa, Kenyan native JastusSuchi Obadiah shows how the family can help overcome the twin obstacles of poverty and hunger – to achieve MDG1. He gives concrete examples of families working together to improve lives, both of family members and of the community-at-large. He stresses, “Development...is

empowerment: it is about local people taking control of their own lives....As we empower families with additional resources and education to break through the poverty barrier, we lift generations to come.”

“MDG2 – Universal Primary Education,” by Mary M. Harris

Mary M. Harris explores how families can enhance education, truly achieving a “Universal Primary Education” for all (MDG 2). Education is in reality a family function, with benefits flowing to all family members. Governments ensure children receive a basic education by tapping into family capital. “No government agency, no children’s advocacy group and no body of educators can take the place of a supportive family environment and proactive parental and familial caregiver participation in the educational welfare of a child,” according to Harris.

“MDG3 – Gender Equality,” by Lynn R. Walsh, MSW

In discussing gender equality and the innate differences in males and females, Lynn Walsh deftly shows the complementarity of each gender, explaining how to harness the strengths of each individual in achieving MDG 3. She said, “Male-female complementarity within the family is the model for the world....” She points out that children have the best chance to learn how to prevent abuse and discrimination in a loving, well-functioning family.

“MDG4 – Reducing Child Mortality,” by Robert B. Clark, MD, MPH

The sensitive and difficult subject of child mortality is tackled by Robert B. Clark, MD. His frank discussion from a medical point-of-view gives basic information about how to increase child survival with basic medical principles, applied by family members. “The most successful strategies for improving child and newborn health outcomes focus on the family, leveraging the resources already extant,” Clark explained. Backed by solid scientific research, Clark provides solutions for the main threats to a young child’s survival.

“MDG5 – Maternal Health,” by Renae Morgan, MPH(c)

Four main problems associated with maternal health are covered in the chapter on MDG5. “From becoming better informed about maternal health in general, to literal assistance to a woman who is hemorrhaging after giving birth, there is a

human resource...not being adequately utilized, that can dramatically change the life or death outcome of a childbearing woman: the family,” states Renae Morgan. She includes effective and simple techniques for families to use with the problems of hemorrhaging, infections, high blood pressure and obstructed labor.

“MDG6 – Combat HIV/AIDS and Other Diseases,” by Terrance D. Olson, Ph.D.

Dr. Olson says that “to address the family unit is to go to the heart of the problems that produce AIDS,” and suggests “the group most likely to respond to this call are parents who understand what it means to act in behalf of the next generation,” because “it is parents who are in the lives of their children for the long run.” Olson cites evidence that values-based programs do work, and that ‘changing beliefs can change sexual behavior in ways that halt the spread of the crisis.’ This chapter also provides information and evaluation of the successful *Stay Alive* HIV/AIDS prevention education program for children.

“MDG7 – Environmental Sustainability,” by Robert C. Roylance

“Essentially, every country that has overcome abject poverty has targeted land and water resources as a means of bringing prosperity to their country,” claims Robert C. Roylance. The chapter on MDG7 provides solutions for families to reverse the loss of environmental resources, restoring productivity of soil, and initiating restoration and stabilization actions for restoring forests and deserts. In recognizing how families “preserve and pass on to each succeeding generation the standards that are the foundation for the future,” Roylance urges parents to teach their children to be responsible in taking care of the environment – making a considerable contribution to the well-being of their community, nation and world.

“MDG8 – Global Partnerships,” by Vincenzina Santoro

In the last chapter, Vincenzina Santoro, an international economist, explores global partnerships, and how families contribute to the process. She noted, “The policies, promises and pledges [of the past] have focused more on goals and targets than people, family and integral human development. Yet the family, as the basic unit of society, is key to development.” Santoro points out most partnerships start out

with the family in mind, and “the most successful development efforts clearly arise from grass-roots initiatives, often at the individual or family level.”

A delegation from the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development(DIIFSD) will be participating at the Launch Event. The delegation will be headed by H.E. Noor Al Malki Al-Jehani, Executive Director DIIFSD, along with Nada Frangieh, Family Research Director, as well as Amani Al Dosari, Media and PR Specialist, Acting Head of Administration.

Many of the authors will be present to answer further questions at the official book launch.