



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

Statement by

H.E. Noor Al-Malki,

Executive Director,

Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentleman,

I am pleased and honored to be here today and welcome you to this raising awareness day on “Poverty, family work balance and intergenerational solidarity”, convened as part of the preparations for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. I would like to extend my thanks to all participants and honorable guests.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the Committee of Regions for allowing the meeting to be held in this significant consultative place, to the International Federation for family and Development and the UN focal point on the family for their cooperation and contribution to make this important event possible.

The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon to a knowledge economy by unlocking human potential. This will not just benefit Qatar, it will benefit the world.

The institute was established by H.H. Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, the consort of H.H. the Emir of the State of Qatar in 2006, to reaffirm the family as the fundamental basic unit of society and to promote the family as a key actor in development through research, capacity building, advocacy, and proactive engagement in international family policy development.

The establishment of the institute flows from the 2004 Doha International Conference where the Doha Declaration was adopted, reaffirming many of the agreed international commitments, including those in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, as an effort to assist in the achievement of the objectives of the International year of the Family, to support United Nations initiatives pertaining to the family and to highlight the role of the family in development. Building strong families should be central in all efforts to improve social and economic development, create sustainable communities and increase global prosperity.

Our strategic objectives at the Doha Institute are to be proactive in information sharing, networking and awareness building, and to provide a platform in Qatar for constructive exchange on family issues, not only to discuss challenges facing the family, but also to identify and promote best practices and programs around the world that work for and with families.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state. The family is the foundation of all cultures and societies and it is the primary means for people to live together and to provide mutual nurturing and support.

The proclamation of the International Year of the Family in 1994, and the celebration of its 10th anniversary in 2004, focused the world's attention on the need to strengthen the family as a main component of sustainable, social and economic development. This attention is more welcome now than ever because the family continues to face many challenges around the globe.

Many of these challenges have an impact on the family and the family, in turn, has a potential to influence. Some of the challenges are related to the evolving changes in family structures and functions, living arrangements and conditions.

Other challenges include demographic ageing, migration, disasters, conflicts, financial and economic crisis, media and internet safety, domestic violence, poverty, intergenerational solidarity and work and family balance. A comprehensive family approach is required at all levels since families in every country are affected by on one or more of these challenges.

For the Doha Institute, the natural family is the best environment for the well-being of all of its members, particularly children. However, we would like to

stress the importance of avoiding being locked in dead end controversies. Rather, we should all focus on strengthening and supporting families. Mounting evidence from research around the world links poverty, unemployment, poor educational attainment, drug abuse and domestic violence to broken families. Strong, stable families, on the other hand, contribute to strong societies and they create a better future for all. It is, therefore, necessary to empower families in ways that strengthen their resilience, gender equality, and care for children to enable families to assume better their responsibilities and indispensable functions in society.

To contribute to the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and to address the new trends and challenges, the Doha Institute is organizing and co-organizing events like this raising awareness day and the upcoming Expert Group Meeting .The Institute has provided grants and supported research in different parts of the world on issues related to the family, in order to keep the family on the international agenda and to mainstream a family perspective into policy making.

As civil society organizations, we should capitalize on this opportunity to put the family at the center of development. It is apparent that, despite all the progress that has been, most Millennium Development Goals, the time bound and quantified targets to address many of the challenges facing the world will not be met by the deadline of 2015. The family as a main agent for sustainable development has a central role to play in achieving the MDGs and we should all strive to make the this point clear in all post 2015 discussions.

The Doha Institute has recently sponsored and launched a booked titled, the Family and the MDGs, Using Family Capital to achieve the 8 Millennium Development Goals. The book provides theoretical and practical solutions to facilitate the participation of family units around the world in achieving the MDGs.

Families, despite their economic and social contribution to societies, are seldom the focus of major policy initiatives as most policies are designed to meet the needs of individuals not families. We need more explicit policies to address the challenges facing families today. Increased effort is needed to convince policy makers that individuals do not live in vacuum. They live in families. A clear message is coming from those people who work with families around the world:

interventions and projects that target families as a point of entry are more likely to succeed than those that target other social units.

Let us take the opportunity provided by the Celebration of the International Year of the Family to call on governments to take concrete measures to strengthen the family institution and to improve the wellbeing of families through implementing effective national policies, strategies and programs that address family poverty, intergenerational solidarity and work family balance

We should encourage the development of criteria by which to assess the potential impact of all policies and legislations on the family. It is important as well that we all work together to provide and to promote evidence based research and data on the family in order to improve the formulation and implementation of policies and programs. By doing so, we will help to ensure increased consistency in policy making and that full consideration is given to families when policy objectives are determined and when the results of the policies are evaluated.

Raising awareness on the family goes beyond the celebration of anniversaries of the International Year of the Family and we should all continue to bring to the attention of policy-makers the challenges facing families and to demand increased cooperation and coordination in development of effective family policies at all levels.

The Doha Institute believes that the family will continue to be essential for human well-being, particularly for the well-being of children. We pledge to continue our advocacy for families around the world. It is important that we all keep reaffirming and recognizing the role of the family in society despite the difficulties and the frustrations. The cause of promoting and strengthening the family is essential, beneficial and worth doing.

Thank you.