

Doha Call to Action 2024

We, the participants of the International Conference on “The Family and Contemporary Megatrends” convened by the Doha International Family Institute in partnership with national, regional, and international organisations, and organised with support of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, held in Doha, Qatar from 30-31 October 2024,

Recognizing the significance of current megatrends impacting the wellbeing of families, including demographic shifts, migration, urbanisation, technological advancements, and climate change, Taking note of the technical work that led to the Conference, including the regional Expert Group Meetings (EGMs), that took place around the globe in preparation for the conference, Underscoring the pressing challenges facing families globally and the imperative for comprehensive policy responses that prioritise family wellbeing through family-friendly and family-oriented policies,

We call upon governments, United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector to:

General Recommendations:

- Prioritise families in crises through comprehensive humanitarian support, especially in times of war and conflict, as well as natural disasters.
- Place family policies at the centre of action for social justice, and design family-based social protection policies to overcome the intergenerational cycle of poverty.
- Reduce inequalities: Implement policies and programmes that protect and empower families in vulnerable situations.
- Strengthen families: Develop policies and programmes that promote stable marriages, strong family cohesion, and physical and mental well-being of all family members.
- Invest in research: Promote research and use evidence-based approaches to better inform family policies.
- Prioritise children’s well-being: Design and implement policies that prioritise best interests, recognizing the importance of positive parenting and life-long learning.
- Involve families and youth: Include a child, youth and family perspective in policy decisions, programme design and implementation to ensure their relevance, feasibility, and sustainability.
- Foster Regional Collaboration: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and good practices in family policy, promoting harmonisation and coordination among member states for an improved cost-effective implementation of policies and programmes.
- Integrate family education into academic curricula: Incorporate lessons on family relationships, intergenerational solidarity, and family values into school curricula to foster strong family bonds and positive social interactions. Empower school professionals with skills to engage with families and partner with caregivers.

- Establish Family Institutions: Create or strengthen dedicated government institutions, such as ministries, councils, or committees, to oversee and implement family policies.
- Provide these institutions with adequate resources and authority to effectively address family issues.
- Promote work-family balance: Encourage policymakers and private businesses to adopt flexible working and care arrangements, particularly reducing long working hours and promoting gender-responsive approach to work-family balance policies.

Family and Technological Change

- Protect children and youth in the digital age by implementing strong legislation to safeguard them from online harms and ensure their privacy.
- Invest in accessible and affordable information technology infrastructure to expand access to families in vulnerable situations, particularly in deprived and low-income areas, and during times of family transitions, such as migration.
- Empower persons with disabilities and older persons by ensuring equitable access to assistive technologies. Encourage the tech industry to provide the ability and language needs of all.
- Expand access to quality healthcare, especially in underserved areas, by leveraging digital interventions supported by artificial intelligence that include telehealth. Integrate these technologies into existing health systems and invest in robust internet infrastructure to bridge the digital divide.
- Promote digital literacy and critical thinking skills among all generations to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing digital age responsibly and ethically.
- Develop and implement ethical guidelines for the development and deployment of artificial intelligence and automation technologies to ensure they benefit society and minimise potential negative impacts on families.
- Bridge the digital divide between generations by developing policies and programs that foster intergenerational solidarity, mentorship, and positive interactions. This includes the adequate preparation, support and standards for professionals who work with children and families.

Family, Migration and Urbanization

- Integrate immigrant families into host countries through inclusive policies that reduce discrimination, promote quality education, offer healthcare services, encourage language competence and provide vital information about the host culture and society.
- Implement streamlined and expedited procedures facilitating family reunification, particularly for vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers. Prioritise cases involving children, older persons, and individuals with specific needs.

- Prioritise family needs in urban planning and design to create inclusive and family-friendly cities. This includes promoting interconnected data networks in 'smart cities' in line with family needs.
- Enact policies that provide paid family and parental leave, and affordable quality childcare, which grow in importance as families become smaller with limited extended family support.
- Implement resilient and sustainable urban infrastructure, such as green spaces and efficient public transportation networks, which promote healthy living conditions.
- Provide affordable housing options and financial support, including subsidised loans and housing allowances, to ensure that urbanisation benefits are accessible to all families, thereby reducing the development of informal settlements.

Family and Demographic Changes

- Support family formation and fertility by implementing policies that promote work-life balance, provide social protection, and acknowledge unpaid care.
- Reduce maternal and infant mortality by improving access to quality healthcare, especially in deprived areas and during wars, conflicts and natural disaster responses.
- Prioritise care for older persons and active ageing by developing policies that support both older adults and their family caregivers.
- Invest in education and skills training to empower young people and prepare them for the transition into the workforce.
- Address demographic diversity by tailoring policies to specific national and regional contexts, considering factors such as partnering patterns, fertility rates, child mortality, youth populations, and ageing populations.

Family and Climate Change

- Protect families from the negative impacts of climate change by implementing policies that prevent, prepare for, and respond to climate-related disasters.
- Reduce carbon footprint by investing in renewable energy sources and regulating carbon markets to encourage green energy transition.
- Strengthen infrastructure for families by improving building codes, regulations and data-sharing to ensure that homes, schools, health facilities, and other critical infrastructure are resilient to extreme weather events.
- Empower families by providing them with timely and accurate information through early warning systems to protect them during extreme weather events.
- Engage families in climate action by involving them in policy-making and community-based initiatives to address climate change and build resilience.
- Empower families as educators, responsible consumers and active advocates for climate action.