



UN DESA - Department of Economic and Social Affairs
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3 (b) (v): Family Issues, Policies and Programs.

Thank you Madam Chairwoman for giving me the floor, thank you also to all the Members of the Bureau, distinguished delegates, translators and conference room managers who will be delivering our oral statement.

Considering the agreed working definition that says that “empowerment is the expansion of the capacity, volition, and vision necessary for people to become effective agents of human well-being”,¹ the discussion of empowerment by this Commission is expected to focus on the participation in decision-making processes by all peoples as an integral element of development and as an effort in order to achieve the MDGs; the main framework for 2015 development.

From our NGO experience, we think that every human being is unique and trying to address empowerment one by one can become more difficult than to address family units directly. What we propose is to empower families² through the four dimensions of empowerment:³ on one hand **the social recognition** as the first level for family empowerment as families are the ones that find the barriers that should be removed to have active participation in society; **the economic help** such as tax benefits, parental leave entitlements, educational grants... as the second level for family empowerment and specially nowadays as we all know that the “family coverage continues to be a key element in the analysis of interrelations between economic context and the dynamics of social exclusion, particularly in countries like Spain. Finding other resources to substitute work income may be vital. One in five households with total family unemployment includes someone over 65. In these families, the grandparent’s pension may become an essential resource for the survival of the whole family. The number of families in this situation has tripled over the last four years and now includes around 300,000 families in Spain”.⁴

¹ Working definition offered by the NGO Committee for Social Development in the 2012 EGM on Promoting people’s empowerment in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and decent work for all, page 2.

² Those ones in which most of the people learn the fundamental skills for life, take part of any decision-making process, find a proper bedrock through which they can freely develop their personality and find themselves truly represented.

³ Key dimensions of empowerment given at the Aide-mémoire of the 2012 EGM on Promoting people’s empowerment in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and decent work for all, page 2 and 3.

⁴ Summary and commentary on the study ‘Crisis y fractura social en Europa - Causas y efectos en España’ (Obra Social ‘la Caixa’, Colección de Estudios Sociales, n. 35, octubre 2012).

On the other hand, the consideration of family as subject of rights can reinforce its third level **as legal empowerment** strengthening the institutions at the same time in order to respond to family needs; and the fourth level **of political empowerment** to ensure that the time, effort and money families invest in their children finds social, economic and policy incentive from the society benefitting from them.⁵ In effect, the promotion of sustainable development can't be set aside from investing in families or empowering them.

Talking about our activities and because of our General Consultative Status at ECOSOC, we feel particularly responsible for promoting and supporting each one of the actions included in the preparations of the 20th Anniversary of the IYF. IFFD conducted the European regional **Expert Group Meeting**⁶ in Brussels as an exchange of good practices in family policy. We will organize several events throughout Europe, America and Asia. In terms of research activities, the Federation publishes **papers** on a monthly basis that aim to analyze and precisely determine the main challenges families are facing nowadays⁷. Furthermore, IFFD organizes a **Side Event**⁸ entitled "Towards 2014: Promoting empowerment of Families" during this Commission on Social Development. In the same line, we are launching a **Declaration of the Civil Society**⁹ which promotes among other recommendations, the idea of the above mentioned global **Family impact report** that should be promoted by governments at an international level.

Available at: http://multimedia.lacaixa.es/lacaixa/ondemand/obrasocial/pdf/estudiossociales/vol35_es.pdf. The summary is available at <http://www.thefamilywatch.org/pprs/IFFDPapers15EN.pdf>.

⁵ According to the Secretary-General in his 2010 report on follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond, there is still a long way ahead, given that the very contribution of families to the achievement of development goals continues to be largely overlooked (A/66/62-E/2011/4, paras. 9 and 10).

⁶ The European Regional Expert Group Meeting was held in Brussels from June 6th to June 8th 2013 and lead up to a series of outcomes: <http://family2014.org/egmb.php> and <http://thefamilywatch.org/act-pprs-es.php>

⁷ IFFD papers and publications: <http://iffd.org/publications/iffd-papers/>

⁸ Towards 2014: Promoting empowerment of families. Preparations for the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. An IFFD Briefing at the United Nations. Tuesday, February 12, 2013 - 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m Conference RoomB - North Lawn Building - United Nations - New York.

⁹ This declaration can be online-signed and downloaded in English in the next link: <http://family2014.org/declaration.php> and in Spanish in the next other link: <http://thefamilywatch.org/act-daif-es.php>