

15 May 2019 - International Day of Families

Statement

On the International Day of Families, the signatory NGOs, accredited partners to UNESCO, would like to share their wishes and recommendations:

- Recalling that families are the basic units of Society (UN 1994) and the role they play in education, protection, health and socialization, hence, they should benefit from the support of States in order to protect parents and the rights of children and adolescents, in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Recalling the importance of this support within the context of today's rapidly evolving world, where significant upheavals can be seen in family structures, notably the increase in isolated families, sources of growing uncertainty and vulnerability;
- Emphasizing the fact that family-centered policies have proven their effectiveness in economic, social and environmental development and that the success of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals is linked to the role of families as active agents of personal, social and cultural change;
- Observing that the family, an institution recognized in all sectors, strives to provide support from birth until the end of life by informally educating and protecting its most vulnerable;
- Considering that families should be a place of intergenerational solidarity and acceptance of others, regardless of their differences;
- Taking into consideration scientific discoveries that reveal the paramount constructive role of the first three years in children's lives for their emotional, physical, cognitive and social development;

Request that Member States establish or improve family policies in order to improve access to conditions for sustainable life, avoid situations of negligence and violence, and recognize the role of families in the social cohesion and economic development of countries.

They submit the following recommendations:

- Foster balance in the lives of families, the first place to learn non-violence, by insuring optimal conditions for Peace so that respect for one's word and trust are recognized;
- Help families so that they can remain places of hospitality where equal dignity is afforded to each of its members, regardless of sex, age, health or handicaps;

- Integrate the experiences and interests of families in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes in the political, economic and social sectors;
- Consider that social and family policies are complementary and not in competition with each other and that the education of all generations is an investment for the country;
- Balance family and professional life; take into account unpaid household work, that serves from the youngest to the elderly, into countries' GDP;
- Educate youth about their future family responsibilities in supportive programmes, wherever families find themselves in these times of planned or forced migration, particularly when their mother tongue is not used in formal education, and when cultures and environments differ.

By proposing these recommendations, the signatory NGOs aspire to participate in advancing the collective consciousness about the place and responsibilities of families within societies.

Signatures NGOs

Assistance to Integration of Demobilized Child Soldiers

International Association of Charities (IAC)

International Catholic Association for Girls (ACISJF-IN VIA International)

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)

Business and Professional Women International (BPW International)

International Catholic Center of Cooperation with UNESCO (ICCC) and Blas in Africa,

Maison de Sagesse

Make Mothers Matter (MMM)

New Humanity

International Catholic Education Office (OIEC)

Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire (OMEP)

SOROPTIMIST

World Union of Catholic Teachers (WUCT)

World Union of Catholic Women Organizations (WUCWO)