

Declaration on the Rights of the Family

Signed by Elected Representatives

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Why the Declaration?

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Declaration on the Rights of the Family

Signed by Legislative Representatives

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We, democratically elected Members of Parliament worldwide, solemnly reaffirm what has long been acknowledged in international law, namely that the family, based on marriage between one man and one woman, is the natural and fundamental unit of society entitled to protection by society and the State.

We are concerned with the current challenges faced by the family. Recent social, legal and public policy changes have negatively affected the status of marriage and parenting resulting in family fragmentation and instability for children. We are especially troubled by deliberate efforts to devalue the family, this natural social institution *par excellence* and in particular, the authentic nature of marriage, the values of fidelity and solidarity in conjugal love, and respect for the right to life.

We fervently call for renewed efforts to value and protect the family as an essential resource for, and a vital contributor to, the common good of our societies. We acknowledge that the right to life cannot be fully effective unless the family and its rights are fully respected in law. We recognize that the family is a community of love, life and solidarity, based on the enduring bond of communion between one man and one woman in marriage, which is uniquely suited by its nature to give birth, raise children, and to protect and care for its most vulnerable members. Through inter-generational solidarity and the transmission of proven cultural values and practices, as well as religious traditions, it assists its members to grow in human wisdom, to serve others and to cultivate a greater sense of responsibility towards future generations, while ensuring that the inherent dignity of the human person is respected.

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We strongly endorse and support international human rights law based on treaties, custom and general principles that bind States to promote and protect the rights of the family through the development of robust domestic policies and laws that effectively tackle the devastating consequences caused by violations of these rights.

We firmly support the international rights of the family, and consequently, have a major role and responsibility in ensuring that these rights as well as the anthropological bedrock from which they derive are respected. We are alarmed that the very foundation of international human rights law is being deliberately distorted to advance certain personal interests and ideologies.

Accordingly, we reaffirm the following legal principles enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and thereby acknowledged as forming the basis of international human rights and the family.



Every human being, by nature and at all stages of life, is endowed with reason, conscience and free will. All human beings, both male and female, are human persons with inherent human dignity. Rights are correlative with duties to others and the community. Both rights and duties may therefore be limited by law for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the common good of society. Rights and duties derive from the inherent dignity of every human person.

We reiterate the rights protected in the International Bill of Human Rights and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty.

A man and a woman of full age, without limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry each other and to found a family; marriage shall be entered into only with free and full consent of both of the intending spouses; the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. Mothers and children have a right to special care and assistance. Everyone has the inherent right to life, commencing from the moment of conception until natural death, and the right to legal recognition as a person. Both parents, mother and father, have a responsibility to protect their child, and to educate him or her in accordance with their moral and religious convictions. Every child has a right to a family and to know and be cared for by his or her mother and father.


As Parliamentarians – we will work to enact appropriate domestic laws that uphold the anthropological foundation of international human rights law and give full effect to the rights of the family, in our respective countries.

As Advocates - we can and will actively engage with our colleagues in the executive branches of government to ensure that the foundation of human rights is preserved and that the rights of the family are recognized as a priority. We will continue to follow the issues that must be properly addressed and will actively campaign for a meaningful implementation of the rights of the family.

As Guardians - of the peoples' trust - we will ensure in accordance with our supervisory role and our obligation to be accountable that our respective governments properly implement and enforce domestic law giving full effect to the rights of the family.

As Individuals - we will continue to make choices that reaffirm the inherent dignity of the human person and seek to secure a healthy future for our children, with special attention to those who have been irreparably damaged or destroyed by breaches of the rights of the family.





As Citizens – we welcome the growing global support for the rights of the family among many diverse groups – including associations of families, non-governmental organizations, and religious leaders – who increasingly recognize that the natural family is essential for all.

We adopt this Declaration as our political commitment to value, protect and promote the international rights of the family, including the rights of parents and children, with full respect for the law.

We hereby call upon our fellow Parliamentarians to join us as we redouble our efforts to achieve full international adherence to fundamental human rights and the rights of the family.

1. 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (UDHR), the original French version of UDHR, art 16.1 refers expressly to one man and one woman: “*A partir de l’âge nubile, l’homme et la femme, sans aucune restriction quant à la race, la nationalité ou la religion, ont le droit de se marier et de fonder une famille. Ils ont des droits égaux au regard du mariage, durant le mariage et lors de sa dissolution*”; cfr. 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), art. 23; 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (ICESCR), art. 10.