

# Family Values and their Link to Economic Well-Being and Social Outcomes

Geneva, Switzerland, 30. June – 1. July 2014



In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the Women's Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI) together with the support of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) and the Fondation L'entreconnaissance jointly sponsored a 2 day Conference at the United Nations Palais des Nations. The conference titled "Family Values and their link to Economic Well-Being and Social Outcomes" aimed at showing the significance of Family Values as a remedy, as preventative and as a guideline for a healthy and prosperous Europe and world. The conference brought together experts from European nations and the United States in order to build capacities among allies in civil society and government, to work upon a proactive and convincing strategy and to regain momentum in reversing the current trends.



Opening Panel, Paul An, Heiner & Carolyn Handschin





## Day One: June 30



**Heiner Handschin**, Director, UPF Office for UN Relations in Geneva opened the conference, referring to the Human Rights Council Resolution on “Protection of the Family” that was passed just a few days before (June 26, 2014),

calling for a new era of family mainstreaming. Among other provisions, he said, this historic resolution reconfirms that. “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” and that the family has the primary responsibility for raising, nurturing and protecting children” (quoted from the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The internationally agreed re-affirmation of the value of the natural family to society and to peaceful development was the result of a hard-fought battle within the UN Human Rights Council over more than one year and many consultations, led courageously and persistently by a coalition of 16 governments.



Mr. Handschin quoted a letter to the conference organizers from the Office of the Director General of the UN in Geneva, “We greatly appreciate the information and the engagement on this important topic”.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by **Mr. Paul An**, Chairman of UPF in Europe. “The institutions (Marriage and Family) have been increasingly weakened, especially in Europe and the United States, due to a whole variety of social trends and forces. These include, of course, the decline of organized religion and of traditional

morality, the increasing number of couples who decide to live together without getting married and the advocacy of various diverse forms of family and alternative morality that have increasingly gained legitimacy.” He further expressed his hope, “that through this conference all of us will find renewed inspiration for the work of rebuilding the institutions of marriage and family throughout Europe and a greater degree of common purpose and energy to begin to turn the tide back in favor healthy and loving marriages and families that can truly be the basis for a world of lasting peace”.

### Session I:

#### Sustainable Family Values as a Means to Create a Stable and Prosperous Society and Nation



The first presentation was given by **Ms. Lynn Walsh**, Office for Marriage & Family of UPF and co-chair of UN NGO Committee on the Family in New York. She mentioned the consistent failure to include the family in policy at the UN. We are relational beings and we need stable secure

attachments to fulfil our potential as productive, responsible, fulfilled citizens. Even international wars can be traced back to a lack of empathy and a properly developed conscience in individuals. Marriage and family are the very cells for nurturing individual character and building trusting relationships in society. The greatest human achievement is our spiritual development. In debating these issues, our first question should be, “what is best for children?” In America the statistics point to declining emotional health of children, but the resources are consistent about the protective influence of an intact family on child development. They receive gender specific support from father and mother. We need to address the lack of human attachment.



**Mr. Richard Kane**, founder and CEO of Marriage Week International, spoke about his NGO's work to make couples' relationships "intentional" through the instrument of marriage. It is the best relationship to raise a

child. Although we must be compassionate of those who live together, they have fallen for a counterfeit-unintentionally. They mistakenly think that cohabitation is the same as marriage, but if we look at the statistics, it is not so. Women think when asked to move in together that it is secure, but men usually don't. However, at a wedding, a man knows that this is commitment. 97% of 16 year olds whose families are intact are from a married family in the UK. Also for 9 out of 10 of the babies born into unmarried families, that relationship will be broken by the time they are 16. Marriage is a written record, a ritual, vows, but moving in together will not be the same. The Swedish Liberal experimentation hasn't worked. Although the West boasts its human rights, we need to re-consider the unlimited exportation of western irresponsible morality that seems to be fuelling discontent and reactionary agenda among more conservative peoples in the world.



Director of the WFWPI UN Offices, **Mrs. Carolyn Handschin's** presentation was "Family: The Place where Human Rights Values meet Peace and Human Development". Clearly, the mere existence of Human

Rights, or a universally agreed Declaration on them, will not automatically bring a culture rooted in the values and behavior described within. A built-in incentive towards empathy and "Human Responsibility" that overrides the need for an elaborate system of enforcement is necessary. Patriarchy hasn't worked, nor matriarchy, but a new paradigm was proposed by Ms. Handschin: "Famili-archy" – a system in society in which the family unit is the nexus.

Parents, children and extended family members cooperate according to their interdependent roles to enhance each member's value and contribute as a whole and as individual members to development of the larger community. This should expand naturally to an inclusive system of governance in which men and women share responsibility similar to the way that parents' guide and nurture their children. Weakened families disrupt gender roles- as seen in the impact on children in cases of domestic violence and have sparked "trends" in the definition of family. It is important to maintain an awareness of the optimal norm/form for family while identifying causes of breakdown (prevention), similar to the way that the medical field handles sickness of the body. A healthy body is always the reference point.

### Session II:

#### Family Breakdown and the Weakening of Marriage and Family through current Family Policies



This session brought to the attention of the audience facts and figures from experts about the price of the failure of marriage and family, costs that are a huge burden to states and governments. Mr. Mark Brann, Secretary

General of UPF Europe chaired the session. The first presenter, **Mr. Harry Benson**, Research Director of the Marriage Foundation-UK asked, “Has government made the problem worse”? What does the data tell us about marriage?” There are very interesting statistics about marriages over 10 years old. Long term stable relationships outside marriage are the rare exception. It is the trend away from marriage that is causing family breakdown. Marriage is all about commitment, a couple with a future. The overwhelming majority of families that stay intact are „married“ families, compared to „cohabiting“. (Data: 69% to 15 %). Marriage is an ultimate act of dedication and commitment for the future, building a history and memories. Families break down when couples move in together too quickly, adding constraints before establishing dedication. Through inertia, they may choose to have a baby when not ready for the responsibility, adding more constraint-until overwhelmed. Is it government policy that weakens dedication and makes couples less likely to commit or is it by weakening constraints they make it easier for couples to escape? It is unlikely that governments can influence the breakdown of families through their laws, signals or money. But, the question remains, “can government help couples to stay together?”



**Mrs. Maria Hildingsson**, SG of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) based in Brussels, spoke about the value of marriage to society. She presented some factors related to family and marriage in the

European situation; individualism, ageing population, low birth rates, divorces, poverty and social exclusion. Family policy in Europe is more of a preventive one, without great expertise available on the issue. There are demographic concerns. High unemployment among youth makes it difficult to establish a home. This will affect the future dramatically. Young people are connected, but not related. Our low birth rate in Europe is not necessarily intentional and statistics show that many would like to have another child. The fact that family issues have become political issues makes it rather difficult to handle. We need to be able to talk about family in a peaceful way. Although sexual education has been compulsory since 1970s, what the youth actually ask is “how can we make lasting relationships?” Statistics show that currently young people have respect for the adults who stay intact as

couples and keep their family. Families should take their role as a social and political entity and as a Rights- holder.



The next speaker, **Mr. Stephen Stacey**, Educator and Marital-family Policy Specialist from Finland asked the question, “Is a parent’s right to happiness more important than a child’s right to get a good start in life?” States have redefined the social understanding of

marriage to being an institution that cements sexual attraction. Marriage, in essence, is about aligning human beings with Nature’s cycle of conception and birth, with children being cared for about 20 years by two opposite-sex adults. They must commit to fulfill the rights of their biological children to receive, on average, the best possible start in life. Politicians have to be very careful when creating laws around marriage. It is not in the state’s interest to only offer social and financial support after the couples have divorced.



**Dr. Anna Zaborska**, member of the European Parliament from Slovakia drove from a European Union meeting in Strasbourg just to speak at the conference -convinced of its importance explaining that she had to leave again

immediately after her presentation. She spoke about commitment to the needs of children. She expressed her concern about the recent discussions on maternal leave at the European Parliament. The role of the mother at home is not being taken into consideration anymore. Is that really what the constituents want of their representatives at the EU? The terms are changing, degrading. It is no longer about pregnant women, but about pregnant workers. At the expense of giving in to “politically correct”, we are sacrificing our future generation. Statistics show that 80% of children who are disadvantaged in the US are from broken families. We need to know our statistics better. We need fair family politics in Europe!



### Session III:

#### “Marriage and Family Policies in the West – where do we go from here?”

This session brought together some very compelling testimonies of efforts from the side of the civil society. This included reports from the popular demonstration just held in Stuttgart, Germany that was organized in joint collaboration with “La Manif-pour-tous”, organizers of a series of very large demonstrations in France against the government’s policies and promoting the natural family. Other civil society initiatives were acknowledged, countering some of the family un-friendly public policies being advanced by local and national governments in Europe.



The Chair of the session, Mr. Dieter Schmidt, Chairman of UPF Germany, invited **Mr. Karl Christian Hausmann**, Vice-President of the Christian Democratic Union of Stuttgart to report on the demonstration of June

28. Mr. Hausmann explained that unfortunately the pro family activists are always presented very derisively; as closed minded, old fashioned, unsympathetic for the vulnerable... It is known that some of the proposed new school curricula being developed by LGBT lobby groups are funded by governments. Local citizens spoke out, saying that the state isn’t respecting parents’ wishes. A legal specialist was asked to prepare a report on the issue of acceptance (of the will of the people) over tolerance. Based upon the professional and unified counterproposals launched from civil society, several of the proposals were changed, including one that demanded sexual diversity among teaching staff in primary schools.

The very striking testimony of **Mr. Dražen Vukotić**, Vice-President, In the Name of the Family-Croatia,



showed the power of civil society that brought about the Referendum in Croatia to protect marriage and family in the National Constitution through a constitutional amendment. Representing the

president of the association, he described how the recent lack of support for marriage and emphasis on „sexual preferences“ in public policy in Croatia caused an outcry among the population- once they realized it. It began with obligatory sex education for young children. Fearing that the new laws would lead to parents forfeiting their rights of family and adoption, parents responded. Research was quickly made and evidence pointed to the pattern of other nations like Spain where one legal concession had quickly led to another. With an extremely well-coordinated campaign, 6000 young volunteers were mobilized, 50 reports were written and 750,000 signatures (20 %of 3.8 million) collected in 15 days. The referendum demanded the inclusion of the wording “marriage is a lifetime union between a man and a woman” in the Constitution. Many government officials and lawmakers expressed their opposition to the referendum. As the youngest member of the EU, it was not simple to go against the “politically correct” trends.



A very interesting account was presented by **Mr. Walter Baar**, Director of the Institute for Trends Research in Austria. His statistical research has been in response to the question: Where is our world heading and why does the family need to be protected? 80% of

the population lives in cities and they have fewer children. The extended family is disintegrating. There is a growing economic independence of women and reconciliation of work and family. There is a growing individualism and increase in privacy among family members, change in partnership and growing acceptance of easy divorce. There is a globalization of industry and a systematic devaluation of family. But the conclusion is rather optimistic; for sustainability, establishing a family is like harvesting, you need to sow carefully at the beginning and realize that the fruit comes later. The extreme trends and anti-

traditional talk is causing people to rethink and a shift is perhaps coming. There may be a return to religion and spirituality.

Religions are instrumental in usually protecting the value of family.



Finally, **Ms. Josie Hauer**, US Department of Health and Social Services, brought a very factual presentation of what the US Government is doing to cope with increased family breakdown, asking, what government can and should do. Their preventive programs to

help reduce marriage and family breakdown invest a yearly amount of almost 150 million dollars. Children living in two-parent, married households statistically do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems and are more likely to have successful marriages of their own. The programs were created under Bill Clinton. They have attracted many couples and it was noted that the greatest benefit went to couples coming in with more extreme conflictual relationships. There were many different programs created. The Office of Refugee Resettlement has programs and offers various health and social services, including communication and language skills for couples to assist them in settling in America. Responsible Fatherhood programs were very effective because female headed households have been a big problem- especially in some sectors of the society. Diverse programs focus on the benefits of marriage, conflict resolution, and household management skills, some on youth and marriage preparation. There is a treasure of webinars and resources that have been collected by these programs that can be accessed. i.e... <twoofus.org>.



#### Session IV:

#### “The Unique Contribution of Civil Society and Faith based Organizations in strengthening Marriage and Family in the 21st Century”

This session brought together three faith communities and their best practices and vision for strengthening Marriage and Family.



Ms. Brigitte Wada, President of WFWPI-France chaired the session. The first speaker, representing Islam, was **Mr. Hafid Ouardiri**, co-founder of the Islamic Center of Geneva and President of the “Fondation de l’Entreconnaissance”. It is not necessary to

be an expert to see that the family isn't doing well. Individuals have to learn “we”. Family allows humanity to regenerate. Democracy cannot twist the definition of family. A family begins with two beings that have to be aware of their role and responsibility. They conceive their children with love and raise them with that affection to share that love and concern beyond their own family. The love of the mother will protect her children. It is very important that girls can be educated so they can guide their children towards a better future. In Islam, one should never choose their partner for their appearance or wealth, but their knowledge (education) and heart. In the long run, the physical beauty will fade but the beauty of the heart will grow. The Koran says whatever happens, we have to respect the family.



Christianity was represented by **Dr. Nancy Lyon Sonntag**, former US Legislator from Utah and current UN representative of LDS Charities. According to her faith’s teachings, all of us are brothers and sisters. Reaching out hand in hand is putting our

faith in action. No other success can compensate failure at home. Their three pillars are; faith, family and freedom, which serve as a guide through life. Marriage is a great engine of the economy. Every person represents the creative potential which is the real wealth of the nation. The foundation of the human capital is strong family life. Creating human capital begins as man and woman committing to each

other and growing together. Pope Francis counseled a team of UN representatives, speaking as well to the Secretary General, Bann Ki Moon about the importance of family capital in the Development Agenda. Waning religiosity and decreasing commitment to traditional marriage makes it a difficult time currently. Is it easy to keep fighting? No... is it worth it? Yes!



Representing the civil society at large, **Mr. Josef Missethon**, (CEO Institute for Education and Human Resource Management in Linz, Austria, expressed the views of the current, perhaps less religious citizens in Europe who nevertheless attach a great importance to

Marriage and Family. It is important to identify the roles and establish value skills, he stated. Define your values based on your family. Values determine our lives whether we like it or not. Each person's duty is to give answers to questions in life, learning as they grow. Values are the common denominator. They are the abstract concepts that orientate us, serving as a compass. At a time when traditional values are declining, it is important to the Austrian people to become more insistent to fill the value vacuum that is occurring. It is leading many to search for deeper meaning in their lives- and this is good.



Finally **Mr. Timothy Miller** representing the Unificationist perspective as a Vice-President of FFWPU Europe, explained about his personal experience as part of Rev. Dr. and Mrs.

Moon's Cross Cultural Marriage Wedding /Blessing and the vision

of "World Peace through Ideal Families". He described in detail the need for a "True" Family movement in order to create a new culture of commitment that is sorely missing today and causing a dangerous destabilization. Religion cannot have credibility if it cannot go beyond faith and denomination. If we cannot put deeds to practice, cannot live for others as an individual, unlikely that we can make a good marriage. Religious people have an invaluable contribution to make towards peace and prosperity.

How amazing that the place where man and women meet is the place where life is created, the same "place where love meets life and God". Love, life and lineage. "Father Moon" often asked us, what is most important among the three? Lineage, he would say. Lineage connects the past to the future. Mr. Miller pointed out similarities among the different religions' high esteem for parental love. We need to swing the pendulum back to rethink values such as purity and fidelity.



*Sergey V. Kondratiev, Russia*



*On the left: Representatives of the Holy Sea to the UN and FAFCE*



*Timothy Miller, Vice President FFWPU Europe*

## Day Two: July 1

On the second Day, the 2 morning sessions were designed to discuss proposals and recommendations for follow-up as a result of the conference; for governments, international and national institutions, NGOs and civil society. Each presenter provided their best practices and talking points with the intention of building momentum and solidarity among family policy advocates in Europe. Each of the morning sessions was followed by discussion. Below are some selected points from each presenter.

### Session V:

#### “Advocacy and Capacity -building”



**Harry Benson** of the Marriage Foundation-UK,

- Policy needs to focus on dedication
- Be confident and positive about marriage
- Appoint minister for family
- Distinguish marriage in the forum
- Incentives for marriage in the early years
- Support relationships in the early years



**Josie Hauer**, Department of Health and Social Services, USA

- If women bear a baby before the age of 20, not educated for so long, they are most likely to stay in poverty.
- Governments can massively educate men on the importance of their role as father.

- Reach out to the levels of family network to foster children. Education at an early age.
- America has federal government doing direct funding to smaller or larger independent agency.
- Programs to help couples to think through life decisions
- Target strategic interventions



**Josef Gundacker**,  
Family Forum  
Oesterreich, Austria

The European Union views families as a source of economic prosperity. Member states focus on:

- Child well-being
- Gender equality – when woman is economically independent, she would better adjust in the family.
- Balancing work and family life
  - The family is a dynamic form of human coexistence
  - These days, people focus more on their career because they want to be better situated in the society. o The primary needs of the child are not material but it is the love and care from the parents. o Family is not the only source of economic prosperity but it is the source of the human prosperity
  - Children sometimes seem to be the problem but they are also the solution. Life functions in the principle of give and take. -> Why human beings cannot establish peace and love in their relationship? Because violate principle of give and take.
  - When we look and think differently, we act differently

### Session VI:

#### “Alliances and Strategies for the Way Forward”



## **Maria Hildingsson**

- other than UN commemoration of international family day, there so many treaties, organizations and institutions so we have so many opportunities

Where do we go from here?

- Adequate income, adequate services and enough time to spend together. Without enough time, hard to develop the relationship between couples and the family
- Convey our vision and map the current situation
- Understand our opponents and their strategy: what lies behind their motivation?
- Identify our opportunities
- Set up a roadmap: maintain our positions and plan our next steps
- Cover all areas of concern – strengthening our networks
- Capacity to mobilize quickly: nurture our networks at all levels (local, national, regional, international)
- Provide reliable information ((Media and politics) about our issues, as well as positive wording on the issues of the families. Convey the positive message of all the benefits of the marriage
- Intelligence : need for monitoring

**Margriet Heijdemann**, educator and family counselor, the Netherlands

- Help children grow to their full potential
- Growing up doesn't automatically result in maturing -> A warm and safe relationship with a caring adult is needed -> attachment is the pre-eminent need.
- 6 phased of attachment: Senses with mother; Sameness; Belonging & loyalty; Significance to be dear to someone and close connection; Love. Being known.
- No need for more expert programs to get more interest of students or anything, but need more attachment.
- Behavioral based resources to encourage better attachment

## **Session VII:**

### **Closing Session**

This session was an opportunity for a few brief closing thoughts from the organisers.

#### **Maria Hildingsson**

- Each one of us can make a difference, wherever we are and whichever talents we have. Each family can make a difference whether you are married or not. Each member of the family has

big impact on the society since the Family is the basic unit of the society.

- Gender theory - difference between men and women whether it is psychological or physical or education difference.
- Everyone can make difference. Nothing is impossible if you have a good will and a will to work together. Go forward in positive way with positive wordings. We need to care for the family not only our own family but all the other families by showing that family life and marriage can be something positive and promoting positive image.

#### **Carolyn Handschin**

- Resolution on „Protection of the family“ is just a starting point, but a chance to reassess and launch a counterproposal to the current disruptive “family trends”.
- Solidarity and momentum are so important. As NGO's, we have responsibility to disseminate talking/advocacy points and clear strategy for the broader population to be confident to respond to the pressures of alternative views...moving then out of the defensive to the offensive.
- Set up NGO committee on the family in Geneva.

#### **Lynn Walsh**

- We have to have parental heart to even those who see differently than we do- We need unconditional love and living principles.
- We need compassion and need understanding - Human to Human connection.

#### **Josie Hauer**

- To make a good and sustainable partnership, we need to establish strategic alliance.
- Should also take a look at older generations. Health of the elderly (talking about foster children).
- Importance of education of the role of man at an early childhood.

#### **Heiner Handschin**

- NGOs and governments need to work together and use common sense in making family policies. It is important that the people's democratic rights are being respected and that government agencies refrain from dictating what suits most their agendas. A core concern is to protect children these days from very controversial perspectives on Marriage and Family. There is a need to strengthen the natural family and empower parents to take more responsibility for raising and educating children to become responsible and caring citizens in today's society, nation and world.

In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary  
the International Year of the Family,

## **RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS**

“Family Values and their link to Economic Well-Being  
and Social Outcomes”

Conference at

UNITED NATIONS' GENEVA PALAIS DES NATIONS

June 30 – July 1, 2014 Organized by:

UN OFFICE GENEVA OF THE UNIVERSAL PEACE  
FEDERATION (UPF), WOMEN'S FEDERATION FOR  
WORLD PEACE INTERNATIONAL (WFWPI),

With the support of:

THE FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC FAMILY  
ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE,

THE MARRIAGE WEEK INTERNATIONAL,

THE MARRIAGE FOUNDATION UK,

FAMILIENFORUM OESTERREICH,

LDs CHARITIES, GENEVA

FONDATION DE L'ENTRECONNAISSANCE, GENEVA

FAMILY FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE AND

UNIFICATION EUROPE (FFWPU)

The organizers, contributors and participants, by  
consensus, agreed to promote the following  
recommendations and action steps:

1. Organize conferences in Europe on the topic of Marriage & Family twice a year
2. Gather data in each nation to illustrate the social value of marriage and disseminate it
3. Lobby to government to lower taxes and offer other incentives rewarding stable marriages
4. Organise celebrations and campaigns locally and on a European level to honour family and recognise parents (Family Values Banquets, “Family Pride” Street Parades, etc.)
5. Establish a NGO Committee on the Family at the UN in Geneva (CONGO or independent).
6. Encourage the candidacy for political office of those supportive of marriage and family
7. UN – global day of Parents – June 1st each year – May 15th International Day of the Family – make use of these International UN days to raise positive images of marriage and family at the grass roots level
8. Improve media advocacy through Letter“s to editors in support of pro-family articles and policy development with collaboration among associations
9. Create a forum that facilitates ongoing interaction among pro-family advocates– suggestion connect via Face book accounts or Google Groups
10. Generate a weekly or monthly electronic „Newsletter“ to influence politicians and public opinion
11. Stimulate systematic outreach to human resource departments to advocate the value of stable families regarding health and productivity
12. Create Book Clubs to support young couples and parents in small groups
13. Create and share advocacy points to popularize marriage and family - positive terminology – „optimum human development“ – positive not anti – „marriage matters“.
14. Prioritize children“s needs in Family and Human Rights matters.
15. Formulate a curriculum for a pro-marriage and family education programs in schools as replacement for current sex education programs.

*Geneva, Palais des Nations, July 1, 2014*

