

UPF Office of the Family: UN Women's Conference Offers New Pro-Family Perspectives

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New York, United States - Almost 14,000 people, primarily women, came from all over the world to attend the popular annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations headquarters in New York from March 11 to 22, 2024. Every year the CSW discusses many critical and, unfortunately, persistent problems facing women throughout the world.

Thanks to a new initiative, the Conference on the State of Women and Family (CSWF), this year's program included topics often missing at CSW events: the family, marriage and parenting. The conference emphasized that family cohesion directly impacts critical issues such as poverty, education, mental health, domestic violence, and the well-being of women and girls around the world. This conference was initiated because for many years pro-family NGOs were often given very poor time and date slots for parallel events, or none at all. This new two-day CSWF was met with excellent and enthusiastic attendance both at the Millennium Hilton Hotel on March 13 and the Mission of Nigeria on March 14.

The steering committee for this conference was composed of representatives from the Universal Peace Federation, United Families International, the Heritage Foundation, and the Center for Family and Human

Rights. UPF sponsored a session on "Irreplaceable Motherhood and Fatherhood for Children and Society." It stressed infants' fragile dependence on their mother's responsive care for healthy neurological development, and the unique impact fathers have in the formation of girls' good judgement and confidence, as well as an avoidance of victimhood.

United Families International hosted an event titled, "The Link Between Family Structure and Escaping Poverty, the Less Examined Solution." The Heritage Foundation focused in their program on "How Myths Inspired by Academia Perpetuate Poverty for Women and Girls." The Center for Family and Human Rights, together with International Youth Coalition, hosted an event, "Supporting Women and Girls During Unplanned Pregnancies."

Nine other NGOs also organized sessions on an expanse of issues related to women, such as preventing abuse, entrepreneur empowerment in poor rural areas, the healing wisdom from Native Americans, fathers, and parenting. There was also a critique of the devastating effect of sexualizing children, as is occurring with widespread use of comprehensive sexuality education.

The Worldwide Organization for Women presented on "Measuring Equality Acceleration," the Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance discussed "A More Just Cause: Justice Demands the UN include a Focus on the Rights of Men, Families, and Parents," and Big Ocean Women displayed their numerous successes giving women in remote villages key entrepreneur guidance which lifted them, their families, and their villages out of poverty. Native American Fatherhood and Families Association went into depth about "Indigenous Healing to Empower Women and Families."

Family Watch International presented a hard-hitting session on "UN Family Rights Caucus: Analyzing CSW68 Agreed Conclusions: Why the Debate?" Christian Council International raised interesting issues in their "Exporting Western Ideology Instead of Solving Poverty." The Campaign Life Coalition presented on "ROE Canada," a documentary on the important record of employment required for insurance benefits in that country.

The CSWF organizers were encouraged by the positive response to this new forum. Here the UNDHR defining words, the "family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society," were taken seriously and literally. It is hoped that the synergy between family-focused experts, researchers, policymakers, grassroots practitioners and faith-based organizations, as well as people from small villages and cultures all over the world, will bring new empathic depth and insight to analyzing the serious and often inhumane circumstances of women and girls, but also of boys and men.

The family, when a stable, loving, cooperative base for life, love, learning and launching, is the source of optimal human capacities to feel and take responsibility for ourselves and each member of our global family. We look forward to more such exploration next year.