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Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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Dear Readers of 'Families International'

The following are excerpts from the statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, on the occasion of International Women's Day, which is commemorated on 8 March 2010:

"It has been estimated that as many as one in three women across the world has been beaten, raped or otherwise abused during the course of her lifetime. And the most common source of such violence comes from within the family. Amongst the most extreme forms of abuse is what is known as 'honour killing'.

Most of the 5,000 honour killings reported to take place every year around the world do not make the news, nor do the other myriad forms of violence inflicted on women and girls by husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, uncles and other male – and sometimes even female – family members.

In the name of preserving family 'honour,' women and girls are shot, stoned, burned, buried alive, strangled, smothered and knifed to death with horrifying regularity. [...]

Honour killings are, however, not something that can be simply brushed aside as some bizarre and retrograde atrocity that happens somewhere else. They are an extreme symptom of discrimination against women, which – including other forms of domestic violence – is a plague that affects every country.

For many women and girls, the family life that is supposed to be productive, protective and harmonious is little more than a myth. Instead, for such females, family life means physical, sexual, emotional or economic violence at the hands of an intimate partner or other family members." [For the complete text cf. below]

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SMAR-8398KS?OpenDocument&RSS20&RSS20=FS>

This double issue of 'Families International' also contains the proceedings of an International Forum, which was held during a Full Committee Meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family at the United Nations Vienna International Centre on Nov. 4th 2010, entitled: 'Family Violence Defies Basic Human Rights' with Dr. Tara Pir, which elaborates on the above mentioned theme.

With kind regards,

Dr.phil. Peter Crowley

Editor

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Special feature: Family Violence Defies Basic Human Rights

**NGO Committee on the Family at the United Nations Office Vienna, Austria
November 4, 2010**

Invited Presenter: Dr. Tara Pir

Clinical Psychologist; Diplomat in Behavior Medical and Professional Psychology
CEO / Executive Director, Institute for Multicultural Counseling and Educational Services, Inc. (IMCES) NGO/DPI/UN
Board of Directors, International Council of Psychologists (ICP)
President, Iranian American Psychological Association (IAPA)

I truly appreciated the opportunity to present at the international forum for the NGO Committee on the Family at the United Nations Office Vienna, Austria. The international forum was represented by countries including: Germany, France, England, Sweden, Bosnia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Czech Republic, Portugal, and others. Special thanks to Dr. Roswith Roth, Dr. Michael Schwarz, and Dr. Peter Crowley of the NGO Committee for their excellent effort in facilitating the invitation and accommodation process for my travel and presentation in Vienna.

Also, I am pleased to know that as part of the international forum, this article will be published to reach the target group of families internationally at the worldwide level. I announced in advance that this presentation may generate emotional reactions of sadness, anger, helplessness, and disturbances. I am hoping that we can be able to be motivated and move and shift the power of these feelings toward a collective action to help stop "honor killing," a culturally supported violence in the context of family that has continued over centuries.

The Concept of Family in the Context of Human Life History

Reviewing the sociocultural evolution of family/kinship from prehistoric to modern times indicates that family has had a universal and basic role in all context and aspects of society including economics, religion, ethnicity and culture. The basic and fundamental role of family over the history of evolution has been to provide protection, safety, and the survival needs of family members. Family violence is in direct contrast with the fundamental existence and meaning of family. Culturally supported family violence indicates the fact that culture has both supportive/protective and risk factors.

The Concept & History of Honor Killings

"Honor killing"—also called "customary killing"—is an extreme practice of violence which entails murder of a family member by one or more family members. The reason for these killings is because it is perceived that the victim has brought dishonor upon the family or community.

Honor Killing as a Culturally-accepted Violence

Honor killing is rooted in the power of core cultural and religious beliefs. It is a custom originating in pagan, pre-Islamic past and is based on fundamentalist interpretations of cultural/religious law. The cultural concept predates Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The cultural concept of "honor," "namus," reflects the sexual integrity of family members. When a woman loses her namus/honor, her brother, father, and uncles also lose their "honor" and it can only be regained through a violent display of dominance. Perpetrators consider the murder to be "God's work" and a religious obligation to purify the family and the act is often celebrated. Most killings occur in male-dominated cultures. The underlying purpose of "honor crimes" is to maintain men's power in families and communities by denying women's basic rights, including the right of marriage, divorce, and sexual relationships. The reason for these crimes can be as trivial as talking to a man or as innocent as suffering rape. Family dishonor can be perceived as using dress codes unacceptable to the family (such as not veiling or wearing makeup), engaging in alleged sexual acts, dating or having a relationship with someone outside of the family or culture or religion, refusing an arranged marriage or marriage to a cousin, or seeking a divorce even if from a violent husband. Dishonor can also be seen as obtaining an advanced education, wanting a career, being a victim of sexual assault, human rights defenders, or for merely being "too Western" or "too independent."

One of the most inhumane methods of family violence is the act of stoning in which the victim is pelted with stones until death. Other practices include rape or gang rape, stoning, stabbing, beating with a hammer or blunt object, removal of eyeballs, acid assaults, female genital mutilation, beheading, throat slashing, burning alive, burying alive, strangling, shooting, and immolation or dismembering of bodies. Victims are prisoners of cultural tradition that condone violence as a solution to social issues.

In some countries, “honor” defenses are woven into the fabric of the law of the land. Such defenses can be found in the penal codes of Peru, Bangladesh, Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Venezuela, and the West Bank. Unofficial community courts even mandate “honor” crimes in some other countries.

Honor Killing is an Invisible Crime

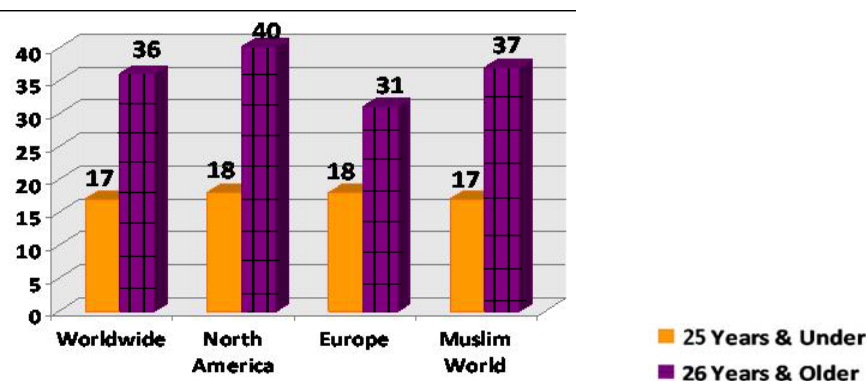
This crime is often disguised as a suicide or an accident, or that the person has gone missing. Honor suicide is a phenomenon of honor killing and a common practice to cover the crime. It is difficult to get precise numbers on the phenomenon of honor killings. Murders frequently go unreported, perpetrators often go unpunished, concept of “family honor” justifies the act in some societies, and the practice is condoned under the rule of many fundamentalist governments and governing forces. Perpetrators do not want to bring further attention to their shame. Families do not cooperate with authorities or researchers and often deny honor crimes completely. Another factor that contributes to the existence and continuation of honor killing is the fact that the 21st Century is still faced with oppression and gender apartheid, the very battle for women’s rights.

The Scope, Depth, & Nature of Honor Killing; Statistics

A study conducted by Phyllis Chesler, Emerita Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at City University of New York, and colleagues have produced the following statistics and charts. 93% of honor killings worldwide are committed against women. 91% of honor killings are committed by Muslims. 81% of honor killings committed in Western civilizations are for being “too Western” (based on statistics from North America & Europe). 81% of female victims of honor killing 25 years or younger are murdered by their family of origin. 68% of women who are victims of honor killing are gruesomely tortured (based on statistics from Europe). Approximately 50% of honor killings are committed by multiple perpetrators.

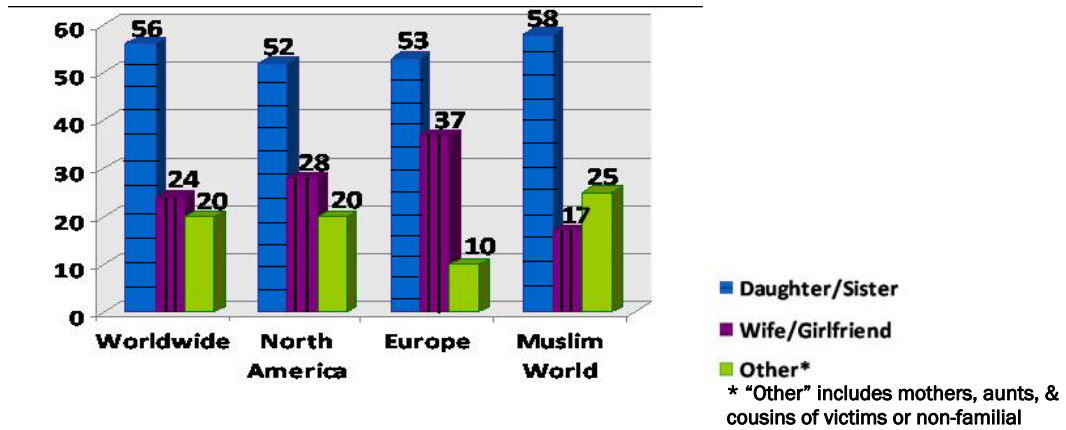
The following components of statistics demonstrate critical aspects of violence conducted in the context of family. Statistics are based on a sample study of 214 female victims (unless otherwise noted). The domain selected includes victims located Worldwide (collectively), North America, Europe, and within the Muslim World (predominantly Muslim countries).

Demonstrating the average age of victims, the following statistics have been categorized into two populations: victims 25 years of age and under; victims 26 years of age and older. Research shows that there are predominantly two types of victims: female children and younger women averaging the age of 17 (with research findings as young as 13-years-old) who are commonly daughters/sisters of perpetrators, and women averaging the age of 36 who are commonly mothers and spouses of perpetrators.



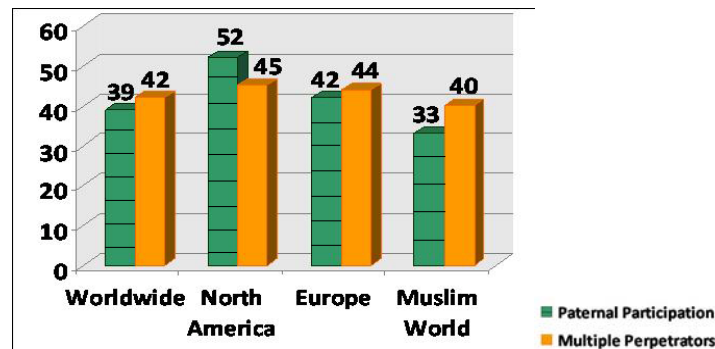
Worldwide, approximately two-thirds of victims were murdered by their families of origin. Of the total number of younger aged victims, 81% were killed by their family of origin. The following statistics reflect the percentages of victims

in respect to their family position. As seen across each domain, more than half of the victims are daughters or sisters of the perpetrators.



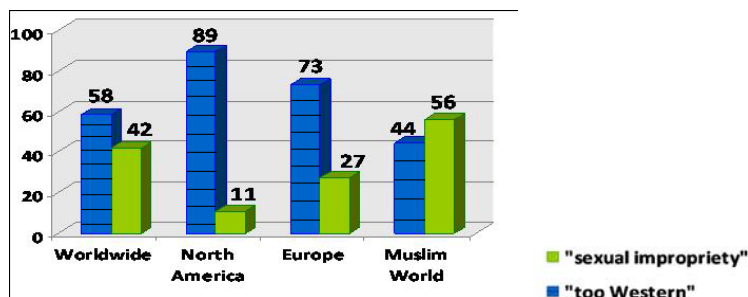
Exhibiting statistics associated with perpetrators of honor killings, the percentage of paternal perpetrators is examined and also the percentage of killings that include multiple perpetrators. Fathers were most involved in North American, in 52% of the cases. Fathers are less

active worldwide and in the Muslim world, often because the act is given to the son/brother to take care of. As shown, nearly half of all honor killings across all domains involve multiple perpetrators. Often the brothers, uncles, and other relatives partake in the murder.



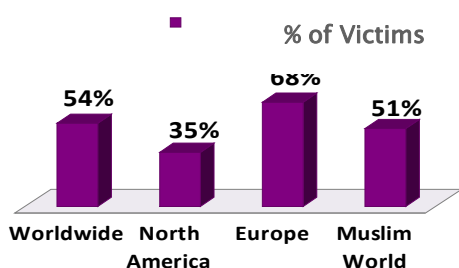
Reasons for honor killings, as previously stated, are varied. However, several of the perpetrators voiced there reason was for the victim being "too Western." The vast majority of the murders in the Western world were due to this specific reason, for being "too Western" and/or violating

cultural expectations. In contrast, in the Muslim world 56% of victims were murdered for sexual impropriety, specifically for being raped, seen as promiscuous, or suspected to have engaged in extramarital affairs. Mere assumption of these crimes can instigate an honor killing



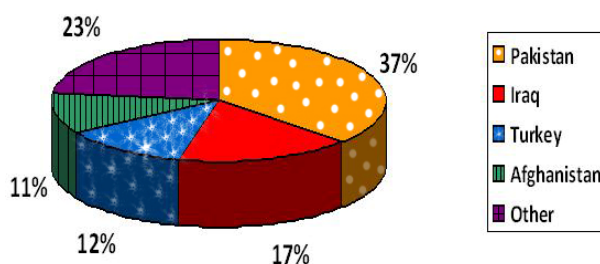
More than half of victims of honor killing worldwide are tortured before being murdered. The purpose of torturing the victim is

so they die in agony a slow and painful death, not instantaneously.



Based on a sample study of 76 perpetrators who killed 100 victims, the following statistics were generated to expose the origin of the perpetrators. More than one-third of the perpetrators originated from Pakistan; 17% were of Iraqi origin; 12% from Turkey; 11% from Afghanistan. The remaining near one-fourth of the perpetrators

came from other countries in the Muslim world: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia, Egypt, Iran, Guyana, Ethiopia, India, Morocco, and the West Bank.



* "Other" includes: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia, Egypt, Iran, Guyana, Ethiopia, India, Morocco, & the West Bank

Moving Towards Solutions

Before moving toward a solution, we must understand the characteristic of this problem; the depth, scope, and dynamic. The problem is complex which requires to overcome many layers of strong, built-in barriers. Honor killing is the perceived command of "God," therefore has more influence than so called "blood" or kinship/family binding. An example is that a mother held down her daughter while the father

stabbed their daughter to death in order to restore the very "honor" to do the "God's work." By understanding the problem it is clear that there is no simple idea and act of solution to solve this.

What is Being Done By Other Countries Around the World

A number of countries and individual citizens have started to bring awareness to the cause in efforts to stop the violence of honor crimes.

Great Britain passed legislation to rescue British female citizens from being kidnapped by their families and forcibly married. Law enforcement has begun to hide endangered women in protection programs. Advocate Maryam Namazie instigated a campaign called "One Law for All. A Campaign against Shari'a Law in Britain" to protest the use of Shari'a courts that discriminate against women. Sweden held an international conference in 2004 on honor killing, calling for "international cooperation" on the issue. In the Netherlands schools have been asked to be "more alert to

honor violence," following research conducted from the Ministry of Integration.

Recently, in North America, the Canadian government has decided to add honor killing to the criminal code. The federal government affirmed a zero-tolerance stance against "honor killing," declaring that such "barbaric cultural practices" have no place in Canadian society. In the United States, an organization launched a campaign on taxicabs to educate the American people about honor killings in the US.



What Needs To Be Done: My Recommendations for Developing Culture of Peace vs. Culture of Violence

There can not be any development without peace, as seen in Article 25 of Human Rights. We must create a safe space to facilitate dialogue between perpetrators and victims of violence. There is a need to form committees of cultural and religious experts to evaluate and identify harmful practices on the basis of human rights, locally & globally. Furthermore, Western judicial systems and governments must further address this problem. Perpetrators and accomplices must all be prosecuted as criminals. Clear government warnings must be issued to Muslim, Sikh, & Hindu immigrants/citizens. International and national laws need to be promoted ahead of the rights of families. Immigration, law enforcement, and religious authorities need to be included in education, prevention, and prosecution. Shelters are needed, as victims are often threatened by their families in advance that their lives are at risk.

What Needs To Be Done: What You Can Do

I have started a petition to bring honor killings to the heightened attention of the UN and will be presenting the petition to the high UN court. I invite you as a person with integrity who supports human rights to join efforts to stop these inhumane and destructive practices. I have organized an online petition to stop honor killing/stoning and would appreciate your online signature via the link below:

<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/stop-the-honor-killings.html>

The change we need cannot be left in the hands of religious leaders or politicians. The change we need is in the hands of individuals who unite together to stand up for human rights.

All charts and statistics on honor killings: Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings, 2010. *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2010. Retrieved from:

<http://www.meforum.org/2646/worldwide-trends-in-honor-killings>

News from the Vienna Committee of the Family

Report of a member organisation provided at the meeting in Vienna Thursday November 4th 2010

Federation Internationale pour l'Education des Parents/
International Federation for Parenting Education
www.fiep/ifpe.fr (click on English flag for English version of site)

Report presented by Mary Crowley, OBE, President of the Federation.

The Federation is a world-wide organisation which was set up in Paris in 1964 in order to promote and support parenting education. It has members in Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Members include both organisations and individual members.

The most recent conference and AGM of the organisation took place in Bucharest on May 28th 2010 and was held in partnership with our Romanian colleagues, Fondatia Copii Nostri. The theme of the conference was

“The development of life skills, citizenship and human rights begins in the family.....how do we pass them on, what training is needed?”

The conference was attended by over a 100 delegates, many from Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia as well as Romania. The languages of the conference were Romanian, French and English. It was supported by UNICEF Romania.

The AGM of the organisation was held in Bucharest. Mary Crowley from the UK was unanimously elected as the new President, taking over from the outgoing President, Monique Laboureur from Belgium.

The Executive Committee met in Paris in September and considered future plans. The following 2011 dates were **agreed**:

14th May for the General Assembly and Administrative Council
and **15th October 2011** for the next conference.

The May meeting will be held by SKYPE video conferencing.

The October meeting will take place in London in and will have a theme about fatherhood.

Mary explained that the organisation is keen to make use of modern communication methods to address the challenge of being a world-wide organisation and to avoid unnecessary air travel which is undesirable from a financial and environmental point of view.

The working languages of the organisation are English and French at present. More information on the web site: www.fiep-ifpe.fr. New members are welcome and queries should be addressed to:

marycrowley@parent.freeseve.co.uk

Report of a member organisation of the Vienna Committee of the Family

World Movement of Mothers



**Mouvement Mondial des Mères
World Movement of Mothers**

Statut Consultatif Général à l'ONU

MMM Europe presents new report

REALITIES OF MOTHERS IN EUROPE

- Reviews current European policy and scientific research
- Expresses the voices of mothers in Europe based on analysis of expert interviews, focus group discussions and the **2010 Survey of Mothers in Europe** of over 10,000 mothers
- Presents recommendations to policy makers and suggestions for future research

The full report can be found on the MMM Europe website www.mmmeurope.org at http://www.mmmeurope.org/sites/mmmeurope.org/files/documents/WP2_MMM_Realities_of_Mothers_in_Europe_1.pdf.

MMM Europe is one of 12 **partners** in the **FAMILY PLATFORM** (<http://www.familyplatform.eu/>), a project initiated by the European Commission on the well-being of families in Europe that aims to identify topics for research on families in the EU, fine-tune European policy and strategy for families, and provide a stakeholder perspective on family well-being, ultimately providing input into the EU's family research and policies.

MMM Europe has been invited to this platform to be the **voice of mothers** and to accurately represent the mothers of Europe, expressing their priorities, challenges and concerns with regard to their well-being and that of their family. This motivated the **2010 SURVEY OF MOTHERS IN EUROPE** as an extraordinary opportunity to make their voices heard and to have a real impact on future European policies that affect families. The survey was launched in February 2010 and conducted in 10 languages across 16 countries, handled solely with the help of many volunteer associations and sponsored by Qualtrics.com. For more information on the results of the survey please visit <http://www.mmmeurope.org/en/results-european-survey-mothers>.

Because MMM is an association of organizations composed of mothers serving other mothers, it is first to mothers that we turn when we want to understand their reality. But in connection with this report in contribution to the Family Platform we have surveyed both policy and empirical literature dealing with family and family well-being. A major finding of our critical review of government and academic literature is this: **Rarely are mothers recognized as specific and distinct participants with a special function and identity. Even more rarely are they given the opportunity to speak with their own voice on policy matters that directly affect them.**

***MMM therefore wishes to state the IMPORTANCE of giving MOTHERS - and FATHERS - a distinct voice in policy matters.**

The **Survey of Mothers in Europe** also reveals that mothers do not see themselves as a "generic" parent but as equal, **complementary** and distinct from fathers. The different roles played by motherhood and fatherhood in the education of children seems to be empirically well-defined and deemed necessary.

***Consequently, to recognize the importance and specificity of the roles which fathers and mothers contribute to the family, MMM wishes**

to engage policyholders to recognize this complementarity and, when appropriate, to use the specific terms of “mother” or “father” rather than the more generic one of “parent”.

The **survey** also shows that mothers are willing both to be part of the workforce AND take care of their children. Responding mothers decried in the survey the lack of RECOGNITION by our societies of unpaid family care work. Yet, the family care work mothers perform is socially, economically and demographically as essential to society as their presence in the labour market.

** In order to achieve the well-being of the European Families the Family Platform is concerned about, MMM suggests that policy makers focus on finding a way to recognize and support “unpaid family care work”, as a valued and indispensable element of family’s and consequently society’s well-being.*

The survey demonstrates that mothers are concerned with the well-being of their children now and in the future. They want to know the long-term effects of family changes, of attachment to the primary caregiver, and of various childcare arrangements on their child’s development. Because of their concern for their children, mothers are an important and often untapped force for social cohesion and sustainability.

** MMM recommends that studies be carried out and DISSEMINATED across the population for mothers and fathers to be informed on the latest findings on child’s development in order*

- **Active contribution of mothers** should guarantee that family policy measures adequately respond to the real needs of families.
- Mothers represent the diversity of cultures and traditions and yet are bonded by **strong commonalities**. Consulting them and integrating their expertise, not only on a professional level but also as mothers in decision-making processes, should conciliate the necessity of respecting diversities, of building a common stand of guidelines and consensus principles to help EU countries in encouraging innovative, coherent and productive measures to support families, and also to insure the cooperation of mothers in implementing these measures.
- **Choice**: In the elaboration of childcare policies, MMM Europe insists on the importance of allowing mothers to choose the way they want to care for their child.
- MMM Europe also draws attention to the importance of **unpaid work** in the family (particularly child rearing) and seeks recognition for its impact not only on the family but on society as a whole.

to know how their choices will affect their children’s life and behaviour.

Furthermore, MMM was invited to provide information for the DESA (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) publication **“Family policy and men in families: An international perspective”**. The purpose of the publication is to explore and analyze the issue of men in families from both an international perspective as and a family policy perspective. MMM provided an analysis for the chapter relating to “Migration, families and men in families: Policies for family empowerment”. Josi Salem, a member of MMM from Jordan wrote a chapter on “Men in families and migration -The example of Moslem refugee families in the Middle East.

The [World Movement of Mothers](#) is an international apolitical and non-denominational NGO created in 1947 that federates 64 associations in more than 40 countries. In consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, MMM gives mothers a voice at the United Nations and contributes to achieve many of the UN Millennium Development Goals with its activities in the field. It raises awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the vital role of mothers for promoting peace and human security and their contribution to social and economic progress.

[MMM Europe](#) is part of MMM International and pursues the **mission** of highlighting the vital social role played by mothers for Europe’s future and brings to the EU the practical expertise of MMM grass roots members.

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Email: mmminternational@wanadoo.fr

Site: www.mouvement-mondial-des-meres.org – www.worldmovementofmothers.org

News from the United Nations

United Nations

A/RES/64/133



General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 February 2010

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/64/432)]

64/133. Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/82 of 8 December 1989, 50/142 of 21 December 1995, 52/81 of 12 December 1997, 54/124 of 17 December 1999, 56/113 of 19 December 2001, 57/164 of 18 December 2002, 58/15 of 3 December 2003, 59/111 of 6 December 2004, 59/147 of 20 December 2004, 60/133 of 16 December 2005 and 62/129 of 18 December 2007 concerning the proclamation of the International Year of the Family and the preparations for, observance of and follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family,

Noting that in paragraph 5 of its resolution 59/111 and paragraph 2 of its resolution 59/147, respectively, the General Assembly underlined the need to realize the objectives of the International Year of the Family and to develop concrete measures and approaches to address national priorities in dealing with family issues,

Recognizing that the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 constituted an important opportunity to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of efforts at all levels to carry out specific programmes within the framework of the objectives of the Year,

Aware that a major objective of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is to address the major concern of strengthening

the capacity of national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families,

Noting that the family-related provisions of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s and their follow-up processes continue to provide policy guidance on ways to strengthen family-centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development,

Convinced of the necessity of ensuring an action-oriented follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family beyond 2004,

Recognizing the important catalytic and supportive role of United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions in ensuring an action-oriented follow-up in the field of the family, including their positive contribution to strengthening national capacities in family policymaking,

Cognizant of the need for continued inter-agency cooperation on family issues in order to generate greater awareness of this subject among the governing bodies of the United Nations system,

Convinced that civil society, including research and academic institutions, has a pivotal role in advocacy, promotion, research and policymaking in respect of family policy development and capacity-building,

Noting that, in its resolution 59/111, the General Assembly decided to celebrate the anniversary of the International Year of the Family on a ten-year basis,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General,¹

1. *Encourages* Governments to continue to make every possible effort to realize the objectives of the International Year of the Family and to integrate a family perspective into national policymaking;

2. *Invites* Governments and regional intergovernmental entities to provide for more systematic national and regional data on family well-being and to identify and ensure support for constructive family policy developments, including the exchange of information on good policies and practices;

3. *Encourages* Member States to adopt holistic approaches to policies and programmes that confront family poverty and social exclusion, and invites Member States to stimulate public debate and consultations on family-oriented and gender- and child-sensitive social protection policies, in accordance with the objectives of the International Year of the Family;

4. *Further encourages* Member States to promote policies and programmes supporting intergenerational solidarity at the family and community levels and geared to reducing the vulnerability of younger and older generations through various social protection strategies;

5. *Urges* Member States to create a conducive environment to strengthen and support all families, recognizing that equality between women and men and respect for all the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all family members are essential to family well-being and to society at large, noting the importance of reconciliation of work and family life and recognizing the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child;

6. *Invites* Governments to continue to develop strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening national capacities to address national priorities relating to family issues, and encourages the United Nations Programme on the Family, within its mandate, to assist Governments in this regard, including through the provision of technical assistance to build and de-

velop national capacities in the area of formulating, implementing and monitoring family policies;

7. *Encourages* Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request;

8. *Recommends* that United Nations agencies and bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions and the private sector play a supportive role in promoting the objectives of the International Year of the Family;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, through the Commission for Social Development at its forty-ninth session and the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the present resolution and on the appropriate ways and means to observe the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, in 2014;

10. *Decides* to consider the topic "Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family" at its sixty-sixth session under the sub-item entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family".

*65th plenary meeting
18 December 2009*

¹ A/64/134.

EU Family Platform

PRESS RELEASE
- THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2010 -

FAMILYPLATFORM Research Agenda conference opens in Brussels, outlining key areas for prospective research on the family, based on present and anticipated societal challenges

Funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme, **FAMILYPLATFORM** gathers a consortium of twelve organisations working together to articulate key research issues and policy questions about the family, for inclusion in the European Social Science and Humanities Research Agenda 2012-2013.

The conference - *Research issues for family research and key policy questions in Europe* - which takes place on the 4-5 November, is organised by the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg. Building on solid work charting and reviewing the major trends of comparative family research in the EU, a critical review of this research, and work predicting future conditions and challenges facing families, this conference brings together the results to propose key areas of research on families and family policy to be tackled with future EU research funding.

Hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee and opened by Luca Jahier (President of Group III), the first day provides an overview of the policy context and the scientific findings so far. The second day presents the pro-

posed themes and issues to be covered by the research agenda, which include family interactions and transitions, the life-course perspective, demographic change in Europe, mobility and migration, and care arrangements.

As in all of **FAMILYPLATFORM**'s work, stakeholders from civil society, academic and policy backgrounds have an opportunity to get involved, both during the conference and afterwards through online consultation: "Elaboration of the research agenda can only take shape through intense co-operation and communication - something which began right at the start of the project and which we mean to continue", says Uwe Uhlendorff (Technical University Dortmund), overall co-ordinator of the project.

ENDS -

Press briefing: A press and media opportunity will be provided on Friday 5 November at 16:00 at CO-FACE, Rue de Londres 17, B1050, Brussels. Contact Linden Farrer (+32 48 55 24 272) for more information.

Forthcoming events

Title: In Defense of the Family: Family, Children and Culture

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Date: June 16 - 20, 2011

Introduction to the Conference:

Families and Children across the world face a multitude of ever changing challenges in an increasing international culture called globalization.

This era of globalization which is directly linked with the media, communications and information technologies has brought in its trail new economic systems that favor opening up new avenues for trade, free markets and flooding the world with consumer goods. It has also opened up new avenues of employment opportunities and the euphoria of a better life-style with the demand for consequent and perhaps necessary cross border migration.

This spurt in material growth is resulting not our in the exchange of goods, but values, ideas and life-style. Such a new world order has created a new ethos in ways that affect every area of living: economic, political, ecological, military and cultural, which have profound affects on the health, development, emotional well-being and security of the family and its members particularly the poor in both countries of the Southern and Northern hemispheres. Such rapidly changing and enlarging exosystems cripple the family in carrying out its essential functions of child bearing and nurturing, love and care for all its members which is indispensable for its own growth and maturation.

Such a paralysis coupled with increasing pollution of the environment through its social and technological systems has almost taken over the running of people's lives resulting in the dehumanization, depersonalization and com modification of individuals and families.

This systemic weakening to a point of destruction of the moral, spiritual, institutional and

social fabric of society has led to the present day crises experienced around the world. These crises are manifested in increasing breakdown in marriage and family relationships, increasing feelings of meaninglessness, alienation, increasing violence and abuse of children, increasing incidences of mental illnesses, addiction, and delinquency and increasing rates of suicides especially among young people.

In reality in some societies originating from the west, the family is regarded as obsolete, sterile and unproductive and hence received with disfavor. In some countries even its abolition is advocated.

[The Role OF SERFAC:](#)

SERFAC stands at the cross roads of civilization and a globalizing technological culture. It is at this crucial juncture of human history that SERFAC (which has over three decades of experience of working with families) takes an uncompromising and unambiguous stand defending life, defending the human person, defending marriage and defending family at all levels and in different societies.

[The Role of the International Conferences organized by SERFAC :](#)

SERFAC has since 1976 championed the cause of the family at various levels one of which are through its International /Global level events and continues to prove to society and social systems that no civilization can endure without a strong family base as there is simply no religious or social institution that can adequately carry out the critical functions that belong to the family including the collective transfer of wisdom and culture to the next generation.

13th International Conference

Title: In Defense of the Family: Family, Children and Culture

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Date: June 16 - 20, 2011

Website: www.defendfamily.org

SERFAC Blogs:

<http://defendthefamilypreventsocialbreakdown.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.factorscontributingtoviolenace.blogspot.com>
<http://www.serfacseminaroncommunalharmonyinindia.blogspot.com>
<http://www.defendthefamilypreventsocialbreakdown.blogspot.com>
<http://www.advocateforthefamily.blogspot.com>
<http://www.givingchildrenavoic.blogspot.com>

Committee That Planned the Conference



(From Right to Left)
Dr. H.B Danish, Canada Dr. John Shea, USA, Dr. Catherine Bernard, India,
Dr. Caroline de Leon, Philippines, Prof. Victoria Thoresen, Norway

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day One: June 16, 2011

10.00 hrs: *Registration* at the Venue of the Conference
16.00 hrs: *Official inauguration*
18.00 hrs: *Cultural Programme and Reception Dinner*

Day Two: June 17, 2011

09.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation: Children and Spirituality*

Chairperson:

Speakers: Dr. Maryanne Loughry, PhD, Australia,

10.30 hrs: Break

11.00 hrs: Panel - Youth

12.45 hrs: Lunch

14.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation:-Cultural Transition and the Family*

Chairperson: Mr. John Dayalan, India

Speakers: Dr. Rev.Theodore Mascarenhas, PhD, Vatican,
Dr. Sami Timimi, MD United Kingdom

15.30 hrs: Break

16.00 hrs: Workshop I Small groups work on Topics related to "Issues in Family and Society"

17.30 hrs: Close of day's session

Day Three: June 18, 2011

09.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation: Sustainable Life Style and Social Responsibility*

Chairperson:

Speakers: Prof. Victoria Thoresen, Norway,
Dr. M.K. George, SJ, PhD, India

10.30 hrs: Break

11.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation: Gender Equality and Conflict Free Family*

Chairperson:

Speaker: Dr. H.B. Danish, MD, FRCP, Canada,

12.45 hrs: Lunch

14.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation: Family Prosperity and Community Service*

Chairperson:

Speakers: Mr. Pooran Pandey, India,
Dr. Richard Wilkins, PhD, Doha, Qatar

15.30 hrs: Break

16.00 hrs: Workshop II Small groups work on Topics: "Innovative, Concepts and Solutions"

Day Four: June 19, 2011

09.00 hrs: *Keynote presentation: Adult Parenting and Spirituality*

Chairperson: Archbishop Meenaparambil, SDB, India (to confirm)

Speakers: Dr. John Shea, PhD, MSW, USA,
Dr. Caroline de Leon, PhD, Philippines

10.30 hrs: Break

11.00 hrs: *Keynote Presentation: Parenting for Peace in a Multi Cultural World*

Chairperson:

Speakers: Dr. Lalit Kumar, PhD, India
Dr. Joan Haliburn, MBBS, FRANZCP, M.Med, Australia

12.45 hrs: Lunch

14.00 hrs: Inter Faith Panel: Chairperson: Bishop Soter Fernandez, Malaysia

Speakers: Christianity: Bishop Vianney Fernando, Sri Lanka

Islam: Dr. Salma Saluddhin, India

Hinduism: Prof. Padma Subramanian, India

Bahai Community:

Buddhism:

15.30 hrs: Break

16.00 hrs: Presenting Concluding Statement of the Conference.

Small Working Group Topics

Work Shop I: Problems

1. Family and Children of Refugees and Migrants
Dr. Maryanne Loughry, PhD, Australia
2. Family and Children in Institutional Care (Orphanages, Foundling Homes, Crèches etc.)
Mrs. Lyn Lea, Australia
3. Family and Children of Prisoners and Juvenile Prisoners
4. Family, Children and HIV – AIDS
Dr. Shymala Balasubramanian, MD, DGO, India
Prof. Padma Subramanian, India
5. Family and Children – Victims of Communal and Ethnic Violence
Dr. Lalit Kumar, PhD, India
6. Family and Children – Victims of Natural Disasters
Sri Lanka
7. Family and Children – Victims of Sexual Abuse and Corporal Punishment kidnapped or killed, suicide
Dr. Salma Saluddhin, India
Dr. Werner Tshan, MD, Switzerland
8. Family and Children – Life issues
Mrs. Joan Clements, Australia
Dr. Chan Lek Lim, MD, Malaysia
9. Family and Children – Victims of Chemical dependency - drugs etc.
Dr. Joan Haliburn, MBBS, FRANZCP, M. Med, Australia

Work Shop II : Innovative concepts and solutions

1. Dynamics of Dialogue *Belgium*
2. Adult Spirituality
Dr. John Shea, OSA, PhD, MSW, USA
Dr. Caroline de Leon, PhD, Philippines
3. Personal, National Identity and Global Integration
Prof. Victoria Thoresen, Norway
Dr. M.K. George, PhD, India
4. Family and Children – Social Policy
Dr. Richard Wilkins, PhD, Qatar
5. Family and Interfaith Marriages
Ms. Wendy Louis, Singapore
India
6. Family and Birth regulation – Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning (BOM)
Mrs. Joan Clements, Australia
Dr. Chan Lek Lim, MD, Malaysia
7. Family and Children in a Technological Society
Dr. Ehtel Quayle, PhD, Scotland
Dr. Janis Wolak, PhD, USA
8. Parenting for Unity and Peace in a Multicultural World
Dr. H.B. Danesh, PhD, Canada
9. Family, Children and Education
Mr. Pooran Pandey, India

Day Five: June 20, 2011 Parallel Seminars:

- Principles of Marriage Counselling
Faculty Dr. H.B. Danesh, MD, FRCP, Canada
- Inter Faith Dialogue – Panel:
Chair: Bishop Vianney Fernando, Malaysia
Christianity: Catholicism and its relationship with other religions: Bishop Lawrence Pius, Auxiliary Bishop of Madras (to confirm)
Islam: Dr. M Syafi'i Anwar, Indonesia
Buddhism:
Hinduism:
Bahai Community:

- Internet and The Family
Faculty: Dr. Ethel Quayle, PhD, Scotland,
Dr. Janis Wolak, PhD, USA
- Poverty and the Family
Dr. M.K. George, SJ, PhD, India
Prof. Victoria Thoresen, Norway
- Natural Family Planning – The Billings Ovulation Method
Mrs. Joan Clements, Director WOOMB International, Australia
Dr. Chan Lek – Lim, President of NFASM, Malaysia

16.30 hrs: Plenary: Official closure of the 13th International Conference of SERFAC

Participation to the Conference is open to and will include:

Governments, Organizations, Institutes, University Departments, NGOs, Political and corporate leadership, Faith based communities, Civil and Religious Organizations, International Organizations, Students, Professionals, Research scholars in disciplines dealing with the Family and Children's issues, foundations, media and general public.

Foreign participation

Participants from other countries other than India intending to participate in the Conference **MUST** send in the following information along with Registration:

1. Filled in Registration form and Conference fee by Bank Transfer.
2. Passport Details including Complete Address of Residence, telephone number including Mobile and Email Id.
3. For Organizations and Institutions Website Address.

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