

Doha Call to Action

We, the representatives of civil society, academia, policy makers and individuals participating in the International Conference organized in Doha, Qatar on the 16-17 of April, 2014 by the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family;

Having considered the conference theme **“Empowering Families: A Pathway to Development,”**

Reaffirming that the family is not only the fundamental group unit of society but is also the fundamental agent for sustainable, social, economic and cultural development,

Stressing the importance of designing, implementing and monitoring family-oriented policies, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, work family balance and social integration and intergenerational solidarity,

Emphasizing that the achievement of development goals especially those relating to the eradication of poverty, education of children, especially girls and reduction in maternal mortality depends, to a significant extent, on how families are empowered to fulfill their numerous functions,

Emphasizing further that strategic focus on families offers a comprehensive approach to solving some of the persistent development challenges such as inequality and social exclusion,

Call on governments to empower and enable families to contribute to development by taking the following actions:

- 1 Develop comprehensive and coherent policies, integrate cross sectorial approach to support family stability and establish/strengthen a national mechanism to develop family-oriented policies and programmes and allocate adequate human and financial resources to implement, monitor and evaluate them.
- 2 Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, reform discriminatory laws and policies, particularly family laws, and enact legislations to end child marriage and violence against women.
- 3 Recognize the contribution and responsibility of men to families, develop policies to address the impact of the absence of males/fathers on family wellbeing and promote active fatherhood.

- 4 Focus poverty alleviation strategies on the family as a unit and acknowledge that family breakdown can be both a root cause and an effect of poverty and its prevention is a priority.
- 5 Adopt policies to ensure work-family balance, so that the responsibilities of parenting and maintaining families do not fall primarily on women and collaborate with the private sector to protect and support workers with family responsibilities.
- 6 Value important contributions of all generations within the family, design and implement policies to strengthen intergenerational solidarity and partnerships and promote healthy intra-family relations.
- 7 Ensure the systematic collection of data and statistics on family wellbeing and collaborate on good practice exchange at national, regional and international levels.
- 8 Develop and implement family focused policies and interventions to strengthen and support families in vulnerable situations (such as conflict, natural disasters and health epidemics including HIV / AIDS and malaria).
- 9 Create an enabling environment for a meaningful contribution of civil society organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of family policies and programs and remove barriers to the establishment, work and funding of non-governmental organizations.
- 10 Acknowledge that families are at the center of sustainable development and ensure that families are an integral part of the post 2015 development agenda.