

*Statement by H.E. Andrei Dapkiunas,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus,
on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Family*

*Round Table “The Effect of Migration and Urbanization on the Family”
(April 10, 2018, 10am -12 pm, Conference Room 8)*

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I have the privilege of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Family, that unites 25 countries: Bangladesh, Comoros, Egypt, the Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen, Zimbabwe and my own country, Belarus.
- We express our heartfelt thanks to **C-Fam**, a reliable partner of the Group of Friends of the Family, for its dedicated and untiring efforts in promoting the family issues. We also welcome **Civil Society for the Family** that represents 180 NGOs all over the world. We count on your continuous support to the United Nations Members States and we are ready to strengthen our partnership as a crucial element of success.
- We all understand that the family is a pillar of our human life and is vital to everyone, since we all came from a family. In this regard we believe that we need to stress our focus on promotion and protection of the family. **That was the main idea behind creating the Group of Friends of the Family in New York.**
- Since its inception the Group of Friends of the Family **has been active in a number of thematic events** on the family in order to bring to the attention of the United Nations its topicality and to explore possible solutions.
- Today we convene another round table in the series of the Group’s events pertaining to the family to discuss major emerging processes in the world such as migration and urbanisation, which **disproportionately affect families.**
- Because of its essential function as a primary educator, economic driver and social safety net, the family is a basic unit of society and natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, particularly children and youth. In this regard **protected and successful family is a key to sustainable social and economic development and foundation for strong societies across the globe.**
- **Migration** has a huge impact on family unity. Entire families often move together but even more often young men or women migrate in searching of secure employment and stability before bringing along members of their

families. **Long separation sometimes leads to family break-up or father household absence.**

- **Urbanization** transforms societal demographic structures. It also modifies domestic roles and relations within the family. **Cities offer opportunities and represent a higher standard of living** not available in the countryside or in small towns. But sometimes advantages cause difficult problems. For instance, cities are difficult places to live in due to health issues resulting from contaminated water and air, severe shortage of housing, psychological problems and stress, crime, violence and other deviant behavior. All these threats can also have a negative influence on families.
- We cannot ignore the processes happening around us. In this regard we should **multiply advantages and turn disadvantages into advantages** in order to assume our common responsibilities within communities to protect and promote the well-being of the family.
- Today we suggest considering the following questions:
 - How to help families to better thrive in modern world and not to do harm to children, in particular those on the move?
 - How to make cities sustainable, safe and friendly towards the family?
 - What actions are needed for speedy and proper family reunification in the context of migration?
 - How to seek and ensure the positive effects of urbanisation?
 - What role the United Nations can play in these processes?
 - How the Group of Friends of the Family could contribute in this regard.
- We look forward to this **discussion** not just as a means of keeping a topical issue visible, but **as a potential contribution to major processes underway at the United Nations, as well as to the current session of the Commission on Populations and Development.**