

*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*

*Thematic discussion “The Importance of Family Stability to Social Protection  
and Achieving Sustainable Development”, UN Headquarters, New York  
(9.45-11.00, CR 12, February 12, 2019)*

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to speak on behalf of the **Group of Friends of the Family** that includes Bangladesh, Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen, Zimbabwe and my own country Belarus.

First of all, we would like to express our appreciation to **C-Fam**, our reliable and old partner of the Group of Friends of the Family, for its dedicated work and leadership on family issues and for co-organising this event. We also thank all other co-organizers from pro-family NGOs and activists for their commitment and for promoting the family.

No one can argue that the family is **a strong force for social cohesion** and integration, intergenerational solidarity and development, and that the family plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity, traditions, morals, heritage and the system of values of any society.

In this regard the importance of **family stability cannot be underestimated.**

**Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** will depend on policies that support the family, especially if it is to ensure that no one is left behind.

The stable, supportive and nurturing family contributes to poverty reduction (Goal 1 of the Agenda), healthy lives (Goal 3), inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16). The stable family provides a vital shield against substance abuse, particularly among minors.

If supported appropriately, the family can make the sustainable development agenda a reality.

Unfortunately, despite unquestionable advantages of the family it continues to face **challenges** in sustaining economic wellbeing, preserving intergenerational ties, and adjusting its members to technological advances. There is also a need to draw our special attention to current ways and means to protect family values, marriage, motherhood and fatherhood and to support the exchange of experience and practical solutions that can help strengthen **the resilience of the family in today's world**.

In December 2018, **the General Assembly adopted its traditional resolution** "Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond", prompted by Qatar, one of the Members of the Group of Friends of the Family on behalf of G77 and China. **This is a "road map"**, which focuses on the need to increase international cooperation on family issues at all levels and to undertake concerted action to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development.

**On May 15 this year the international community will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Family.** We consider this Day a good opportunity to take stock of good practices and lessons learnt pertaining to the family policy and to explore possible ways of fostering togetherness in national, regional and international endeavours on family policies implementation. In this regard we invite all interested partners **to propose possible format to mark this Day**. We are open to any suggestions.

We would like to express hope that in 2019 we all will be further encouraged to continue promoting and protecting family values. The Group of Friends will closely cooperate with international organizations and NGOs on family-related issues.

Thank you for your attention.