****

**High-level Side Event**

**titled "Family Protection in the Context of the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: From Words to Actions"**

**Date: December 11, 2023,** **from 13h00 – 14h00 (GMT+2)**

**Venue : Palais des Nations, Room XXI, Geneva**

**Concept Note**

**Background and Objectives**

The year 2023 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first global document on human rights that provides a specific reference to the family. Article 16 of the Declaration states that men and women of full age have the right to marry and to found a family. It also recognizes the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society, entitled to protection by society and the State.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has served as a common standard that all peoples and nations strive to achieve. It has directly contributed to the development of international human rights law, as many subsequent human rights treaties have drawn inspiration from its provisions. Regarding the family, several international treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 23.1) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Article 10.1), have emphasized the central and vital role of the family in society and affirmed the commitment to protecting families. The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community.

After 75 years since the adoption of this Declaration, its principles regarding family protection remain more relevant than ever. Despite the emergence of new challenges that did not exist at the time of its adoption, such as technological advancements, climate change, and health pandemics, which have greatly impacted individuals, families, and communities, the principles laid down by the Declaration recognizing the natural entity of the family, its importance in society, and the need for its support and protection, remain valid across time and place.

Although the institution of the family is facing significant challenges nowadays, it continues to serve as the natural environment for the enjoyment by all members of society, of their rights, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other groups in need of special care. The family also remains a powerful tool for promoting social cohesion, intergenerational solidarity, and social development, as well as preserving cultural identity, traditions, ethics, heritage, and societal values.

Therefore, the occasion of celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represents a significant milestone in the collective efforts to promote and protect human rights, providing a new opportunity to reaffirm the commitment to translate words into actions. It also serves as a valuable opportunity to encourage preparations for the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2024 and its goals, particularly those related to family policies in achieving sustainable development goals.

In this context, the high-level side event aims to:

* Highlight the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its role in ensuring family protection and support by the State and society.
* Review the role of the family in promoting and protecting the human rights of its members.
* Discuss current and emerging economic, political, social, and demographic challenges that affect the institution of the family and hinder its ability to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
* Identify states' obligations under international human rights law regarding support, assistance, and protection of the family as the basic unit of society.
* Highlight the role of the family in the achievement the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the importance of enhancing family cohesion as part of a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

**Event Program**

**Opening remarks (3 minutes) and moderation**

* **H. E. Dr. Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah,** Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva**.**

**Keynote Addresses (7 minutes for each)**

* **Her Excellency, Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad**, Minister of Social Development and Family in Qatar.

**Topic:** Role of the family in promoting and protecting the human rights of its members. (Experience of Qatar)

* **H.E. Mr. János Csák,** Minister of Culture and Innovation (Hungary), (TBC)

**Topic:** The importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its role in ensuring family protection and support by the State and society.

* **H.E. Ms. Göktaș Mahinur Özdemir,** Minister of Family and Social Services, (Turkey)

**Topic:** Current and emerging economic, political, social, and demographic challenges that affect the institution of the family and hinder its ability to fulfill its duties and responsibilities

* **H.E. Dr. Valentine Uwamariya,** Minister of Gender and Family Promotion of Rwanda, (TBC)

**Topic**: Role of the family in the achievement the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the importance of enhancing family cohesion as part of a comprehensive approach to sustainable development

* **Dr. Sharifa Al-Emadi**, Executive Director of the Doha International Family Institute.

**Topic:** Impact of armed conflicts on families.

* **Dr. Hala bint Mazyed Altuwaijri,** President of the Human Rights Commission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (TBC)

**Topic:** States' obligations under international human rights law regarding support, assistance, and protection of the family as the basic unit of society.

**Interactive discussion and interventions from the floor (12 minutes)**

**Closing Remarks** **(3 minutes)**

* **H. E. Dr. Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah,** Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva.

**2. Family Exhibition**

After closing the side event, the "Family Exhibition" will be inaugurated. The exhibition includes showcasing paintings, traditional costumes, and models of heritage works that document the roles played by families in society.

The event will be inaugurated by Her Excellency, Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Minister of Social Development and Family in Qatar, and the esteemed Ministers, dignitaries, Permanent Representatives, and other participants attending the event.

Following the inauguration and the tour of the exhibition, a reception will be held in honor of the Ministers and participants of the event, organized by the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office.