

As of 16 January 2024



## **Navigating the Digital Landscape: Fostering Resilient Families in a Transforming World**

*Side Event on the occasion of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD62), in Preparation for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family*

Organized by the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the UN  
and the Doha International Family Institute

**6 February 2024, 1:15-2:40 p.m.**  
**United Nations Headquarters, CR4**

The rapid pace of digitalization has profoundly transformed our lives, impacting every aspect of society, including the very fabric of the family. This transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for achieving social development, social justice, and poverty eradication, the overarching themes of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD62).

In fact, ensuring equitable access to digital technologies and resources can empower individuals and communities, particularly those marginalized or in remote areas, to participate fully in the digital economy and society.

Families, as the fundamental units of society, play a crucial role in mitigating the negative impacts of digital technologies and harnessing their potential for positive change. By fostering digital literacy, promoting responsible digital use, and strengthening family bonds, families can navigate the digital landscape effectively, contributing to inclusive and sustainable development.

Despite their potential benefits, the pervasiveness of digital technologies also poses challenges to achieving social development and social justice. The digital divide can widen existing inequalities, further marginalizing those without access to digital technologies and resources. In addition, the collection and use of personal data through digital platforms raises concerns about privacy, surveillance, and potential misuse of information. Moreover, excessive screen time and exposure to inappropriate content can lead to social isolation, digital addiction, particularly among adolescents, reduced physical activity, and disrupted sleep patterns, negatively impacting mental health and well-being.

Some of the most important changes in families are related to recent technological innovations, which are multifaceted, presenting both opportunities and challenges for achieving social development, social justice, and poverty eradication. By fostering resilient families and promoting responsible digital use, we can harness the transformative power of digital technologies to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

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Technological changes are one of the four megatrends identified by the United Nations for the commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2024. Therefore, the discussion recommendations will pertinently feed into preparations for the 2024 Global Conference Commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, to be held in Doha, State of Qatar.

Furthermore, CSocD62 will focus on the emerging issue of "**The Influence of Digital Transformation on Inclusive Growth and Development: A Path to Achieving Social Justice.**" The Commission will also commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

Therefore, the event's focus on fostering resilient families in the digital age aligns directly with the CSocD62's emerging issue and will therefore provide a platform for discussion and collaboration on this critical topic, contributing to the goals of the IYF+30 and the 62nd Session of the CSocD62.

### ***Key Themes***

- **Digital technologies and family communication:** Examining the impact of digital technologies on work-family balance, and family communication patterns, including the potential for both connection and isolation.
- **Digital use and family well-being:** Discussing the effects of digital media use on family dynamics, including sleep patterns, digital addiction, physical activity, and mental health.
- **Digital literacy and parental guidance:** Exploring strategies for promoting digital literacy among children and adolescents, and fostering responsible digital use within families.
- **Bridging the digital divide:** Addressing the challenges of unequal access to digital technologies and resources, and exploring strategies for bridging the digital divide.

### ***Objectives***

- Raise awareness of the multifaceted impact of digital change on families, highlighting both its opportunities and challenges.
- Explore strategies for fostering resilient families in the digital age, promoting responsible digital use and strengthening family bonds in a rapidly changing world.
- Gather insights from diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, experts, and practitioners, to inform evidence-based policy recommendations for the IYF+30 and the CSocD62.

### ***Outcomes***

- A shared understanding of the multifaceted impact of digital change on families, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing both its opportunities and challenges.
- Actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and families to promote resilient families in the digital age.
- Enhanced awareness of the importance of digital literacy and parental guidance in navigating the digital landscape responsibly.
- A renewed commitment to bridging the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to digital technologies and resources for all families.

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## **Program**

### **Welcome Remarks**

- H.E. Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations (confirmed)
- Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al-Emadi, Executive Director of Doha International Family Institute (DIFI)

### **Keynote Remarks**

- Mr. Fahd Mohammed Al-Khayarin, Assistant Under-Secretary for Social Development, Ministry of Social Development and Family
- Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General UNDESA

### **Panellists**

- Ms. Ursula Wynhoven, ITU Representative to the United Nations
- Mr. Bo Viktor Nylund, Director Innocenti, Global Office of Research and Foresight, UNICEF
- Dr. Susan Walker, Professor Emeritus, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota

### ***Moderator***

- Ms. Renata Kaczmarek, Focal Point on Family, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DISD/DESA), United Nations