



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

63rd plenary meeting
 Wednesday, 3 December 2014, 10 a.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Masood Kahn (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Agenda item 26

Social development

b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

The Acting President: This meeting is being held in accordance with resolution 68/136, of 18 December 2013, and serves to discuss the role of family-oriented policies in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

I shall now deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

“I am pleased to address the Assembly today as we gather to observe the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

“Over the past two decades, the international community has recognized the importance of families in development efforts and shared global concern over their well-being. That concern has been expressed in human rights instruments, in outcomes of major conferences and summits and in resolutions of the General Assembly itself.

“The International Year of the Family, proclaimed and celebrated by the General Assembly, helped raise awareness of family issues among Member States. The Year promoted knowledge of socioeconomic and demographic trends affecting families. It also stimulated efforts to respond to challenges facing families through effective public policies. Following up on the achievements of the International Year, subsequent General Assembly resolutions recommended specific actions to ensure that families were both participants in and beneficiaries of development efforts. The resolutions recognized that families are often challenged to provide economic and emotional support to their members.

“Maintaining strong intergenerational connections in an increasingly mobile and competitive world is another difficulty faced by many families, as is the struggle to balance work and household commitments. In that context, families need effective support through public policies and programmes. That is the responsibility of national Governments, in partnership with civil society, the private sector and families themselves.

“Preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family have recognized those challenges and focused on three major themes, namely, confronting family poverty and social exclusion, ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity. The General Assembly has recommended action on all three areas and recognized that

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anti-poverty policies and programmes targeting family units, such as conditional and unconditional cash transfers and child allowances, contribute to overall poverty reduction. Decent jobs and work-family balance policies are essential not only for economic well-being and children's development, but for gender equality as well. Policies promoting intergenerational support and exchanges are essential for bringing generations together. We must do more to encourage social and economic policies that meet the needs of families, especially those that are most vulnerable. We must also ensure opportunities for family members and help them meet their social responsibilities, for the young and old alike.

“As Assembly members may know, gender equality and women's empowerment is a key priority for this year's General Assembly session and will be the subject of a high-level thematic debate that the President will convene on 6 March next year. In that regard, greater effort must be geared towards enlisting all family members in the struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment. Such values have their roots in the home when girls and boys are treated equally and provided the same educational opportunities. Raising boys to respect their mothers and sisters leads to societies where women are treated respectfully, not just in practice but under the law as well. Recently the “HeForShe” campaign was launched, which recognizes the importance of involving men in the fight for gender equality. That important campaign further solidifies the integral role of boys and men in achieving gender equality.

“Myriad development goals, including those that address poverty and hunger, inequality, education and health, require greater focus on families. Policies that focus on families can greatly contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and should be advanced further. As the world looks ahead to the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, let us not forget about the vital role of families in our societies of today as well as of tomorrow.”

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Schlyter (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The European Union and its member States attach great importance to family-related issues. As far back as 1989, the European Commission published its first communication on family policies, followed by a number of important actions addressing such issues as parental leave, reconciling family and work life and improving the living conditions of vulnerable families.

We recognize the crucial role of parents, caregivers and families in improving outcomes for children and young people, the important role of families concerning responsibility and care for the elderly and the need to provide support for families to do so. We share the view of many in the Hall about the valuable contribution that families make to strengthening our societies, and the need to develop policies to support their role. Indeed, our aspirations for a transformative post-2015 development agenda cannot be realized without the engagement of people through all levels of society, including at the level of families.

But for those policies to be successful, they must also be inclusive. Across the EU, as in the rest of the world, families have changed and continue to change with time, thereby illustrating the fact that a family is a living, dynamic entity. In that regard, we believe that we must all continue to recognize this diversity, as we did at the various United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s and in their follow-up processes, and that our ongoing policy discussion and development should similarly continue to reflect the diversity of family forms.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Mr. Pröhle (Hungary): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to give a short summary of Hungary's standpoint regarding the role of family policy in the post-2015 development period.

One of the key issues of the coming years is that of sustainability, which does not apply only to the environment but to our societies as well. Without a sustainable population, no long-term development goal can be accomplished. Therefore, we believe it is crucial that we reinforce the part of the community that forms the basis of the society: the family, where children are brought up, family values and knowledge are passed down and children are taught to be responsible and good citizens and how to live with others.

When considering the complex question of demography, we must be aware of those differing

tendencies that characterize different parts of the world. While certain areas combat overpopulation, others, including Europe, and therefore Hungary, face an increasing rate of ageing. That fact prompts us to do everything in our power to ensure future subsistence and development by supporting the birth of children, providing them with the possibility for healthy development in both body and mind and the opportunity for education so that as active citizens they might contribute to society's lasting sustainability and progress. The family is the best basis for achieving those objectives. Therefore, the Hungarian Government's policy will continue to place families in the mainstream in the coming years.

The goal and principles of Hungary's family policy are also defined in our fundamental law. Hungary protects the institution of marriage as the union of a man and a woman, established by voluntary decision, and the family as the basis of the survival of the nation. Family ties are based on marriage and the relationship between parents and children. Hungary encourages the commitment to have children and protects the life of the fetus from the moment of conception. Our act on the protection of families also states that family protection and the reinforcement of family welfare is a task shared by the State, local Governments, non-governmental organizations, media providers and businesses. We also count on the participation of churches in achieving those objectives.

The commitment to family values and marriage does not mean that we judge those who feel that marriage or having children is not for them. At the same time, I believe that it is unnecessary to fear standing by our Christian values, which are part of the Abrahamic religious tradition. As Archbishop Bruno Forte said, our family tradition is deeply human and is never against anyone, but it is for the dignity and beauty of life of all people and all of society.

Long-term security and a solid framework is required for a person to live a good and happy life. A number of researchers have confirmed that married people are happier and live longer lives. In families based on marriages, health indicators are better and more children are born whose life and career prospects are better, which is also a crucial condition for the development of both society and the economy.

The fact that there are families functioning incorrectly — failed marriages, financial and employment difficulties, sicknesses, violent acts

and other hardships that require solutions, help or support — does not override the basic truth of the family's role and its significance, but requires a safety net from the wider community. Hungary wishes to weave this safety net around the family, while safeguarding the autonomy of families, the individual's freedom of choice and decision regarding the framework of his or her life.

It is our conviction that in the post-2015 period the role of families in the sustainable development of the world will not diminish. Indeed, local communities consisting of strong families should be given an increasingly significant role. Beyond the incontrovertible rights of individuals, society and the State should grant families the right to protection consistent with the spirit of the international documents on families adopted in recent decades under the authority of the United Nations and expressing the agreement of peoples.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. AlSaloom (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly, for having introduced this important item into the agenda of the General Assembly.

We would like to congratulate the international community on the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. We have considered document A/69/61, on the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 at the national, regional and international levels. It reflects the important initiatives adopted by States on the implementation of various family policies. We would like to thank Governments, the United Nations and civil society for having put together those policies.

The international community has acknowledged the importance of policies and programmes aimed at the family, as the family is the main unit in society and the very foundation of social development. The family therefore is of primordial importance with respect to education and health care, which protect it from being scattered, for society could not succeed without a cohesive family unit. We therefore need strategies for the well-being of the family that will have an impact on the well-being of society as a whole.

The implementation of policies for the family will benefit children and will improve the gender balance.

Kuwait attaches great importance to the family and its role in society. According to article IX of our Constitution, the family is the foundation of society on the basis of religion, morality and love of country. Those provisions enhance family relationships with respect to women and children. Furthermore, law No. 31 of 2008 requires that certain tests be administered before a marriage takes place in order to ensure that generations are protected from disease. In addition, a draft bill has been introduced in Parliament for the creation of a family court, as it is not appropriate to consider family problems together with other problems such as criminal matters. Each province in our country will soon have a special court for the family where a psychological adviser will be available to the court in order to address family problems.

With regard to children, of the many policies enacted to preserve the rights of the child and acknowledge in advance the cases of abuse and violence, we have taken into consideration a whole range of problems, but particularly those related to minors. As to disabled persons, we have provided the right environment, in the form of a special club for the disabled, so that they can engage in sports activities, and we have set up a special unit for them. The law provides for a number of privileges for them in order to integrate them into society as a whole, so that they have a well-balanced access to general services like everyone else.

Kuwait is very proud of the successes of its handicapped athletes on the international scene, of whom the most recent example is Tariq Alqallaf, a disabled person who earned three gold medals in fencing at the Virginia international paralympic competition.

Finally, the State is providing health care and housing to those who are 65 years of age or older, who represented more than 3.3 per cent of the general population in 2012, and 3.55 per cent in 2013.

We would like to reiterate our appeal to Member States to spare no effort in order to attain the objectives of the International Year of the Family and to provide programmes that enhance national capabilities with regard to the family. Kuwait asks the international community to give priority to family strategies, particularly for the young, the elderly and the disabled, with specific regard to the post-2015 development agenda. We support the draft resolution introduced by Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this item.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The United Nations International Year of the Family, established in 1994, is of definite and ongoing significance. It is encouraging that the twentieth anniversary of the event has become a catalyst for an active discussion on the role and place of the family as the key institution for society in the process of global social development.

On many occasions, the Secretary-General has noted the importance of the international community's action in expanding the rights and opportunities of the family, in overcoming generational poverty, social exclusion and inequality, in achieving a balance between family and work and in strengthening the ties of intergenerational support. We fully support those aspirations.

Support for the institution of the family is part of the United Nations social priorities. That objective is inextricably linked to achieving the strategic objectives of ensuring gender equality and expanding the rights and opportunities of women. It is also linked to the global community's efforts to encourage and protect the rights of children. One of the important prerequisites for social stability is strengthening the institution of the family — an equal union of a man and a woman.

Many people in today's world share those approaches. In June, at its twenty-sixth session, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution entitled "Protection of the family", once again reaffirming that

"the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State". (*Human Rights Council resolution 26/11, eighth preambular paragraph*)

Very recently, on 20 November, the ministerial declaration of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and the Women's Empowerment was adopted in Bangkok. It spoke in particular of the "critical and equal role of women and men in the family as the building block of society". That provision carries even more weight in the sense that the declaration reflects the opinion of the representatives of a region with the largest number of people and families on the planet.

An important step in supporting the institution of the family was taken in Russia in August this year

with the adoption of a concept paper for a Government family policy up to 2025. The goals of the concept paper are to provide support, strengthen and protect the family and family values, establish the necessary conditions for the family to function, improve the quality of family life and ensure the rights of family members during their social development. The State in fact has an obligation to share with families the risks associated with childbirth and child-rearing, thereby assuming the function of a partner and helping parents protect their children from poverty and want.

We are implementing a wide range of practical measures to that end, including a national programme of one-time subsidies for the birth of second and subsequent children. Multi-child families receive a number of significant social benefits, including discounted public services and free public transit. In many regions, those families are allocated no-cost parcels of land for construction of individual residences.

The strength and well-being of the traditional family, as the cornerstone of social harmony, is critical. Therefore, we regard the strengthening of the family's social functions and intergenerational solidarity, as well as the recognition of traditional family and ethical values, as important factors in promoting the sustainable development of our country in the long-term.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and you, Sir, for organizing this plenary meeting on the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and to discuss the role of the family and family policies in the post-2015 development agenda.

As we observe the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, we have a unique opportunity to highlight efforts to further the welfare and the role of the family in promoting development and the environment and in protecting the family. Although the role of the family and the need to provide assistance and satisfy its needs have been widely acknowledged, great challenges persist, including poverty and the need to balance work and family life, especially given the negative impact of the international financial and monetary crises. Today, we wish to underscore the dire need for strategies, policies and comprehensive programmes focused on the family to meet the needs

of all its members, especially strategies to overcome poverty and promote family and intergenerational values.

We attach primary importance to the protection of, and respect for, the family, which constitutes the basic unit of societies, as well as to providing all kinds of support to, and creating an enabling environment for, families. That could be reflected clearly through policies that promote family well-being and the upbringing of children and that take the work-family balance into account and provide decent work.

We have adopted policies and enacted legislation in that regard. Our constitution includes a provision that stipulates the need to strengthen links among family members. We have also adopted a comprehensive strategy covering the period 2011 to 2016 that identifies the family as the main component. In addition, the Doha International Family Institute has been making every effort to promote the family and to facilitate the adoption of policies that promote family members and protect the family. Last April, the Institute also played a major part in highlighting the role of family as part of the celebrations of the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. In 2004, as part of the observance of the tenth anniversary of the Year, Qatar hosted the Doha International Conference on the Family, and we have been developing relevant policies over the past decade.

The family has great potential to promote development, given that it is the key unit and the major promoter of sustainable development. It should be part and parcel of the post-2015 agenda. Gender equality and respect for human rights and the fundamental rights of family members are some of the main elements of the well-being of families. We would like to stress our unchanging position with regard to promoting the family and its values.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus): An extraterrestrial paying a short visit to this planet, with a tight schedule that allows only enough time to visit the United Nations, may get a fairly incomplete idea about the current human perspective on the family. On the one hand, the extraterrestrial may certainly notice that the United Nations is getting together to observe, if not to celebrate, the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It should notice that the moral

beacons of freedom for humankind — the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — state clearly that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. It could also not fail to observe that the norms of international law continue to recognize only the natural family, based on marriage between men and women of legal age and aimed at procreating children.

Yet many important things may escape the inquisitive eye of the alien. Looking at the world exclusively through the lens of United Nations documents, the extraterrestrial may overlook the fact that some national Governments regard the notion of the sanctity of the family and marriage as dated. It be oblivious to the increasing number of national Governments that, by their actions, call into question the validity of the maxims of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially with regard to the family and the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion and belief — effectively no longer regarding them as sacrosanct or tenable. The extraterrestrial might depart from Earth unaware of the true depth of our world's collective confusion, and that, were it not today, those otherwise united countries most probably would not have agreed on establishing an International Year of the Family.

Of course, discussing the role of family-oriented and family-centred policies is important. Yet this discussion runs the risk of becoming marginal if, here at the United Nations, we continue to remain cautiously silent about the real challenge the institution of the family faces today. What I intend to say may sound harsh, yet, as someone coming from a part of the world that was engaged in extensive social experimentation and engineering in the twentieth century, often with very tragic results, I feel I have a moral obligation to be blunt in sharing my point of view with Assembly members.

This challenge to the family is an attempt to blur the moral points of reference that the family has traditionally provided. The challenge posed is an attempt to apply the absolute of homocentrism to redefining the role of the family in society.

Apparently, significant strides in human liberation over past decades have tempted some Governments to test the limits of the possible with regard to the family. Even in name, some of our most honourable initiatives — such as the Rights Up Front

campaign — inadvertently reveal our growing sense of entitlement to as many rights and freedoms as we can claim, often at the expense of our sense of responsibility for the state of our natural and social environment. Yet, as we all know, human wants and needs are endless. Where do we stop? When do we understand that not everything that can be done should be done? Just as we have to learn to live on our planet without destroying it, we have to learn to respect the fragility of our social environment.

It goes without saying that we have to exert our utmost to prevent the mistreatment, harassment and persecution of our fellow human beings on the grounds of their otherness — be it race, ethnicity, religion or sex. Yet the success of that effort can be easily subverted by a “cavalry attack” charging over the precipice, demanding the impossible. While having every reason to go “all out” in preventing negative discrimination in our society, we have to be twice as careful about the need for “positive discrimination” of concepts we choose to propagate, of the trends and mores we want to encourage. In a tragic ironic twist of fate, the surrender to extreme permissiveness in one part of the world reverberates in another part of the world in an upsurge of extreme animosity and hate. It does indeed recall the principle of communicating vessels.

Unless, in our decision-making, we manage to strike the right balance between rights advocacy, on the one hand, and a clear sense of responsibility, moderation and restraint, on the other, we may risk rupturing the fabric of our society. That is already happening in family matters in the opinion of hundreds of millions of concerned people all over the world. Take a look at the family: by dint of its very existence and foundation it provides invaluable guidelines about the ways of living in this world sustainably and responsibly. Besides being a source of empowerment, protection and encouragement, a loving and caring family instils in its members a clear sense of the limits, an understanding of the boundaries of the acceptable, the very notion of the golden mean and moderation.

Today Belarus presents its perspective on the family openly and firmly. We strongly believe in the sanctity of the traditional family, and we intend to make every effort to uphold its values and role in social life at the United Nations. We call upon all concerned Member States to be vocal and strong in defending the family values we cherish. Today the family badly needs our protection. It is an uphill battle that will not be won

by our silence or by avoiding an inconvenient subject. To rely solely on the protective power of the wording of existing international and national instruments would also be a weak strategy. One can ride out a storm, but the only viable response to the current challenge to the institution of the family, including here at the United Nations, is engagement in debate, action and advocacy.

We have to provide the family with the best support from the State by giving it the priority it deserves in our political and social strategies. We should make strengthening of the family one of the key sustainable development goals. Some say in response: “Let us not overemphasize this delicate issue beyond paying traditional lip service to the problem; this is not a big deal. Let the social innovators deal with the consequences of their actions within their national borders. Let us not touch that Pandora’s box.” Well, the box is no longer sealed. May no one be lulled into thinking that national borders provide immunity to the corruptible influence of relativism on family matters. We all know that in the age of globalization no border is impermeable — not in matters not requiring a visa to cross that border. Whether we admit it or not, the truly civilizational gap in the way that the family and its role in society are understood today has not just been charted, it is deepening.

Twenty years after the International Year of the Family was established, we stand at a crossroads. We can either watch the foundations of the family being destroyed and traditional family values sacrificed in the name of artificial social constructs — all under the guise of the protection of human rights — or we can raise our voice in defence of the natural family, in defence of motherhood and fatherhood as inalienable attributes of the human self.

It is not at all common for people around the world to follow the day-to-day activities of the United Nations with bated breath. Yet our action or inaction on the family at the United Nations will be one of the rare occasions when the world really will be watching.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Today’s meeting, which marks the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, draws attention to critical family-related issues and the need to reinforce a comprehensive family-centred approach to global development. The institution of the family

is the basic unit of society and embodies the core foundation of spiritual values for the development and prosperity of any nation. The lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals clearly proves that no significant strides can be made in eradicating poverty, promoting education, reducing infant and maternal mortality, as well as halting the intergenerational transfer of poverty and inequality, unless the family is given the highest priority. We therefore commend the integration of crucial family-related issues into the outcomes of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as reflected in almost all of its vital goals. In that regard, my delegation particularly endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General pertaining to family empowerment as an important tool in fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.

In addition, we encourage the Commission for Social Development to establish an appropriate follow-up mechanism for the observance of the International Year of the Family in order to guide national policy development. The family agenda should therefore be significantly advanced at the international level in a coordinated and systematic way. Thus, a comprehensive review associated with the observance of the International Year of the Family promotes learning lessons, adopting best national policies and monitoring the progress achieved at the national and regional levels.

In that regard, Kazakhstan wishes to share its experience of contributing to the global review process. This year, Kazakhstan adopted its comprehensive Strategy 2050 and the corresponding new economic policy — the Nyrly Zhol, or Path to the Future — both of which were presented by President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan at his two latest state-of-the-union addresses. Those two documents aim to attain enhanced social standards focused on poverty eradication and earmarked social protection through improved education and high-quality health care, especially for persons with disabilities, the elderly, mothers and children. High priority is thereby given to healthful nutrition and a positive lifestyle. Measures will also be undertaken to modernize labour, employment and wage policies by enacting new laws and models of labour relations. At the same time, services will meet intellectual and information needs. The social sector gains predominance in the strategies of the national development of Kazakhstan. The new housing policy and infrastructure will revise the current rental housing

practices and construct social housing with low interest-rate mortgages to make housing more affordable for various strata of the population, including young families.

My Government will also increase its funding by an additional \$1 billion during 2015-2016. An amount of \$110 million will be allocated to address the problems related to inadequate schooling and the three-shift educational system. Ten institutions of higher education have been designated to ensure firm links among science, the various economic sectors and personnel training, with \$55 million earmarked from now through 2017.

The Government has also elaborated a sound programme of family development through its specialized National Commission on Gender and Family Demographic Policy, established 20 years ago. The Commission has been updating pertinent legislation and evaluating State plans, strategies and policies to improve the protection of children, reproductive health and the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation from diseases and serious medical conditions. The national plan of action for improving the status of women and the strategy on gender equality will strengthen the role of the family in society with gender equality as its key element.

Demographic stimulation is envisaged through maternity and child-care allowances. Likewise, social risks will be minimized by increased benefits from the State social insurance fund in cases of income lost due to pregnancy or childbirth, and for the adoption of newborn children, for childcare until 1 year of age and for financial allowances for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities.

Last year, by a presidential decree, a day of the family was established in Kazakhstan, aimed at enhancing the role of the family and family traditions. The day was celebrated with numerous family events and educational programmes. Separate mothers' and fathers' councils were established in close cooperation with civil society organizations. In addition, the National Commission plans to initiate family academies in every subregion of the country to unite and coordinate family-related non-governmental organizations. The currently operating 28 crisis centres will also pay attention to preventing domestic violence and assisting with family rehabilitation and skills training through increased budgetary provisions.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan is committed to work with the international community to share its experience and to learn the best practices of Member States to protect and promote family values to ensure stronger and more stable societies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco.

Mrs. Bruell-Melchior (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): At a time when we are preparing to define our development goals for the next 15 years, we all have recognized the importance of focusing our attention on the human being and on aiming for inclusive development. Families are the most faithful reflection, daily, of the strengths and weaknesses of action taken on matters of social protection and sustainable development, and they offer a unique perspective for the definition of our next development paradigm. Therefore, my country's Government ascribes to the family a particular role in our societies. As the basic building block of society, the family is a natural unit capable of promoting social development and the implementation of policies as part of a development strategy framework that favours an integrated approach. The family unit must contribute to the transmission of values based on respect for others, gender equality and the rights of children. It assumes, among other things, the primary responsibility for the development, education and socialization of children.

The observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family should be an opportunity to formulate general policies capable of optimizing the role of the family. Reconciling professional work life and family life must be a priority, especially to ensure the flourishing and well-being of all its members. In our Principality, the Government ensures that women can enjoy adequate social protection so that they can achieve a better balance between their private lives and their professional lives through the granting of maternity leaves, the allocation of family subsidies and the flexible planning of work schedules. In general, the services offered include housing assistance; parental leave, notably, maternity, paternity and adoption leaves; and access to nurseries and day care and home care for sick children.

Those services are complemented by further allocation of subsidies to all families, in particular to low-income, single-parent or young-couple families or those with special needs or people with disabilities. Those policies also extend to the elderly, who can

benefit according to their needs from medical and social assistance or to a temporary convalescent home after a hospital stay. To preserve the family unit, retirement homes welcome couples and take in residents who are in declining health; that stability is very much appreciated by families already being tested.

With the many challenges we face, Member States should invest in empowering the family so that it becomes an important tool in the fight against poverty. We must keep in mind that families, as basic units of social life, are important agents of sustainable development at all levels of society. The contribution of the family to the new post-2015 development framework is essential to effectively and successfully combat poverty.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): Egypt believes that the traditional family is the natural and fundamental core unit of society. The family has the primary responsibility for nurturing and protecting children, ensuring that they grow up in a family environment and enabling them to fully and harmoniously develop their personalities in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. That healthy family environment cannot be achieved without the total engagement of States and societies in protecting the family. Egypt emphasizes that family issues should be given the attention they are due in accordance with each country's laws, traditions and religious background. All cultures and traditions respect the family as the main unit of society and the guardian of children's rights.

During the deliberations of the Third Committee, Egypt was disappointed with the attempts of some Member States to introduce notions of gender identity and issues of sexual orientation into draft resolutions concerning the family and children and to impose those notions on other Member States. Egypt rejects such attempts for a number of reasons.

The first is that such notions of gender identity and sexual orientation are neither universally acceptable nor reflected in any international human rights instruments negotiated and adopted by consensus.

The second is that they are counterproductive and likely to have a negative impact on the concept of family that we are celebrating today.

The third is that imposing those notions, which are rejected by Egypt and many other Member States, as

well as a broad spectrum of civil society organizations, sets a negative precedent for the work of the United Nations and contravenes the principle of the Charter of the United Nations of non-intervention in Member States' internal affairs.

The fourth is that those notions run counter to the provisions of many universal instruments, among them the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the provisions of the latter that concern a child's right to an identity.

Egypt fully respects the human rights of all individuals on its territories, without discrimination based on colour, origin, sex, religion or ideology. Egypt has equal respect for the choices of other Member States based on their national cultures, laws and religions, and expects reciprocity.

Egypt urges Member States to abandon such controversial notions and to be practical in dealing with family issues. While we are preparing a new post-2015 development agenda, our main focus should be on developing family-oriented policies and providing the relevant education, housing and health-care services, with an intergenerational approach. Many families are still living in abject poverty. Our main objective should be to support those families, especially their members who are vulnerable women and children.

In conclusion, let us collectively pursue family-oriented development programmes and refrain from attempting to change other Member States' social and cultural patterns. Let us all work for our children's welfare according to each country's social and cultural patterns and understanding of the family. Let us help every family to raise its children within a normal environment while safeguarding their innocence and ensuring that it is not disturbed by controversial notions.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Ordoñez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to commend the President for convening this plenary meeting and for giving us this opportunity to discuss the role of family policies in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda. This meeting is particularly timely, since we have reached a crucial moment in defining the development agenda and taking decisive steps in the preparation of the draft final document that our Heads of State and Government will adopt next year.

Colombia's Constitution enshrines the notion that families have their own collective rights as well as a shared responsibility for ensuring the rights of their individual members. We have therefore developed and begun to implement policies enabling us to strengthen the family as an institution and ensure its comprehensive development as a fundamental unit of society.

In 2014, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, Colombia believes we should take advantage of the occasion to enhance the family's role in promoting sustainable development, strengthening intergenerational solidarity and furthering the recognition, protection and attention to the specific needs of the various forms that the family takes. In that regard, Colombia sees the role of the family in the post-2015 development agenda as based on recognizing it as an agent for sustainable development and a key player in implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

That is particularly important in view of the fact that the agenda should promote the possibility that families and their members can fully enjoy and exercise such rights as those of decent, good-quality work with a fair income, full health and social security, equal-opportunity education, the protection of family assets, mutual respect among family members and gender equality, among others. Those are all goals cited in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/69/970), which forms the fundamental basis for the post-2015 development agenda of the United Nations. We must therefore work to advance the development of an agenda that will help to empower the family and its members in dealing with sustainable development and in turn will enable them to participate in implementing the results of our deliberations in 2015.

Achieving the goals we have set ourselves for the post-2015 development agenda requires policies that take account of the family's evolution as an institution and meet the specific needs it is facing. As recent debates in negotiations in the Third Committee, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Population and Development, among others, have shown, reaching an international consensus on the best way to address family-related issues is not easy. However, we must recognize that there is no one family model and that we must adjust the way in which the United Nations addresses the issue in order to

reflect the demands of reality and societies' inevitable evolution.

If we are to achieve social development and improve our peoples' living conditions, we cannot ignore the particular needs and challenges facing single-parent families, families in which grandparents or aunts and uncles are raising grandchildren or nieces and nephews, families whose members are physically separated by members' migration, the particular family configurations of indigenous peoples and those of same-sex couples. Recognizing such individual realities of the various forms the family can take will not only give us better results in achieving our post-2015 development agenda goals, it will also enable us to improve the promotion and protection of human rights and the realization of our objectives as democratic, inclusive and pluralistic countries.

Eradicating poverty is the greatest challenge facing the world today and an essential condition for sustainable development, which is why our discussions must enable us to see progress in making a reality of the promise of striving for a fair, equitable and inclusive world and working together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and the protection of the environment, in an atmosphere conducive to families' achievement of their rights and responsibilities.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Bayat Mokhtari (Islamic Republic of Iran): If a nation is to live in peace and prosperity, free from want, fear, corruption and crime, and become a nation of beautiful minds and rich ethics, there are two key members of society who can make a difference. They are the father and the mother, who create the family.

The General Assembly decided to celebrate the International Year of the Family in recognition of the central role that the family plays in social development and of the need to focus on a comprehensive, people-centred perspective on development issues. The observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family creates momentum to remind the international community once again of the important objectives of the International Year of the Family. It also creates an opportunity to refocus our attention on the pre-eminent role that the family plays as a major contributor to international development

efforts. It goes without saying that strengthening the family can contribute to eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and even Ebola.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to eradicating poverty, advancing education and reducing maternal mortality, is a great challenge. The means for advancing the Goals can be better enabled by placing greater emphasis on strategies that incorporate the role of the family. By the same token, family policy development should be included as we draw up the post-2015 development agenda by inviting Member States and United Nations system organizations to take into account the role of the family as a major contributor to sustainable development. The need to strengthen family policy development in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals should therefore be emphasized.

Notwithstanding the demographic, social and economic changes occurring around the world that affect the family, more or less everywhere, the family remains the basic societal unit of reproduction, consumption, asset-building and, in many parts of the world, production. The family bears the primary responsibility for the development, education and socialization of children. It provides material and non-material care and support to its members and is the backbone of intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion.

The achievement of development goals depends, to a significant extent, on how the family and its members are empowered to fulfil their numerous functions. Accordingly, family-oriented policies have a unique role to play in helping families to fulfil their functions and benefit society at large.

Although, there is no specific international instrument to advance a family perspective in development, Governments have been actively pursuing family-oriented policies at the national level, largely in response to the increasing challenges faced by the family.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the family is the fundamental unit of society and the main centre for the growth and edification of human beings. Article 10 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran stipulates that:

“Since the family is the fundamental unit of the society, all laws, regulations and pertinent programmes must tend to facilitate the formation of the family, and to safeguard its sanctity and the stability of family relations on the basis of the law and ethics of Islam”.

The Government of Islamic Republic of Iran, in pursuing Iranian religious and cultural values and in fulfilling its international obligations, is fully committed to continuing its efforts to ensure the provision of the necessary protection and promotion of the institution of the family. In the same vein, concrete measures have been undertaken by the relevant authorities and stakeholders in Iran. I will touch upon some of those measures.

The family perspective has been integrated into the five-year national development plan, and, accordingly, the necessary budget resources have been allocated for the protection and promotion of the institution of the family. Grants and loans with preferential terms are provided to families in need, especially to households headed by single females. Public-health services are provided to low-income households, especially in rural areas. Consultative centres have been established at the local and national levels in order to provide advice to those in need. Such consultative services are basically demand-oriented and are provided on various family-related issues, such as health, education, employment and family planning. Those services are usually provided free of charge by the Government, as well as by civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The provision of the necessary social security and protection for women and girls is facilitated and the protection for mothers, especially during pregnancy, orphans and widows ensured. We are investing extensively in the education and health sectors, with particular attention to women and girls, with a family perspective, especially in rural areas. We are promoting the role of pro-family NGOs and the participation of civil society as well as think tanks, academia and research institutions in designing and implementing family-related policies and programmes aiming at strengthening and maintaining the integrity and well-being of the family. And we are establishing various committees and working groups in the different branches of the Government to deal with specific problems that members of the family, especially female

members, may face, such as violence, unemployment, ageing, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

In conclusion, as the Secretary-General accentuated in his 2011 report on the Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond,

“the majority of the Millennium Development targets, especially those relating to the reduction of poverty, education of children and reduction in maternal mortality, are difficult to attain unless the strategies to achieve them focus on the family.”
(A/66/62, para. 7)

Therefore, as the international community takes its historic decisions regarding the sustainable development goals in the post-2015 development agenda, the inclusion of strengthening family policy development is inevitably a must.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Hamilton (United States of America): I am pleased to further discussion at the United Nations about the human rights enjoyed by all individuals within a family, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The family clearly plays an important role within society, and we have come to observe that the nature and role of the family adapt over time while the family retains its fundamental value. We believe that the family plays an essential role in the raising of children and in fostering an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, as recent General Assembly resolutions on the family have described.

We believe that social development across the globe requires stable and strong families of all types to address the important issues of poverty, work-life balance and support among and between the generations. Any and all United Nations discussions on the important role of the family must consider all types of loving families that exist today, be those families headed by one mother and father, a single parent, a same-sex couple, grandparents or the myriad other family structures that provide essential support for raising children. It is essential that the United Nations recognize these various forms of the family as we further address human rights and the family throughout various United Nations forums, including any discussion that may take place in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. In our work, we do not want to leave anyone behind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Eriza (Indonesia): It is a great privilege for me to share Indonesia's views on the occasion of the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The family is the core element of human development as well as of the cohesion of society. Within the course of development, the family unit releases people to act as players and participants in different areas. That is an indispensable role that cannot be replaced. For that reason, this fundamental institution of society and development must be continuously promoted. We must also provide an opportunity to share good practices in family policymaking and further discuss the growing challenges faced by families worldwide, in particular in their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Allow me to share our views on the issue at hand.

First of all, Indonesia attaches great importance to the role of the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society. As Confucius once said, the strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home. We therefore believe that a stable and healthy family is the backbone of a strong society, which is needed to ensure a nation's well-being.

Secondly, despite the growing acknowledgement of the important role of the family in development, the family is often excluded from the development process. Such exclusion leads to increasing inequality in the form of economic and social exclusion, which are major barriers in the common endeavour to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. To tackle those challenges, Indonesia wishes to emphasize the importance of the empowerment of the family in supporting development to contribute to enhancing social integration, economic inclusion and supporting efforts to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Thirdly, Indonesia is of the view that the value of the family in development deserves due consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. As the Secretary-General notes in his recent report, adding the role of the family to the post-2015 development agenda would be a step forward in the direction of empowerment and the reduction of inequality, and contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Nonetheless, as we turn

towards future development goals, it is indeed a timely juncture to mainstream the family as the fundamental unit of community in development processes.

Indonesia has been an avid promoter of the perspective of the family in development and social policies. The Government of Indonesia has enacted a number of national laws and established national bodies to address issues related to marital and family institutions. Together with civil society and other relevant stakeholders, the Government has also produced policies at the municipal level to complement those national laws and bodies. Indonesia has also developed the national initiative of family day. More than just a simple ceremonial celebration on 29 June of every year, the initiative also aims to raise awareness of the importance of the family as the core unit of society and to promote national family-related multisectoral services, including family planning and family counselling. Over the years, our Government has been engaging families, in urban as well as rural communities, as instrumental partners in rendering social safety nets as well as in empowering and enabling women and all persons of the family to unleash their maximum potential and fulfil the roles in development.

On a final note, my delegation believes that the series of events commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family will further echo the global recognition of the central role of the family in ensuring social and economic development and the importance of building a comprehensive people-centred approach with regard to development. To achieve that, we encourage all countries to continue their efforts to fulfil the objectives of International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes, both by developing strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening national capacities on family issues and by strengthening international cooperation at all levels. Such cooperation is imperative in advancing the role of the family in important areas, including property eradication.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): One of the most significant challenges of our time is the increased poverty and inequality within and among countries. The eradication of poverty and inequality cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone, as it requires changes in economic structures in order to ensure access to resources and opportunities. Poverty and

inequality have various manifestations, from a lack of productive resources and access to land and of education to inadequate housing, social discrimination and exclusion. It occurs in all countries, as mass poverty in many developing countries and as pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries. It may be caused by an economic recession resulting in loss of livelihood, as experienced in 2008. It can also be aggravated by the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets.

These words were written almost two decades ago by us Member States, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Sadly, they depict a reality we still face, as poverty — and inequality, which I added to that excerpt — remain serious challenges worldwide.

In addition, rural-to-urban-centre migration and massive movements of migrants, refugees and displaced persons have profoundly changed family survival strategies and structures. Those changes have placed an extra burden on women, especially those who provide for several dependants.

Today, women-led households account for 25 per cent in most of our societies. In many countries, women-led households are very often among the poorest because of wage discrimination, occupational segregation patterns in the labour market and other gender-based barriers. Discrimination against women usually starts in the realm of the family. That is one of the reasons that back in Beijing in 1995 we agreed on the need to eliminate intra-family discrimination against the girl child and on the supportive, nurturing and educational role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

Education is a human right and is recognized as an essential dimension for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. According to the Beijing Platform for Action,

“non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change. The literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in

society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth that is both sustained and sustainable". (*A/CONF.177/20, paragraph 69*).

Those words could not be more relevant today.

Against the backdrop of poverty and inequality, the post-2015 development agenda offers a historic opportunity to make adjustments and correct priorities for the decades ahead. In compliance with the Rio+20 vision, the post-2015 agenda should aim for social inclusion and more equitable and sustainable societies. To that end, we have agreed that the eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequalities must be prioritized, while not losing focus on issues and groups that require special attention, such as women, girls, older persons, persons with disabilities and youth — all of them as individuals or as members of a family.

As the main basis for the post-2015 agenda, the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970), which includes a set of 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets, places human rights and development at the centre of our efforts. It builds on recent successful experiences of developing and developed countries. Those who invested in social inclusion and anti-recession policies in the last six years are now reaping the benefits associated with the redistribution of wealth. Prioritizing social protection, decent work, education and health can help eradicate poverty and pave a new path for development that is inclusive and sustainable for individuals and families.

As we agreed at both Cairo and Beijing, families should be strengthened and are entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist. The rights, capabilities and responsibilities of family members must be respected. In the years since Cairo and Beijing we have recognized that families can make an important contribution to development. We have also agreed on the critical role that women play in families. They contribute to families' welfare and society's development to an extent still not universally acknowledged or valued in its full importance today.

In the case of Brazil, in the last decade we have experienced an unprecedented reduction in inequality. That has been made possible through a framework of economic stability, access to credit, the promotion of decent work, the expansion of social-protection systems and investment in human capabilities. Our best-known social-protection programme, the Family Stipend, is centred on women. It constitutes recognition in practice of the fact that women head at least one fourth of all households, both worldwide and in Brazil, and that many other households are dependent on female income even when men are present. The success of the Family Stipend programme testifies to the fact that if we had not targeted all kinds of families — single-parent, no-children, same-sex and no-parent — we would not have lifted 36 million Brazilians out of poverty into the middle class. Quite the opposite — we would have helped to deepen their vulnerabilities and the multiple intersecting forms of discrimination they already suffer from. Such measures would never have succeeded without an open-minded perspective on the family unit. Brazil is firmly committed to protecting all forms of families from socioeconomic vulnerabilities, with a view to eradicating poverty, promoting their social inclusion, creating decent work for all and eliminating domestic violence.

We understand that individuals in a family hold rights and fundamental freedoms no matter how their family is constituted. From Brazil's perspective, we should focus our attention on those in a situation of vulnerability, among them children, young people, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and all individuals who are victims of prejudice and discrimination, including by virtue of their race, religion or sexual orientation. One of our concerns is addressing the many challenges that women face in their family life as a consequence of discrimination, bearing the burden of unpaid work and, above all, suffering from domestic violence, which is a grave violation of human rights and limits the enjoyment of all other fundamental freedoms.

Finally, I would like to express our belief that the United Nations can stand up for people in need and recognize vulnerabilities beyond cultural divides and countries' specifics. Human rights are universal and should be universally promoted and protected. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, let us raise our awareness of the fact that a one-dimensional perspective on families

can mean keeping millions of persons excluded from society, depriving them of citizenship and a better future in the twenty-first century.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Larsen (Norway): Norway has been actively engaged in working to formulate ambitious sustainable development goals and in the process of creating a post-2015 development agenda. We have taken a human-based approach to our priorities, and we welcome today's discussion on advancing the rights of all the individuals within families, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. To us, families are fundamental group units and important bearers of tradition and culture in our societies, and they should be a safe place for children. What constitutes a family has changed and will continue to change over time and around the world. No individuals should be discriminated against because of the form of family to which they belong. Unfortunately, for many the family is a setting for rejection, discrimination and even violence. Norway believes that we must continue to recognize diversity within the concept of the family, including acknowledging parents of the same gender.

Norway believes that gender equality and the advancement of women's rights are key to the post-2015 agenda. Ensuring women's economic independence and freedom from violence and suppression, as well as safeguarding women's reproductive rights within the family, is important in that regard. And men play an important role in advancing women's rights, whether they are husbands, fathers, brothers or sons. In that regard, we welcome UN-Women's "HeForShe" campaign.

Gender equality is a right in itself, but it is also smart economics, and thus key to sustainable development. And we speak from experience. At the beginning of the previous century, Norway was among the poorest countries in Europe. Investment in gender equality accelerated development and economic growth. Norwegian women's participation in the workforce has increased from 50 per cent in 1970 to more than 75 per cent today, representing a source of wealth not only for the family but also for Norway as a whole. If Norwegian women's participation in the workforce was the same as the average of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, we would have lost an amount equivalent to the Norwegian oil fund, which is more than \$800 billion. Our experience

shows that welfare schemes that enable women to combine work and caring for children are key to economic development.

This year we are also celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To a large extent, the Convention has set the agenda for Norway's policies concerning children and their families over the past 25 years. The rights of children and young people must be respected within the family, including, for example, their right to education and information and to privacy and confidentiality, as well as their right to health, including sexual and reproductive health. In our experience, allowing children to be heard and to participate in processes that affect their lives and well-being paves the way to better policies and more sustainable solutions. In every society, children are the experts on children's lives.

While we want the family to be the safest place there is for a child, sadly, a main finding in one of UNICEF's recent reports, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, shows that six children in 10 worldwide — almost 1 billion of those aged between 2 and 14 — are subjected to corporal punishment by their caregivers on a regular basis. In all regions of the world, violence often occurs in the context of families, especially towards women, children and the elderly. Domestic violence occurs in every society. We would therefore like to recall States' obligation to protect the human rights of individual family members from human rights violations or abuses that occur in a family context. It is of the utmost importance that those who provide parental guidance and care always have the best interests of the child as their main objective. Norway believes that preventive efforts and good parenting are one way of preventing domestic violence. In a few weeks we will launch a new action plan to intensify efforts against violence and abuse against children, entitled "A good childhood lasts a lifetime". We will also deliver a white paper on family policies to our Parliament next year. We therefore welcome today's debate, as it provides input on areas where we need to strengthen our efforts and strategies in the best interests of the child.

I would like to conclude by inviting all those present to an event to be held next week on 10 December, Human Rights Day, entitled "Love is a family value: supporting all families and family members", in the Chamber of the Economic and Social Council.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Urbańczyk (Holy See): My delegation warmly welcomes the holding of this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The anniversary is a good opportunity to consider what has been achieved over the past 20 years, and thus to highlight the importance of the family and understand its functions and needs, focus on the rights and responsibilities of all family members, strengthen national institutions and formulate, implement and monitor policies regarding the family.

Along those lines, the Holy See hopes this meeting will help States, and the United Nations as a whole, acknowledge the role of the family in formulating and implementing the post-2015 sustainable development goals. The family is critically important as one of those intangible assets that societies and States need. In efforts that range from preventing conflicts to building peaceful societies, from fostering agriculture to preventing crime in inner cities, from caring for the Earth to ensuring food security, from eradicating poverty to sustaining healthy communities, the family is and always will be at the forefront. Its contribution to the life of societies and States transcends tangible measures and defies monetary quantification. A family animated by unity and mutual responsibility makes an undeniable contribution to nurturing future generations and taking care of the more vulnerable members of our society, such as the sick, the elderly and the marginalized. As Pope Francis has affirmed, the family is a fundamental pillar of society, the foundation of coexistence and a guarantee against social fragmentation.

Given the family's exceptional potential and the obvious and widely acknowledged social and economic contribution it makes to society, it is sad to note that, as the Secretary-General's report underlines (A/69/61), families are rarely the focus of major policy initiatives. Often such policies target women and children separately, not the family unit per se. While that may be understandable for particular reasons, the fight against violence and discrimination against women and girls and for the empowerment of women and the promotion of the rights of children could yield greater results if we took a more integrated approach of focusing on the family unit. Indeed, studies show that those who build stable families are at a lower risk for domestic violence, mental illness and alcoholism. Children in such families display a lower risk of alcoholism, drug addiction and mental illness, a lower incidence of criminality later

in life, and higher academic achievement. In many cases, the breakdown of families also contributes to feminizing poverty and stunting child development. From an economic perspective, a stable family is the lowest-cost option for both its members and the State.

My delegation considers it urgent that the post-2015 development agenda create an environment conducive to strengthening and supporting the family, in order to enable it to undergird the maintenance of peace and security, the advancement of women and girls, respect for fundamental human rights, the reconciliation of work and family life and shared parental responsibility for children's upbringing and development. While echoing the recommendations articulated in the Secretary-General's report, my delegation would like to reiterate a strong call to all international and national institutions and State and civil-society structures to promote and advance family empowerment through appropriate family-centred policies and programmes, without falling into what Pope Francis has referred to as the trap of being limited by ideological concepts. The family is indeed an indispensable, natural and anthropological asset to humankind. Let us promote and support it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. The plenary devoted to the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is now concluded.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 26.

Agenda item 123 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Draft resolution (A/69/L.27)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 123 and its sub-items (a) to (y) at its 48th plenary meeting, on 11 November 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.27.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Proceeding from the mandate given by the Committee of Ministers of the

Council of Europe for the period from May to November 2014, I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/69/L.27, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe”. In addition to the 34 sponsors listed in the document, the following countries have joined the list: Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Macedonia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino and Sweden.

Since its adoption in its first version by the General Assembly in 2000 (resolution 55/3), today’s draft resolution has evolved as a reflection of the increasing cooperation between the two organizations. Over the years, that collaboration has further deepened, creating more opportunities for synergies and partnerships in areas of common interest.

Today’s draft resolution A/69/L.27 includes some updates with regard to the work undertaken by the Council since the adoption of resolution 67/83, while recognizing its important role and contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the promotion of democracy and the strengthening the rule of law through its standards, principles and monitoring mechanism as well as to the effective implementation of the relevant international legal instruments.

The draft resolution also acknowledges the importance of the work of the Council in a broader context, and the growing interests in its activities aimed at enhancing dialogue in cooperation between international and regional mechanisms. Focusing on its core values, the Council has also contributed to the enhancement of stability, social cohesion and cultural diversity within and beyond the region.

The Council of Europe remains committed to the promotion of its objectives around its three key pillars — human rights, democracy and the rule of law — and stands ready for dialogue and cooperation to advance its core values and achieve greater synergy between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all members of the Council of Europe for their cooperation and the support extended to us during our chairmanship, and to all the other delegations for their constructive approach and contributions to the discussions on the draft resolution, enabling us to arrive at an agreement on the text.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.27. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe”. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/69/L.27 was adopted (resolution 69/83).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Van Den Akker (European Union): In view of the adoption of resolution 69/83, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe”, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Switzerland and the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We welcome the adoption of this resolution, which aims to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Since the signing, in 1951, of the agreement between the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the United Nations, the cooperative arrangements between the respective secretariats in 1971 and resolution 44/6, of 1989, the Council of Europe has continued to contribute to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Moreover, the Council of Europe has striven to improve the synergy between its work and that of the United Nations.

The resolution before us contains an operational paragraph on questions relating to human rights. In the informal consultations, several delegations called for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. Unfortunately, we note with regret that this call has once again not been taken on board and that the paragraph on this issue was not retained. The Council of Europe, together with the European Union, its member States and many other European and non-European countries, has been engaged in this campaign for a long time. On the occasion of the World Day against the Death

Penalty, on 10 October, the Council of Europe, via its Secretary General, appealed to all the States Members of the United Nations to support the moratorium on the use of the death penalty. We therefore strongly urge that in future this issue be included in the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 123?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at noon.