



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: rethinking and strengthening social  
development in the contemporary world**

### **Statement submitted by Service and Research Institute on Family and Children, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## **Statement**

### **Introduction**

Our contemporary world is bewildered by the severity of the global crisis, which is manifest in increasing and dehumanizing poverty, growing injustice, economic disparity, rampant corruption, a state of continual war in many parts of the globe, trafficking in women and children, cross-border terrorism and global networks of drug cartels and weapons traffickers, all of which can be summed up as a breakdown of all human safety nets and democratic systems, increasing cultural confusion and the collapse of civilization.

The objective of the present statement is to highlight the crucial role of the family in social development.

### **Overview**

In this complex and complicated sociopolitical, economic and cultural contemporary global scenario, the possibility of rethinking and strengthening development efforts is of very little avail unless there is an immediate, intense and concerted effort to demystify the term “development”. Unless and until there is a commitment to identify, name and take collective ownership of the global crisis by the very groups that created it, the threats to humanity will continue. Contrary to the Western world’s conception, development cannot be equated with economics nor achieved in economic terms. Development must have at its core the well-being of the human person.

The call, therefore, is not for a mere rethinking, but for a radical way of thinking that achieves effective, long-term and long-lasting change by restoring a type of family life that nurtures upright men and women, as well as financiers and politicians who are attuned to the common good. Priority attention must be paid to the realization that families continue to be responsible for the proper use of resources, as well as for the raising of children, whose growth and development they support emotionally, financially and materially.

The Service and Research Institute on Family and Children, which has worked for over two decades in the area of family life, has demonstrated that the family serves as the primary locus for the integration and preservation of social and human values, as well as for the transmission of culture, by educating, training and motivating people and investing in their future, all of which constitutes a vital resource for development. In many parts of the world, families are units of production that create employment and income. As consumption units, they have a direct impact on sustainability. Therefore, the key to strengthening development in contemporary society lies in a greater appreciation for the role of the family in sustainable development.

### **The way forward**

Such an approach requires fresh thinking and a new vision, namely, a call for investment in family-centred practices. This entails an innovative way of working with children, women and families who are at risk or embroiled in contemporary crises. The approach is based on a set of radical principles, values and beliefs that recognize the critical role of the family as the common vehicle for poverty

alleviation. Attention must, therefore, be paid to the family, with a focus on its strengths. The approach must be culturally responsive and educationally enlightened, employing a paradigm of empowerment based on collaborative partnerships with families.

**Conclusion**

It is necessary to realize that families give form to the fabric of the larger society. Hence, empowering families is crucial for present and future generations and essential for the world's future. Such proactive thinking, coupled with family-centred action, amounts to a highly positive approach for social and human development in contemporary society.

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