

Civil Society Statement on Parenting

Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development organized an International Conference on Parenting, Child Wellbeing and Development in partnership with UNICEF on 23-24 October. Preceding this conference, DIFI convened a Meeting for Civil Society Organizations on Parenting in partnership with the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) on 22 October 2018. The participants in this meeting collaboratively decided to make the following statement during the Conference:

The Statement:

We, representatives of the Civil Society organizations [1] participating in the Civil Society Meeting on Parenting organized by Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) in partnership with the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) on 22 October 2018;

Having considered the scientific evidence that confirms the importance of positive parenting practices and behaviors to health, education, child wellbeing and overall wellbeing outcomes for children, including adolescents;

Conscious of the importance of supporting families, parents and caregivers in their “crucial role in social development, as they bear the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of children as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society”¹, while providing material and non-material care and support to all family members, especially those in vulnerable situations;

Recognizing that “the child, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding”²;

Recalling that, “the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015, identified the potential of families to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty and the creation of just, inclusive and secure societies”³;

¹ A/66/62-E/2011/4

² Convention on the Rights of the Child, Preamble, A/RES/44/25, A/RES/50/155, (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>)

³ General Assembly Report A/HRC/31/37. Par, 4 (<http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/31/37>)

Taking into account target 5.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development –“recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies”;⁴

1. **We emphasize** that family is the fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state, as indicated in Article (16.3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. **We reaffirm** that parents are critical to children’s development, adjustment and success and that evidence-based programs supporting parents are cost effective ways to strengthen parent –child relationships, caregiving, and the health, safety and resilience of children and all members of the family;
3. **We highlight** that “initiatives supporting the role of grandparents have been found to be beneficial in advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity, as well as in promoting and protecting the human rights of all family members”;⁵
4. **We express our concern** that the wellbeing of the parents themselves, their relationship with each other and their different needs are frequently overlooked within social policies and programs;

Therefore, we call on governments, national and international organizations, academic and research institutions, donors and the private sector to support families, parents and caregivers everywhere by:

1. Adopting policies that enable work-family balance like “flexible working and leave arrangements, parental leave, affordable, accessible and good quality childcare and initiatives to promote the equal sharing of household responsibilities, including unpaid care work, between men and women”,⁶
2. Investing in parenting education programs that address the different range of parenting needs and dimensions; empower parents and caregivers to continue to build on their good practices while enabling them to adopt others that will improve children’s health, development, learning and wellbeing and ensure they are protected;
3. Making the wellbeing of parents, children and other caregivers’ explicit objectives of parenting policies and programs while investing in universal, positive parenting

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1, annex, para. 25.

⁵ General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/145: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/72/145>

⁶ A/Res/72/145

programs and services that are sensitive to the requirements of individual families and the different needs of mothers, fathers and other caregivers.

4. Recognizing the contribution and responsibility of men to families, developing policies to address the absence of males/fathers on family wellbeing and promote active and present fatherhood;⁷
5. Recognizing the valuable contribution of grandparents to parenting and “investing in family policies and programs that promote strong intergenerational interactions, such as intergenerational living arrangements and parenting education in an effort to promote inclusive urbanization, intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion;⁸
6. Investing in research on families and parenting, program evaluations and impact assessments of parenting policies and programs, so that the role of parents and their contribution to children’s wellbeing and social development can be better understood by all stakeholders;
7. Creating an enabling environment for meaningful contributions of civil society organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of family policies and programs, removing barriers to the establishment, work and funding of non-governmental organizations.⁹

We call on all the participants in the International Conference on Parenting, Child Wellbeing and Development, in their different capacities, to join us in promoting this statement.

[1] List of Civil Society organizations participating in the statement:

- The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI)
- The International Federation of Family Development (IFFD)
- World Family Organization
- International Federation for Home Economics
- Focus on the Family Malaysia
- Fathers in Africa
- Ngala Parenting with Confidence
- European Large Families Confederation
- Parents Forum

⁷ Doha Call to Action, 2014:

⁸ A/Res/72/145

⁹ Doha Call to Action, 2014.