



United Nations
International Day of Families
SYMPOSIUM



*Creating a World of Peace:
One Family at a Time*

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
New York • Conference Room 2
May 18, 2009



UN Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Families

New York, 15 May 2009 —

This year's International Day of Families, being commemorated under the theme, "Mothers and Families: Challenges in a Changing World," focuses on the important role of mothers for families and communities around the world.

Mothers play a critical role in the family, which is a powerful force for social cohesion and integration. The mother-child relationship is vital for the healthy development of children. And mothers are not only caregivers; they are also breadwinners for their families. Yet women continue to face major – and even life-threatening – challenges in motherhood.

Childbirth, which should be a cause for celebration, is a grave health risk for too many women in developing countries. Improving maternal health is the Millennium Development Goal on which the least progress has been made. A woman in a least-developed country is 300 times more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications than a woman in a developed country. We must make pregnancy and childbirth safer by enabling health systems to provide family planning, skilled attendance at birth and emergency obstetric care.

Violence against women, many of whom are mothers, remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time. It has far-reaching consequences –endangering the lives of women and girls, harming their families and communities, and damaging the very fabric of societies. Ending and preventing violence against women should be a key priority for all countries.

We must also ensure universal access to education. The benefits of educating women and girls accrue not only to individual families but to whole countries, unlocking the potential of women to contribute to broader development efforts. Statistics also show that educated mothers are much more likely to keep their children in school, meaning that the benefits of education transcend generations.

As we strive to support mothers in their caregiving work, we should develop and expand family-friendly policies and services, such as child care centres, that would reduce some of the workload placed on women. Women and men alike need stronger public support to share equally in work and family responsibilities. Families built on the recognition of equality between women and men will contribute to more stable and productive societies.



**United Nations
International Day of Families
Symposium**

**“Creating a World of Peace:
One Family at a Time”**

**United Nations • New York, NY
Conference Room 2
May 18, 2009**

Sponsored by:

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Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union

Organized by:

Universal Peace Federation

Program

3:00 – 3:50 p.m. OPENING PLENARY: “CREATING A WORLD OF PEACE: ONE FAMILY AT A TIME”

Chair: **H.E. Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu**
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Nigeria

Welcome Remarks: **H.E. Mr. Alpha Ibrahim Sow**
Permanent Representative,
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guinea

Special Messages: **H.E. Mr. Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann**
President, of the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

H.E. Dr. Abdelaziz Hegazy
Former Prime Minister of Egypt.
Chairman, General Federation of NGOs and Foundations, Egypt

Speakers: **H.E. Mr. Nassir A. Al-Nasser**
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar

Rep. Gregory Meeks
U.S. Congressman, New York, 6th Congressional District

Mr. Eric Olson
Focal Point, United Nations Programme on the Family, Division for
Social Policy and Development

Dr. Thomas Walsh
Secretary General, Universal Peace Federation

Moderator: **Mr. Taj Hamad**
Director, Office of UN and International Relations, UPF

4:00 – 4:30 p.m. SESSION TWO: “WOMEN AND FAMILY”

Chair: **H.E. Mrs. Lila Hanitra Ratsifandrihamanana**
Ambassador, Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union

Speakers: **H.E. Mr. Hamid Al Bayati**
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Iraq

Ms. Sharon Hamilton
President and Founder, World Harmony Council and Forum

Mrs. Lynn Walsh
Chairwoman, Women for Peace, Universal Peace Federation





4:30 – 5:00 p.m. SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

Dr. Deepak Chopra
President, Alliance for New Humanity

5:00 – 5:30 p.m. SESSION THREE: “FAITH AND FAMILY”

Chair: H.E. Mr. Abdalmahmood A. Mohamad
Permanent Representative,
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan

Speakers: Imam Shamsi Ali
Islamic Cultural Center of New York

Dr. Nicolas Bikar
Educator, Lebanon

Mr. Steven Cayre
Founder, The Steven J. Cayre Foundation

Swami Parmeshananda
UN Representative, Bharat Sevashram Sangha

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. CLOSING SESSION

H.E. Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu,
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Nigeria

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim
Chair, UPF USA



Universal Peace Federation

Declaration on Families

New York, 15 May 2009 —

On the occasion of the International Day of Families on May 15, 2009, the Universal Peace Federation honors UN resolution 52/81 of 12 December 1997, in which the United Nations General Assembly recognizes the need to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions. UPF offers the following recommendations:

First, Universal Peace Federation acknowledges that the family is a microcosm of the global community. If the world is to finally come to an era of sustainable peace and harmony among civilizations, that peace must be founded on this basic, most intimate social unit of humankind. In other words, the family is the central building block of society, as well as being an instrument for peace and reconciliation.

Second, the family is universal. Regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliations, we are all members of families. Most importantly, the family is the school of love and ethics. Through experiences in our families, we learn to embrace and value all relationships in our wider human family; with friends, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues and strangers.

Third, marriage and family are the basis of human development and the core institutions for education in character, ethics, social relationships, and citizenship. Strong, healthy, loving families help protect society from the moral decline of its youth, increase in crime, drug abuse and corruption, as well as the spread of diseases, such as AIDS. In addition, it can help break down the age-old resentments that have fueled religious, tribal and civil conflict.

Fourth, throughout history, the family has successfully adapted to change. It has survived revolutions, outlived empires, and endured through the economic and social unrest of many societies. This adaptability, however, is now being threatened by a wide range of social developments, economic, cultural, and political. Now is the time to strengthen the family. Restoring the family is one way we can address the proliferation of social and civil problems plaguing the world today.

Fifth, lasting peace is secured not merely through laws, backed by the power of government enforcement, but by a rising awareness of our universal solidarity as one human family, brothers and sisters who share a common spiritual and moral heritage. We are one family under God. Universal Peace Federation thereby resolves to join the United Nations to declare May 15th as

The International Day of Families



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