

UPF UN: Experts Review Second World Summit on Social Development

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New York, United States – The NGO Committee on the Family, NY – of which UPF is an executive member – held a virtual program on November 20, 2025, to review the Second World Summit for Social Development held in Doha, Qatar, from November 4-6. The summit aimed to address the largely poor progress in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The expert panel had a special interest in the degree to which the family could potentially accelerate the attainment of Agenda 2030.

Mr. Dale-Gunn Lawton, representing LDS Charities, served as the moderator, handling questions from the audience, and **Ms. Lynn Walsh**, representing UPF, opened and introduced the event.

Ms. Renata Kaczmarek, focal point on the family in the Division for Inclusive Social Development at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), gave an overview of the scale and content of this large gathering, with a special focus on programs and discussions related to the family. She reported that 40 heads of state and government, 230 ministers and senior officials, and almost 14,000 participants were present.

Although other issues were far more predominant, some governments noted the importance of the family in social development. Many civil society organizations partnered with governments to hold side events and solution sessions focusing on family policies, intergenerational issues, capacity development, care work, and other topics, with many best practices both strengthening the family and utilizing the unique resources that families provide to society.

Dr. Khalid Al-Naama, senior researcher at the Doha International Family Institute, who also attended WSSD2, first described Qatar's current challenges: increased divorce, delayed marriage, fertility decline, the negative impact of social media and digital addiction, and growing mental health issues, especially among youth and families, echoing a fairly global plight. DIFI's research has helped Qatar focus attention on the problems of early marital breakup, couples' poor relationship and communication skills, parents' difficulty managing children's behavior, and steep decline in childbirth.

He then presented a wealth of family policies and programs Qatar has initiated to ameliorate these problems. Family counseling, marriage preparation, parenting, and family bonding programs are increasingly being offered. A mandatory national pre-marital education program has been launched, as well as increased conflict management and parenting support services. Addressing the key concern of low fertility rate, Qatar has introduced family-centered work-life policies, increased parental leave and housing support, and started a fertility awareness campaign. The government is developing a national digital literacy and cyber safety program for youth and parents, as well as financial literacy programs.

Ms. Kaczmarek reported that at the conclusion of the summit, UN member states adopted a Political Declaration which invites governments, international organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, and the UN system to step up engagement on social development issues, including through enhanced policies and programs that recognize the central role of families and households. UPF and the NGOFC, NY firmly believe that the central role of the family must be recognized and bolstered, and that, in light of many pressing global issues, this is becoming critical.