

UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ORGANISMES FAMILIAUX
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FAMILY ORGANISATIONS
الاتحاد الدولي للمؤسسات العائلية

Declaration of Family Rights

Proclaimed by

the International Union of Family Organisations

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Declaration of Family Rights

Statement of the Motives :

*"The family is the natural fundamental element of the Society and has the right to the protection of the Society and the State."
(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a. 16.3.)*

An assertion from which all the consequences must be drawn, from the completely theoretical intention to the political awareness of the educational, civil, social, economic and cultural role of families and to concretely appreciate the responsibilities which mutually bind families and the Society and each Nation and its families.

Founded on love, a family is the privileged area of the practice of values which at one and the same time constitute the principle and the finality of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of values which proclaim the great religions and those which are supported by the philosophies respectful of the Person.

The Family is the expression of humanity of Man.

Far from preventing each personality from expressing its different potentialities, whether they are parents or children, the family life allows them to become worthwhile by sharing a common project.

Each family is enrolled in time. It transmits the message of History and simultaneously takes part in evolution. Thus families express the permanence of life. They are at one and the same time the memories of tradition and the openings into the future which they help to build up.

As such, each single family exercises its functions at the service of the inseparable interest of its members and of the Society.

In doing so, families are actors and educative, social, economic and cultural partners. If they must benefit from rights linked to their responsibilities, they have obligations between their members and towards the Nation and the Society.

Thus is the necessity of a family policy justified : by the right to dignity that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes for each person in each function and notably in each family function, and by the very interest of Society which needs for its development in every field, active help from trained, responsible and solidary citizens. The Family is the first framework of solidarity and education.

Family policy is inevitably global because it is justified :

- by the fact that families are enrolled in time,
- by the respect of the unity of the family around an ideal and a common objective,
- and by the diversity of its functions.

It is therefore imperative to integrate the family facts, family interests, family and parental functions, charges and responsibilities which result and the expectations of families, in the political, economic, social and cultural debate. In all these spheres, families have problems, needs and identified charges, linked to the nature and the specific character of family life.

The family policy, because of the nature and specificity of the family and family life, is inevitably an autonomous policy. It should not be a secondary element derived from the social policy.

This philosophy and these considerations which have motivated the creation of the International Union of Family Organisations (IUFO) in 1947 guide all its action.

Present on each continent and in all cultures, IUFO is constituted of : associations, organisations and movements grouping families; institutions and organisations directly interested in family life; and Governmental Members.

IUFO represents all families and defends family interests at state and institutional level and among International Organisations.

As such, by its nature, its composition, its world-wide scope, its democratic character, its respect of diversities and differences, its action and its experience, IUFO is competent to draw up the "Declaration of Family Rights" which follows and to present it and propose it to International Institutions and Organisations, to States and to families themselves.

Text of The Declaration of Family Rights

Considering the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948,

Considering the Declaration on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989,

Considering the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979,

Observing a permanency of the family founded on the universal values of love, solidarity, liberty and responsibility and the diversity of its forms and status,

Wishing to further the recognition of the rights, roles and responsibilities of families, notably through the development of a progressive, appropriate, autonomous and global family policy at state and institutional level and amongst International Organisations

On the basis of its observations and work and drawing inspiration from the conclusions and declarations of its different authorities,

The International Union of Family Organisations declares

Article 1

The Family is the fundamental element of Society. It is a community of people, of functions, of rights and duties, and an emotional educative, cultural, civic, economic and social reality.

A natural framework for the development and well-being of all its members, it is a privileged area of exchanges, communication and solidarity between generations. It must be respected to receive protection and support and have access to necessary rights and services to exercise entirely its functions and responsibilities.

The unity and natural community of the family must be respected.

Article 2

Every person has the right to dignity and respect for his privacy and family life.

To found a family is an essential liberty. This right is independent of philosophical, political or religious choice of individuals and States.

"Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion; have the right to marry and to found a family..." (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a.16.1).

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses." (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a.16.2).

In consequence, each of the spouses must have equal rights.

Article 3

The parents have the responsibility of deciding the number of children they wish to bring into the world. States, the guardians of the common goods and individual liberties shall have the duty to create conditions allowing parents to exercise their choices and responsibilities.

Article 4

The responsibility of bringing up the children falls primarily and jointly on the parents. This solidarity demonstrated in the upkeep and education of the children must work in their interest whatever the conjugal status of the parents and its evolution. A child is not responsible for the status of its parents and must not be the victim of it.

The parents are the first persons responsible for the education that shall be given to their children. States have the duty to provide educative support and their social and material assistance to the families.

Its aim is the full development of personalities whilst respecting their differences and the strengthening of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It must promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all Nations, all ethnic or religious groups, all families, all individuals.

Article 5

Motherhood and childhood, before and after birth, are entitled to respect and due support and protection.

All children, whether born in or out of wedlock shall enjoy the same rights, especially with regard to social protection.

A child has a natural need for a father and a mother. States have the duty to encourage the full exercise of paternal, maternal and parental responsibilities by legislations and appropriate means.

If the parents judge that the interest of their child needs the permanent presence of one of them near him, the conditions of choice should be facilitated by adequate dispositions.

Legislations, rules and applications relative to the organisation of work and time, by means of custody of children, must take into account the necessity, for the parents, to harmonize, in humane and efficient conditions, the exercise of their activities notably professional with their responsibilities and family pressures.

The international agreements must take into account the child's interests in and outside his family.

Article 6

Each family has the right to have at its disposal economic and social conditions and means - revenues from a professional activity, different financial benefits, and services, - adapted to the reality of situations and needs.

The parents invest part of the resources of the family and part of their time in the upkeep and education of their children. This investment serves in the interest of the children and, because of this, that of the Society which in reciprocation of such a social effort must endeavour compensation.

The economic indicators must integrate the value of the time that the parents devote to the upbringing and education of their children. The family policy must take this into account.

Article 7

Owing to the importance of accommodation for personal and family life, housing constitutes an essential family right. Therefore, and for their full development, all families must have a suitable place for living, equipped for their needs.

Article 8

The environment is a factor indispensable for the quality of family lives. It must be, in all forms, the object of appropriate policies, notably for its protection and the management of space.

Article 9

Families must have access to all the means of communication with regard to elements of education, information, culture, development of interpersonal relationships and spare time.

Article 10

The ethical consequences of scientific research of life must be taken into account for their effect on the individual and the family and must respect the nature and the rights of one and the other.

Article 11

Families have the right to join forces to defend their moral and material interests. States have the duty to watch over their permanent representation and to guarantee it. This is in the joint interest of families and States.

Article 12

In order to assume their responsibilities and create conditions of dignity and success of their members, families need Peace. The States, whatever be the conflicts which oppose them, must firstly and always seek, by negotiation, peaceful solutions.

The upholding of a just and lasting Peace is linked to the existence of a sustainable development and of an active, economic, social and cultural solidarity between Nations, peoples and families.

In fact, the universal nature and dimension of the family find their concretisation in a solidarity which in itself is broadened in its universal dimension : ages, ethnic groups, cultures and Nations. This solidarity involves each generation. It involves : States, Institutions and International Organisations, and the International Union of Family Organisations. It also involves each person and each family.

* translation from French original