



Oral Statement of the Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam) at the 55th session of the Commission on Social Development

Thank you Chairperson,

The family is the natural social institution at the foundation of every society. Sadly, it is frequently overlooked by the international community even as the family faces new and never before experienced challenges.

Last year C-Fam launched the “The Family Articles”—the platform of a new coalition known as Civil Society for the Family. Over 180 pro-family organizations around the world that want the international community to protect the family in accordance with binding international human rights obligations have since subscribed to the articles. The articles and explanatory notes are available online at the website www.civilsocietyforthefamily.org.

The Articles make three main points, which we would like to repeat here.

First, protecting the family is an obligation under international human rights law.

The family is defined in international law and policy as “the natural and fundamental group unit of society.” As such, it is “entitled to protection by society and the State” and is a proper subject of human rights. Several well-established obligations in this regard are enshrined in binding human rights instruments.

Unfortunately, recent pressure to recognize social and legal arrangements between individuals of the same sex in the context of the United Nations has led to unnecessary confusion and acrimony in international negotiations on the subject of the family.

Only the natural family is entitled by under international law to specific protections by virtue of its natural character as the foundation of society. No other social and legal arrangement is entitled to the same protections.

Second, protecting the family is necessary to realize social and economic rights.

The self-evident truth of the benefit of the family to its individual members and society at large enshrined in international law is validated by the best available social science and research. Indeed, the social science and the data could not be clearer. Unless the family is empowered, poverty eradication will never be achieved and development will never be sustainable.



Third, some new social and legal arrangements, as well as certain reproductive technologies, threaten and undermine the right of the child to know and be cared for by his mother and father, as well as their health and well-being.

The right to know one's parents does not only entail the right to "know" one's biological identity, it entails the right to "grow up in an atmosphere of happiness love and understanding" in the context of the "natural environment for the growth and well-being" of children as the Prologue of the Convention on the Rights of the Child so eloquently describes.

We hope these considerations can help us move constructively beyond the current impasse on family policy here at the UN to recognize the importance of the family for all individuals and society at large as a rights holder, an agent of sustainable social and economic development, and a proper subject of international programs and policies.

Thank you,