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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: rethinking and strengthening social
development in the contemporary world**

Statement submitted by Confédération des organisations familiales de l'Union européenne, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The role of family organizations and the importance of family policymaking and exchange of good practices

COFACE commends all efforts made in drafting and adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 Development Agenda and believes that it is a good basis for which Member States and family organizations could build upon for further elaboration and discussion. COFACE and its 60 European member organizations, believe that the global and holistic SDGs are and will be key instruments for enhancing the well-being of families, improving the role of civil society organizations in policy actions, and drawing decision-makers' attention to policies that impact the daily life of families.

The SDGs and indicators incorporate and include several specific targets that relate to family policies in the areas of social integration, reconciling work and family life and intergenerational solidarity. Placing a strong emphasis on the role that family policies play in the achievement of the sustainable development goals is fundamental to securing the appropriate levels of funding and attention to family and social policies. The SDGs are for all families and also with all families!

As the recently adopted global SDGs will become applicable in January 2016 it is a key period for the Commission on Social Development. It is therefore crucial that the Commission recommits to its transformative approach, expressed in its Report during the fifty-third session that facilitates ways in addressing complex and interrelated issues, such as integrating social, and family, policies in the development agenda.

Inclusive transformation will be important in achieving the ambitious SDGs. COFACE supports this approach and calls upon every actor involved to make medium and long term commitments and actions that go beyond regular measures.

To highlight transverse and well-designed social policies COFACE, in cooperation with the UN Focal Point on the Family, is organising an international conference focussed on how family policies can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and thus feed into the global discussion on how social development can be best rethought and strengthened. We urge the Commission (in one of its most important roles in providing action-oriented policy guidance to all parts of the United Nations system) to further strengthen and promote stakeholders such as COFACE and support initiatives such as the COFACE conference: SDGs — the role of family policies and exchange of good practices.

COFACE recalls that in terms of well-designed social policies, rethinking and strengthening social development requires an inclusive and progressive approach. Comprehensive and pragmatic policy-making also requires cooperation and coordination between all concerned parties. Accordingly, COFACE and other stakeholders will continue to stimulate debate, create opportunities to learn from each other and encourage politicians at all levels to make commitments.

Family formations are constant changing across the globe, therefore family and social policies must constantly respond to recent trends and look for input, innovation and relevance from other areas of the economy and society. COFACE emphasises that creating synergies between various sectors has long-term positive and socially-desirable effects. Indeed, for the achievement of the most ambitious

global targets we need political will and dialogue with all concerned actors, social partners (representation by employers and employees, trade unions), and other stakeholders in the society).

One of the major challenges ahead will be finding solutions to how commitments can be translated into practice and how currently existing national programmes can be integrated into National Action Plans to achieving the SDG targets. COFACE calls for more involvement in core cross-cutting areas, such as family policies, where commitments and initiatives are necessary. In moving from engagement to real implementation COFACE counts on the active cooperation of governing bodies and companies, as well as family organizations and other stakeholders representing the interest of families. At its conference in 2016 COFACE will launch the Amsterdam Action Plan. This call for action based on the commitment of COFACE members and attendees will include concrete recommendations, timelines and guidelines on what actions are necessary in family policy development to achieve the SDG's in which COFACE and other stakeholders held an important role.

COFACE would like to end by thanking the UN Focal Point on the Family for its commitment to addressing family policy issues and its open and transparent cooperation with our network. We look forward to our joint event to engage with the family policy related targets of the SDGs.
