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STATEMENT

of international non-governmental organizations
in consultative status with ECOSOC on the
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

Participants at the World NGO Forum, coming from international, national and local organizations are cordially invited to support the attached Statement. The Statement was prepared by a group of international NGOs, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, and, as you will see from the attached list, has received substantial support. The INGO Statement will be part of the documentation prepared for the IYF launching Session of the UN General Assembly, 7 December 1993. The Chairman of the Vienna NGO Committee, Mr. D.O.Callagy will present it at this occasion. His report will include the results of the World NGO Forum and it is hoped that he will be in a position to inform the Delegates at the UN General Assembly of additional wide-spread support for the Statement, expressed by the all important NGO sectors at national and local level, represented at Malta.

You and your organization are invited to support this statement by signing the slip at the end of this page and by handing it to the IYF-NGO Secretariat.

The following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (category I, category II, or on the roster) have submitted already the

Statement on the International Year of the Family

- All-Indian Women 's Conference
- AMADE International
- Associated Country Women of the World
- Association Catholique Internationale de Services pour la Jeunesse Féminine
- Baha 'i International Community
- Catholic International Education Office
- Caritas Internationalis
- European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly
- European Union of Women
- Help Age International

p.t.o.

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WE/I SUPPORT THE INGO STATEMENT ON THE IYF 1994

NAME OF ORGANIZATION (please use capital letters)

Malta, date

Signature

International Association of Charities
International Catholic Child Bureau
International Confederation of Christian Family Movements
International Council of Jewish Women
International Council of Nurses
International Council of Pyschologists
International Council on Alcohol and Addictions
International Federation for Home Economics
International Federation of Business and Professional Women
International Federation of Pedestrians
International Federation of Social Workers
International Federation of University Women
International Federation on Ageing
International Inner Wheel
International Kolping Society
International Movement A.T.D. Fourth World
International Organization of Consumers Unions
International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling
International Social Service
International Union of Family Organizations
Italian Centre of Solidarity
La Leche League International
League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
New Humanity - focolare movement
Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Association International
Pax Romana (ICMICA-IMCS)
PRODEFA
Rotary International
Soroptimist International
SOS- Kinderdorf International
St. Joan's International Alliance
The Salvation Army
Women's International Zionist Organization
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
World Federation of Methodist Women
World Leisure and Recreation Association
World Movement of Mothers
World Organization for Early Childhood Education
World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations
World Vision International
World Young Women's Christian Association
Zonta International

**STATEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
ON THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (IYF) 1994**

(prepared for presentation at the IYF launching session of the UN General Assembly 1993 and for possible acclamation by the participants of the World NGO Forum in Malta, December 1993)

We, the undersigned international non-governmental organizations,

1- **welcome** the launching of the International Year of the Family and the related event, the World NGO Forum in Malta, and are confident that the deliberations at the Forum will assist in creating a world-wide IYF movement. Recalling the active contributions of the NGO sector in the preparations for IYF, the global meeting in Malta is a further expression of the efforts and potential of the non-governmental community at all levels in working for and with families;

2- **recognize** families as intrinsically self-reliant units in society which can, even in adverse external circumstances, regulate their own internal affairs and maintain successful and harmonious relationships;

3- **advocate** policies seeking to empower families as basic social groups, in order to provide continuity, security and dignity to families and their individual members in the light of wide-spread, constant and rapid changes resulting from the interactions between peoples and their environment;

4- **affirm** that families as the fundamental group units of society are entitled to a maximum of protection and assistance to fulfill their roles for the well-being of the individual members and society, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the relevant declarations, principles and resolutions;

5- **reiterate and commit** ourselves to the principles and objectives of the International Year of the Family, underlining that stable families are main agents of sustainable development. Such a development depends largely on the social, emotional, spiritual, cultural and political maturity of all family members. In this context, recognition of families demands a comprehensive approach to issues like redistribution of global resources, eradication of poverty, assuring education and health for all;

6- **recognize** the diverse forms and functions of families around the world, on condition that they are fully consistent with the fundamental human rights. IYF is of special relevance in promoting concepts of families and intra-familial relationships which will allow the actual enjoyment of these rights, with special emphasis on gender equality and the rights of minor children;

We, the undersigned international non-governmental organizations,

7- **urge** governments to support the establishment and/or extension of national coordinating bodies for IYF in order to develop concrete action plans at the national, local and community levels, taking into consideration the capacities and self-help potential of families themselves and of the NGOs working at the grassroot level;

8- **request** governments to formulate family-sensitive policies, promoting self-reliance and participation of families, taking into consideration the aspirations and expectations of families themselves. In this regard, a family-friendly society, specific economic and ecological measures and recognition of the contributions of families in the social, cultural and economic fields are indispensable;

9- **appeal** to governments to consider special joint action with NGOs in such fields as: evaluation of social programmes and their impact on the family; practical research to identify data, articulate family issues and suggest solutions; study of gender issues and identification of measures to ensure equality between males and females of all ages; enhancement of a positive and objective image of family-life in the media; reconciliation of professional life and employment with family obligations; education for family life; family health issues; assistance to families living in extreme poverty; help to refugee and displaced families, including their relationships with their host country and country of origin; development of support and counselling services to families and family members in difficulty or at risk;

10- **invite** governments to support and join NGO initiatives and plans of family movements to celebrate the 15th of May of each year as the International Day of the Family;

11- **request** that "family" should be a specific topic in relevant national and international reports on social issues;

12- **urge** governments to consider the role and function of families and their capacities and needs in the forthcoming meetings of the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development. To ensure implementation of IYF plans and activities, family should also be considered in the context of programmes developed for the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995);

13- **appeal** to governments and the United Nations to undertake adequate follow-up measures to IYF and to enter into an ongoing process of building a family-friendly society;

14- **request** that a declaration on the rights and responsibilities of families be identified as a specific goal in the follow-up to IYF;

In turn and in conformity with our own respective aims, experiences, and competences we, the undersigned international non-governmental organizations,

15- **plan** to explore areas where new and creative actions can be developed to support family resilience and to emphasize the significance of family life for the benefit of its members, thereby empowering them to master their every-day situations and to make decisions on their future;

16- **intend** to continue assuming the responsibility for individualized and flexible services for families, reviewing and revising such assistance programmes regularly by involving families in order to respond most effectively to their needs and expectations;

17- **continue** to review our role as advocates and mediators in representing family strengths and family concerns to politicians, media, educational authorities, employers, employees, specialized organizations and institutions concerned with children, youth, women, men, elderly, disabled, dispossessed, etc;

18- **hope** to develop a new culture of partnership and new patterns of negotiation and cooperation at the national and international levels, promoting formal and informal networks and coalitions to fulfill our vital functions in the interest of families. In doing so, a major emphasis will be placed on effectiveness, transparency and accountability of family-oriented NGO operations.

In conclusion, **we, the undersigned international non-governmental organizations, look** with confidence upon the dawn of the International Year of the Family. We subscribe to its ultimate objective, emphasizing the recognition of values such as caring, sharing, solidarity and responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance, in order to promote the "smallest democracy at the heart of society" in its unique contribution to the achievement of durable peace in the world.