

Side Event at the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council

“The Family: Foundation of Society, Driver of Development and Human Rights”

12:00–13:00 CET | Wednesday, 18 June 2025
Room XXIV, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Refreshments will be served outside the room at 11:30

CONCEPT NOTE

The family, as recognized in Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is “the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.” As societies navigate increasing challenges and transformations—ranging from economic pressures, demographic shifts, and evolving generational dynamics—the role of the family as a stabilizing and empowering unit is more crucial than ever.

International community widely recognizes that family-oriented policies can contribute to ending poverty and hunger, ensuring a healthy life and better education, enabling access to employment opportunities and decent work for parents and caregivers, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and supporting the overall quality of life of families, including those in vulnerable situations, so that family members can fully enjoy human rights and realize their full potential as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to development. (A/HRC/RES/54/17 PP6)

Recent evidence affirms the multidimensional contributions of families to sustainable development. Strong family systems are closely linked to poverty reduction (SDG 1), better health and nutrition (SDG 3), improved educational outcomes (SDG 4), and gender equality (SDG 5), particularly when care work, especially unpaid caregiving, is equitably shared and adequately supported.

This side event will offer a platform to explore how protecting and strengthening families can serve as a cross-cutting strategy to promote human rights, deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and reinforce social cohesion in times of uncertainty.

Co-Sponsored By:



- The Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations in Geneva
- The Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations in Geneva
- The Permanent Mission of Vanuatu to the United Nations in Geneva
- The Permanent Delegation of the Sovereign Order of Malta
- Latter-day Saint Charities

OBJECTIVES

- Reaffirm the central role of the family in promoting human rights, social protection, and inclusive and comprehensive development.
- Examine intersections between family policy, human rights obligations, and the achievement of the SDGs.
- Share evidence-based practices and policy approaches that empower families, particularly in vulnerable contexts such as migration, and economic instability.

AGENDA

Opening Remarks



H.E. Dr. Hend Abdalrahman Al-Mufta

Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations

Moderator



H.E. Mr. Omar Sultanov

Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations

Panelists



With a distinguished career spanning senior positions in the Vanuatu Government—including Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Vanuatu—**H.E. Mr. Sumbue Antas** brings a wealth of experience in public service, international trade, and economic governance. Throughout his career, he has championed policies that recognize the vital role of families in fostering social cohesion and driving sustainable development. He holds degrees from the University of Papua New Guinea and Kingston University London.



After a 20 years career as a Software Engineer and Consultant in different countries, **Valerie Bichelmeier** joined Make Mother Matter (MMM) in 2010. In her work as head of advocacy at the UN she brings the perspective of mothers in the discussions held at the UN – with a particular focus on the issue of the inequitable distribution of unpaid family care work and the resulting economic injustice for women who are mothers. She has also been board member and Vice-President of MMM.



As a a senior Church Leader in the European Area of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, **Elder Paul Picard** has extensive experience working with and strengthening families. For over two decades, he has worked in the field of conflict prevention, supporting various mediation processes and peace efforts throughout the Eurasian continent. He served for over a decade as a senior officer in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Q&A Session

Closing Remarks