



International Day of Families 15 May 2020

Statement by the Partnership for Families – Brazil, Hungary, Poland, United States

In December 2019, Brazil, Hungary, Poland and the United States of America launched the initiative entitled “Partnership for Families”, which aims to engage with the international community to raise awareness and promote family-related matters and family-friendly policies at the United Nations.

Today, the 15th May, we celebrate the International Day of Families. This year, this important day occurs amidst a pandemic that puts our societies to serious test, and forces us to re-adjust and re-prioritize our everyday lives. We would like to express our most heartfelt solidarity with the families of those whose lives were taken by the disease, and wish those who have contracted COVID-19 a speedy and full recovery.

We are concerned by the grave challenges that many families around the world face due to the pandemic and its consequences: they have to worry for the health of their loved ones or suffer from loss, they struggle to keep their livelihoods and to provide education to their children, and they may experience anxiety or violence. All generations are under severe pressure as they work to secure their future. We are especially concerned by families living in poverty or in other vulnerable situations, as well as the disproportionate impact of the crisis on women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

Strengthening families is a key element of the policy-making of our countries, and during this challenging time, we commit to step up our efforts to protect families and enable them to live under the safest circumstances possible. The current crisis highlights even more the importance of investing in family-friendly policies and in the health and well-being of family members. Key policies include social protection and employment support, and flexible working arrangements, access to quality childcare and psycho-social support, among many others. Health professionals and other essential workers deserve our maximum support, as they sacrifice their own health and time with their loved ones to be at the frontline of the current health crisis.

The Partnership for Families also expresses concern on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and well-being of all family members. We recognize the harmful impacts of stress and anxiety, reason why we must focus on suicide prevention and combating all forms of violence and discrimination in the household, in particular against women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

We must also take into account that families are affected by the pandemic in different ways, and tailor our support to their specific needs in an inclusive way, upholding human rights and caring also for those without families.

As the world struggles to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, there is a real opportunity to rethink and transform the way our economies and societies function to foster greater equality for all. We stress the importance of family-friendly policies in creating resilience in society and ensuring that families are best prepared for unexpected crises in the future.

The Partnership for Families avails this opportunity to renew its commitment to supporting and investing in families, including during the fight against COVID-19, to achieve a more inclusive and prosperous society, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.