

On Children and Family:

Quotes from United Nations Treaties & Conference Documents, 1948-2002

*Compiled by Thomas W. Jacobson in preparation for the
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1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 16.3:

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

1966, International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, Article 23

1966, International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, Article 10

Article 26.3:

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

1966, International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights

Article 6.1:

Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

Article 18.4:

The State Parties ... undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

1966, International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights

Article 10.1:

The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children.

1989, Convention on the Rights of the Child

Preamble:

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded

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the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. ...

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.” (Preamble)

Article 6:

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 7.1:

The child shall ... have ... the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 18:

Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.

Article 23.1:

States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Article 24.2:

States Parties shall ... take appropriate measures: (a) To diminish infant and child mortality;

1990, World Declaration on Survival, Protection & Development of Children

Paragraph 14:

The family, as a fundamental group and natural environment for the growth and well-being of children, should be given all necessary protection and assistance.

1993, World Conference on Human Rights – Vienna Declaration & Program of Action

Paragraph 21:

(T)he child for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality should grow up in a family environment which accordingly merits broader protection.

1994, International Conference on Population and Development

Paragraph 5.11:

Governments should support and develop the appropriate mechanisms to assist families caring for children ... and support the viability of multigenerational families.

***1995, World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen)
– Programme of Action***

Paragraph 25:

There is ... an urgent need for: Policies that strengthen the family and contribute to its stability

Paragraph 27(a):

Governments are urged to ... (analyze) policies and programmes ... with respect to their ... impact on family well-being

Paragraph 39:

Particular efforts should be made to protect children and youth by ... Promoting family stability and supporting families in providing mutual support, including in their role as nurturers and educators of children.

Paragraph 80:

The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened.

1995, Beijing Declaration, Platform for Action, par. 29

1996, Habitat Agenda & Istanbul Declaration, Goals/Principles, par. 31

Paragraph 26(h):

Recognize the family as the basic unit of society, and acknowledge that it plays a key role in social development and as such should be strengthened, with attention to rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members.

Paragraphs 26(h), 80:

The family ... is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support.

1994, Cairo—International Conference on Population and Development, Principle 9

1996, Habitat Agenda & Istanbul Declaration, par. 31

2001, Habitat II / Istanbul+5, par. 30

***1995, Fourth World Conference on Women
– Beijing Declaration, Platform for Action***

Paragraph 285(b):

Provide an environment conducive to the strengthening of the family

1996, Habitat Agenda

Paragraph 31:

Human settlements planning should take into account the constructive role of the family in the design, development and management of such settlements.

2001, Habitat II, par. 30

2000, Copenhagen+5 – World Summit on Social Development (follow-up)

Paragraph 56:

Recognize that the family is the basic unit of society and that it plays a key role in social development and is a strong force of social cohesion and integration.

Paragraph 72:

Recognize that stable, supportive and nurturing family relationships, supported by communities ... can provide a vital shield against substance abuse, particular among minors.

Paragraph 68:

Intensify efforts to ensure the facilitation of ... family reunification of documented migrants and their equal treatment under the law.

2000, Beijing+5

Paragraph 60:

The family is the basic unit of society and is a strong force for social cohesion and integration and, as such, should be strengthened.

Paragraph 82(d):

Design, implement and promote family friendly policies

2002, Special Session of the General Assembly on Children (Child Summit) – A World Fit for Children

Paragraph 6:

We recognize and support parents and families ... as the primary caretakers of children.

Paragraph 7.6:

Protect children from harm and exploitation. Children must be protected against any acts of violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination, as well as all forms of terrorism and hostage taking.

Paragraph 15:

The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. The primary responsibility for the protection, upbringing and development of children rests with the family.

Paragraph 23:

We are determined to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child throughout her life cycle ... including the right to be free from coercion and from harmful practices and sexual exploitation.

Paragraph 32.2:

Parents (and) families ... have the primary role and responsibility for the well-being of children, and must be supported in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities.

Paragraph 36:

We are determined to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and poor health by providing a safe and healthy start in life for all children ... Accordingly, we resolve to achieve the following goals ...:

- (a) Reduction in the infant and under-five mortality rate by at least one third, in pursuit of the goal of reducing it by two thirds by 2015;
- (b) Reduction in the maternal mortality ratio by at least one third, in pursuit of the goal of reducing it by three quarters by 2015;

Paragraph 37:

To achieve these goals and targets ... we will carry out the following strategies and actions:

1. Ensure that the reduction of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality is a health sector priority

Paragraph 43:

Children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Societies must eliminate all forms of violence against children. Accordingly, we resolve to:

- (a) Protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;
- (b) Protect children from the impact of armed conflict and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law;
- (c) Protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation including paedophilia; trafficking, and abduction;
- (d) Take immediate and effective measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as defined in *International Labour Organization Convention No. 182*, and elaborate and implement strategies for the elimination of child labour that is contrary to accepted international standards;
- (e) Improve the plight of millions of children who live under especially difficult circumstances.

Paragraph 44:

To achieve these goals, we will implement the following strategies and actions:

8. Protect children from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. ...
9. End harmful traditional or customary practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, which violate the rights of children and women.
40. Take concerted national and international actions as a matter of urgency to end the sale of children and their organs, sexual exploitation and abuse, including the use of children for pornography, prostitution and paedophilia, and to combat existing markets.