

Human Rights Council
27th session

Item 3 – Panel on the protection of the family and its members

15 September 2014

Joint Statement: **Plan International, Child Rights Connect** (formerly Groupe des ONG pour la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant), **DCI International, Eurochild, International Federation of Social Workers, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages**

Check against delivery.

Thank you Mr President.

This is a joint statement on behalf of Plan International, Child Rights Connect and five other national, regional and international organisations working on children's rights.

It is based on the written statement¹ submitted by the same organisations recalling the key legal obligations of States with regard to the rights of children in family environments, which are:

- To respect and protect children as individual rights-holders in all settings;
- To recognise all forms of families (in order to : a) ensure the right of children not to be discriminated against on the basis of family status, b) respect children's identity rights and c) make sure that national family policies and programmes reach out to all children, regardless of the environment in which they live;) and
- To support and strengthen families in their child rearing role.

It is clear from international human rights law that 'family' is a social construct, which children experience in a variety of ways and forms, according to the cultural, political and/or social system or particular context (such as social change, man-made or natural disasters, conflict, urbanization, HIV/AIDS and health-related crisis) in which they live in.

To realise the full range of rights for all children, States have the obligation to support and assist all parents, caregivers and families in their child rearing role². This includes, for instance, assisting all parents and caregivers with parenting skills and supporting all families economically.

¹ See A/HRC/27/NGO/25

² See the preamble of the CRC and article 18 of the CRC which provides that "States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities".

From a children's rights perspective, the "protection of the family" can therefore only be understood as supporting and strengthening families so that the rights of all its members, including children are fulfilled.

We therefore urge States to:

- 1. Reaffirm that all children remain individual rights-holders whose rights cannot be overlooked, limited or negated, whether they live in a family environment or not,**
- 2. Explicitly acknowledge the existence of all families by using the phrase "all forms of families in different contexts" in any discussion or international document on 'family'.**
- 3. Reaffirm that the "protection of the family" means supporting and strengthening families to ensure the fulfilment of the rights of all their members, including by providing them appropriate assistance in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities.**