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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 August 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Rights of Children and their Families

A Declaration on the Rights of Children and Their Families A Call from the Children of the World

In conjunction with the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and the panel on the "Protection of the Family" to be held 15, September, 2014 under the auspices of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Global Helping to Advance Women and Children (Global HAWC) herewith submits as our statement for the session of the UN Human Rights Council a *Declaration on the Rights of Children and Their Families* from the children of the world. This Declaration enumerates the obligation of UN Member States to protect children by protecting the institution of the family and the rights of parents to guide the upbringing and education of their children. This Declaration will be presented by children at a side event sponsored by the UN Family Rights Caucus, a coalition of organizations and individuals in over 170 countries on 12 September, 2014 at the UN Human Rights Council.

Article I

Each Child Has the Right to Life

Recognizing that every child has the inherent right to life (CRC Art. 6); and,
Whereas 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 (CRC Preamble);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to ensure the survival and development of children (CRC Art. 6; Children's Summit, Art. 19).

Article II

Each Child Has the Right to a Family

Recognizing that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State (UDHR (1948), Art. 16 (3)); and
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 (CRC Preamble; Children's Summit, Plan of Action, Art. 18);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to protect and strengthen the institution of the family, to ensure the optimal development of children (based on Children's Summit, Art. 14 & 20(5)).

Article III

Each Child Has the Right to a Married Mother and Father

Recognizing that children and youth who reside in a stable, intact family with a married mother and father, generally exhibit greater well-being in every measurable indicator including physically, socially, emotionally, economically and academically; and

That the child shall have the right, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by his or her parents (CRC Art. 7);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to discourage sexual relations and childbearing outside of the marital bond, and to promote the institution of marriage as the best environment for children.

Article IV

Each Child Has the Right to the Protection and Guidance of Their Parents

Recognizing that parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child (CRC Art. 18); and
That parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (UDHR Art. 26(3)); and
That only in cases of extreme abuse or neglect shall the State have the right to intervene in the parent/child relationship (CRC Art. 9);
We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to respect family autonomy and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents to direct the upbringing of their children (CRC Art. 3, 5 & 18; ICPD (1994), II, Principle 11).

Article V

Each Child Has the Right to Education

Recognizing that each child needs an education to develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (CRC Art. 29.1(a)); and
That the best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his or her education and that this responsibility lies in the first place with the parents (ICPD (1994), II, Principle 10);
We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to establish basic education programs for all children that are respectful of the child's parents, and his or her own cultural identity, language and values (CRC Art. 29.1(c)).

Article VI

Each Child Has the Right to a Religion

Recognizing that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (UDHR Art. 18; CRC Art. 30); and
That the introduction of children to the culture, values and norms of their society begins in the family (Children's Summit, Plan of Action, Art. 18); and
That parents have the right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions (ICESCR (1976) Art. 13-3; ICCPR (1976), Art. 18-4);
We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to fully respect the right of parents to guide the moral and religious education of their children (CRC Art. 14).

Article VII

Each Child Has the Right to Innocence and Childhood

Recognizing that the rights enumerated in this declaration are legitimate universal protection rights that belong to every child;
Noting, with alarm, the increasing international trend to grant autonomous adult rights to children prematurely;
That children have a right to enjoy their childhood free of adult concerns and responsibilities; and
Being greatly concerned by the increase of sexual education programs that encourage children and youth to experiment and engage in sexual behavior;
We call upon States Parties and the United Nations System to respect the right of parents to guide the sex education of their children (ICESCR (1976) Art. 13-3; ICCPR (1976), Art. 18-4) and to cease promoting or supporting programs that condone or encourage sexual activity among children.

Article VIII

The Protection of Children Requires the Protection of the Family

Recognizing that for the full protection of the rights of the child and the family enumerated in this declaration, all governments must fulfill their legal obligation to protect

the institution of the family (based on UDHR Art. 16(3); ICPD (1994), II, Principle 9;
ICESR (1976), Art. 10-1; ICCPR (1976), Art. 23-1; Children's Summit, 14; CRC Preamble; Disabilities (2006),
Preamble (x));

Therefore we call upon all UN Member States and the United Nations system to mainstream a family perspective in all
laws, policies and programs, and to ensure the rights of parents are recognized in all governmental actions impacting
their children.
