

**Oral Statement at the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council—Geneva—June 22, 2014**  
**Delivered by Annie Franklin**

I respectfully address the council on behalf of Global Helping to Advance Women and Children and the UN Family Rights Caucus, an international coalition of NGOs.

The resolution on the protection of the family before this council takes important steps in filling a major gap in UN policies. In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, at least three binding UN treaties and multiple other UN agreements call upon nations to protect the family unit. Yet until now, there have been no UN initiatives to protect the family and family rights.

We commend the resolution sponsors for focusing on the protection of the family unit as a whole, rather than being diverted by calls to focus only on individual rights that are addressed in countless other resolutions.

UN consensus documents specify that the family unit needs to be protected against poverty, diseases including HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, unemployment, poverty, migration, war, family separation and barriers to reunification, and the worldwide disintegration of the family itself.

We call upon Member States to resist the inclusion of the vague and elastic term “various forms of the family” in the family resolution, as this language adopted in past UN documents has become contentious and could now include emerging family forms detrimental to the wellbeing of children such as polyandrous, polyamorous, incestuous, pedophilic, or group marriage families.

The UN Secretary General has stated that “the stability and cohesiveness of communities and societies largely rest on the strength of the family” (Secretary General's Family Report 2011 (A/66/62–E/2011/4)). Guided by this statement, we call upon all states to keep the focus of the Protection of the Family resolution on the protection of the family unit and to reject the controversial and divisive term “various forms of the family” that could weaken the resolution.

Thank you.