STATEMENT
by
H.E. Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan
to the United Nations in New York
at the UNGA Plenary Meeting to observe the
Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family
under agenda item 26 (b)
"Social development, including questions relating
to the world social situation and to youth, ageing,
disabled persons and the family"
(3 December 2014, New York)
Mr. President,

Today's meeting, which marks the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, draws attention to critical family-related issues and the need to reinforce a comprehensive family-centered approach to global development.

The institution of the family is the basic unit of society and embodies the core foundation of spiritual values for the development and prosperity of any nation. The lessons learnt from implementing the MDGs clearly proves that no significant strides can be made in eradicating poverty, promoting education, reducing infant and maternal mortality, as well as halting intergenerational transfer of poverty and inequality, unless the family is given the highest priority. We therefore commend the integration of crucial family-related issues in the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on the SDGs, reflected in almost all of its vital goals. In this regard my delegation particularly endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General pertaining to family empowerment as an important tool in fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.

In addition, we encourage the Commission for Social Development to establish an appropriate follow-up mechanism for the observance of the International Year in order to guide national policy development. The "family agenda" should therefore be significantly advanced at the international level in a coordinated and systematic way. Thus, a comprehensive review associated with the observance of the Year of the Family, promotes learning lessons, adopting best national policies and monitoring the progress achieved at the national and regional levels.

Mr. President,

In this regard, Kazakhstan wishes to share its experience of contributing to the global review process. This year Kazakhstan adopted the comprehensive "Strategy 2050" and the corresponding new economic policy "Nyrly Zhol – Path to the Future", both of which were presented by the President of Kazakhstan at his two latest State-of-the-Nation Addresses.

These two documents aim to attain enhanced social standards focused on poverty eradication, and earmarked social protection through improved education, high quality healthcare, especially for persons with disabilities, the elderly, mothers and children. High priority is thus given to healthy nutrition and positive lifestyle. Measures will also be undertaken to modernize labour, employment and wage policies by enacting new laws and models of labor relations. At the same time, services will meet intellectual and information needs.

The social sector gains predominance in the Kazakh 2050 and Path to the Future. The new housing policy and infrastructure will revise current rental housing practice, and construct social housing with low mortgage interest rates to make it more affordable for various strata of the population, including young families.

My Government will also increase its funding by an additional US $1 billion during 2015-2016. An amount of US $110 million will be allocated to address the problems related to inadequate schooling and the three-shift educational system. Ten institutions of higher education have been designated to ensure firm links between
science, the various economic sectors and personnel training, with US $55 million earmarked from now through 2017.

The Government has also elaborated a sound programme of family development through its specialized National Commission on Gender and Family Demographic Policy established twenty years ago. The Commission has been updating pertinent legislation and evaluating state plans, strategies and policies to improve the protection of children, reproductive health, as well as the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation from diseases and serious medical conditions. The National Plan of Action for Improving the Status of Women and the Strategy on Gender Equality for 2006-2016 will strengthen the role of the family in society with gender equality as its key element.

Demographic stimulation is envisaged through maternity and childcare allowances. Likewise, social risks will be minimized by increased benefits from the State Social Insurance Fund in cases of loss of income due to pregnancy and childbirth, adoption of newborn children, childcare until one year age, and financial allowances for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities.

Last year, by a Presidential Decree, a Day of the Family was established in Kazakhstan, aimed at enhancing the role of the family and family traditions. The Day was celebrated with numerous family events and educational programmes. Separate Mothers’ and Fathers’ Councils were established in close cooperation with civil society organizations. In addition, the National Commission intends to initiate Family Academies in every sub-region of the country to unite and coordinate family-related NGOs. The currently-operating 28 crisis centers will also pay attention to preventing domestic violence and assist with family rehabilitation and skills training through increased budgetary provisions.

To conclude, Kazakhstan is committed to work with the international community to protect and promote family values to ensure stronger and more stable societies.

Thank you.