



JCHS Policy Brief # 9

United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 29/22 'Protection of the Family': A refreshing and welcomed initiative

The below comment builds on the JCHS' original input to the United Nations Human Rights Council consultation of October 2015, on its Resolution 29/22 on the "Protection of the family and the contribution of families in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living"

The Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society welcomes this opportunity to comment on the July 2015 Resolution on the protection of the family.¹ This resolution was achieved after much valuable debate. The call for the protection of the family as a fundamental unit of society, for the recognition of the prior right of parents to educate their children, and for all nations to create family-sensitive policies is a call which was overdue in time. These are issues which have hitherto been neglected by the UNCHR. It is a call in keeping with reality, the outcomes of which will be the strengthening of the family units. Strong family units bounded together by wholesome values have measurably better outcomes in producing strong and healthy individuals not only physically but, mentally emotionally and spiritually.

The underlying assumption in the Resolution that the family is the natural family founded upon the voluntary union of a man and a woman, is to be greatly commended. This union reflects design and the inescapable and unchangeable fact of the complementarity of the two opposite sexes. Marriage is by definition therefore, one man married to one woman, committed to each other for life, to the exclusion of all others, in a caring, safe union together raising their children.

The public good gained by individuals and societies from the presence of the intact married family is illustrated by extensive social science data. Married families enjoy the highest income and average net worth of all family structures.² Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that children do best when raised in intact low-conflict homes by their married biological mother and father, compared to other parenting arrangements.³

¹ UN General Assembly, HRC/Res/29/22 of 3 July 2015

² Marriage and Poverty, Marriage and Religion Research Institute, www.marri.us

³ **Emotional Problems Among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition**, Dr. Donald Paul Sullins, *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (January 25, 2015)

Similar conclusions that the intact married home as the ideal family environment in the Jamaican context were put forward in the Jamaican Birth Cohort Study, 1986.⁴

A recent comprehensive study confirmed the superiority of this family model when compared with other increasingly accepted practices. The New Family Structures Study, 2013,⁵ examined the life circumstances of children who grew up in homes with married biological parents or cohabiting biological, step parent, adoptive/foster parents, single parent, same sex married parent and same sex cohabiting parent.

The outcomes of this Study showed that children appear most likely to succeed as adults—on multiple counts and across a variety of domains—when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father, and especially when the parents remain married to the present day.

Marriage between one man and one woman also accords with the neuroscience of sexual intimacy. Neuroscience informs us that the hormones released in the human brain when stimulated by sexual activity, have the impact of bonding sexual partners to the sexual activity and the partner, thereby establishing an expectation of a continued relationship. As such, one could say that neuro-biologically, humans are designed for monogamy, sexual exclusivity and permanence. These three qualities are considered to be the essential pillars of marriage.⁶

Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships weaken a partner's ability to commit to a long-term relationship.⁷ Co-habiting women are more likely to experience more emotional turmoil and domestic violence. Fatherless children are more likely to do poorly in school, get into risky behaviours, early sexual initiation, be more sad, depressed and at risk for suicide.⁸ Boys looking for male guidance, affirmation and solace get drawn into gangs. High rates of recidivism by young men may be explained by the unmet need for male affirmation and bonding.⁹

Sexual promiscuity therefore exacts a public health cost on individuals, families and nations; whether through sexually transmitted infections/ disease, infertility, cancers, broken family relationships, single motherhood, fatherless children, domestic violence among other consequences.

⁴ Multiple authors, Department of Community Health and Psychiatry, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46095060_Cohort_Profile_The_Jamaican_1986_Birth_Cohort_Study. Last accessed August 16, 2016.

⁵ The study was led by Professor Mark Regnerus, University of Texas at Austin <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/34392>. Summary at <http://www.prc.utexas.edu/nfss/> and <http://www.familystructurestudies.com/summary>. Last accessed on August 16, 2016

⁶ **Marriage: What It Is, Why It Matters, and the Consequences of Redefining It**, Ryan Anderson, Ph.D <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/03/marriage-what-it-is-why-it-matters-and-the-consequences-of-redefining-it>. Last accessed on August 16, 2016

⁷ **Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children**, , 2008, Dr Freda McKissic Bush and Dr Joe McIlhane

⁸ **Too many single parents**, Jamaica Gleaner, April 10, 2011. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20110410/news/news5.html>. Last accessed April 16, 2016.

⁹ **The Marriage Files**, Dr Patricia Morgan, 2014

Marriage and family-weak societies are marked by lower rates of productivity, poorer neighborhoods and increased crime among other socio-economic markers.¹⁰

Indeed, it has been argued that the real roots of crime and violence are not poverty but “the loss of the capacity of fathers and mothers to be responsible in caring for the children they bring into the world. This loss of love and guidance at the intimate levels of marriage and family has broad social consequences for children and for the wider community.”¹¹

The author of The New Family Structures Study, 2013 also concluded that “the shrinking percentages of intact, biological mother/father families brings growing challenges within families, but also heightened dependence on public health organizations, federal and state public assistance, psychotherapeutic resources, substance use programs, and the criminal justice system.”¹²

Public policy should be informed by such studies and factual statistics on public health data, particularly by the medical and harmful outcomes of the practice of high risk sexual behaviours to the individual and the society. Sexual choices and behaviours that have been established as harmful and destructive on the basis of robust, credible, scientific and epidemiological research ought to be actively discouraged by the State, the church and civil society.

Societies should instead teach and encourage healthy human relationships and behaviours which are associated with life sustaining outcomes. We note for example that paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Resolution highlight the particular economic vulnerabilities faced by single female headed households and other types of households not headed by fathers. Effective intervention by the State, the church and civil society must first encourage and promote committed and nurturing husbands and fathers being in and actively involved in their home. Committed fathers can provide an unmatched singular benefit to ensuring stable healthy homes.

Chastity and fidelity are therefore necessary virtues for a thriving society. The only safe sex is saving sex until marriage between one man and one woman. Marriage is in fact not a private affair but a public institution with a critical societal role. It is the foundation for the five institutions of society – family, school, church, Government and the marketplace.¹³

¹⁰ **The Family: Agent of economic development and the fundamental safety net**, Dr Patrick Fagan, 2015, <http://www.marri.us/UN-HolySee>. Last accessed on August 16, 2016.

¹¹ “The empirical evidence shows that too many young men and women from broken families tend to have a much weaker sense of connection with their neighborhood and are prone to exploit its members to satisfy their unmet needs or desires. This contributes to a loss of a sense of community and to the disintegration of neighborhoods into social chaos and violent crime. If policymakers are to deal with the root causes of crime, therefore, they must deal with the rapid rise of illegitimacy.” **The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family, and Community**, Patrick Fagan, Ph. D, 1995. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1995/03/bg1026nbsp-the-real-root-causes-of-violent-crime>. Last accessed on August 16, 2016.

¹² Professor Mark Regnerus , p.776. University of Texas at Austin cf FN.5 Summary at <http://www.prc.utexas.edu/nfss/> and <http://www.familystructurestudies.com/summary>. Last accessed on August 16, 2016

¹³ cf. FN.9

Jamaica's historical experience of colonial plantation slavery has buffeted the institutions of Marriage and the natural family. Yet, whilst it has been long-recognised that many of the economic and social challenges facing Jamaica in our modern era - crime, domestic violence and child abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty and illiteracy, drug abuse, sexual exploitation, fatherless households - have direct linkages to the condition of family life, concerted policy action to reverse this reality has been lacking.

The fragile state of the Jamaican family is compounded by international attempts to advance the illogical and unsustainable idea of sexual 'rights' and freedoms without legal or moral restraint. The primary avenues of advancing this social engineering concept have been legal challenges to long-standing laws on sexual offences; public health campaigns; the introduction of controversial and objectionable sex education curriculum to children; media, business and youth outreach programmes.

As seen by the outcomes in Western nations that have adopted this ideology, the political and legal recognition of sexual freedom without restraint has been used to suppress existing fundamental freedoms of conscience, expression, belief and parental rights of many ordinary citizens, along with dismantling the traditional definition of marriage and the natural family.¹⁴

Such an ideology will not only undermine the concept and proper functioning of the institution of the family, but also threatens good governance and ordering of society. The JCHS therefore welcomes Resolution 29/22 as a basis on which to stand against these harmful developments and to build a legal and policy framework for ensuring that stable, nurturing family life is a policy imperative which will lead to healthy nations.

The greatest need for human beings is for physical and emotional security. How can we give that to the next generation of citizens of the world? This is what the July 2015 resolution of the UNCHR is about- creating the framework for flourishing for the next generations of our various nations.



The Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society incorporated in 2012 is a local non-profit organisation seeking to respond to social development challenges from the perspective of Judeo-Christian principles and values.

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¹⁴ **Liberty and SOGI laws: an impossible and unsustainable 'compromise'**. Ryan Anderson, Ph.D. and Professor Robert George, January 21, 2016. <http://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/ryan-t-anderson/liberty-and-sogi-laws-impossible-and-unsustainable-compromise-0>. Last accessed August 16, 2016