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Letter dated 18 February 2015 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus, Egypt and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to address you on behalf of Bangladesh, Belarus, the Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Yemen, Uganda and Zimbabwe and to inform you of the establishment of the Group of Friends of the Family. The Group was established to work at the United Nations as an informal voluntary association of like-minded countries committed to the promotion of the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society, entitled to protection by society and the State.

The Group of Friends aims at promoting family-oriented policies and prioritizing the needs and priorities of the family at the national and international levels.

The Group of Friends emphasizes that the consideration of family issues at the international level should pay due attention to the national laws, traditions and religious and cultural background of the States Members of the United Nations related to the family and its role in society.

The Group of Friends emphasizes that the human rights of all individuals, without discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language or religion, can best be promoted and protected within the family environment.

The Group of Friends believes that the family is the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children and that it has the primary responsibility for nurturing and protecting children, from infancy to adolescence.

The Group of Friends stresses the ability of the family with regard to the achievement of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women.



The Group of Friends is convinced that genuine and effective sustainable development may not be achieved without the family, which plays a vital role in attaining the internationally agreed development goals.

The Group of Friends recognizes the pivotal role of the family as an important contributor to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the goals that the States Members of the United Nations would identify as global priorities.

The Group of Friends is looking forward to constructive cooperation with all Member States and international organizations, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders, in the promotion of national and global family-oriented strategies and policies, programmes and initiatives that harness the unique strength of the family and its contributions to the common good of society.

We would appreciate if you would kindly circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 26 (b).

(Signed) Andrei **Dapkiunas**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations

(Signed) Amr **Aboulatta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations

(Signed) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations
