**Opening Remarks**

The UPF Founders have long taught that marriage and family are the cornerstones of peace, and UPF is a leading voice for a vision of marriage and family that stands firm in the face of a wide array of forces that challenge and undermine the traditional family.

Our marriage and family programs are part of a wider initiative that includes observances of the United Nations International Day of Families. Each year the United Nations takes a hard look at some of the very real obstacles standing in the way of a world of strong families. Themes of International Day of Families have included work-family balance, family poverty and social exclusion, and the impact of migration on families.

At International Day of Families programs in New York, both UN and UPF representatives have pointed out that it would be wrong to think of families as just one more issue or problem that the UN has to solve. Rather, families can themselves become a great resource for social change. For example, it is widely recognized that the only way the UN Millennium Development Goals can be fulfilled (even if not on time for 2015) will be through harnessing the efforts of strong, united and loving families.

Today, then, we should consider that we are, each one of us, "resources." We encourage you to participate fully in the program and participate in discussions. At the end of the day, please take a moment to give feedback about the program so that we can continue to improve.

Thank you!