The 13th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda
Implementation of the mandate and programme of work –
Consideration of thematic studies
Conference Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York

An interactive chapter-by-chapter discussion on the draft international covenant on the right to development

Thursday 23 April 2026, 10:00 to 13:00

Unofficial transcript of the oral statement by
Women's Federation for World Peace International

Women's Federation for World Peace International, on behalf of our 128 national chapters, expresses its sincere appreciation to the Chair and members of the Expert Mechanism for your efforts to advance the right to development to its fullest potential. We also welcome and appreciate the space given to civil society to contribute to the full realization of this right, recognizing that inclusive engagement is essential to building a just, participatory, and sustainable development framework.

We respectfully note that, while the draft Covenant affirms participation, solidarity, inclusion, civil society engagement, and the role of organs of society, it does not yet explicitly recognize the family within the general principles as a foundational stakeholder in the realization of the right to development. We therefore respectfully recommend including, within the general principles of the Covenant and its normative framework, language affirming a whole-of-society approach that explicitly recognizes the family as a foundational environment for human development and as a key contributor and stakeholder in nation-building and peacebuilding. If development is to be fully holistic, inclusive, and sustainable, the family must be given sufficient normative and operational space at the national and local levels.

The family is where values are first learned, where empathy, mutual responsibility, and respect are formed, and where the moral, emotional, and relational foundations of peaceful societies are nurtured. It is the seed of development. It is also a primary environment for protection, care, economic empowerment, and the creation of a wholesome and positive nurturing environment in which children, youth, and future citizens can flourish. For this reason, we respectfully ask Member States to not only provide the material conditions for development, but also to institutionalize peace education across the education system from early childhood onward, including family education, values formation and emotional literacy, conflict resolution, trauma healing, and readiness for marriage before family life begins.

Development can be fully realized only if the peace, security, economic empowerment, and well-being of the family are not treated as secondary concerns. Nor can societies move forward sustainably without equal attention to healing trauma, restoring trust, strengthening the social fabric, and ensuring a wholesome and positive nurturing environment in which families can thrive and contribute to the common good. We further encourage greater space for civil society, women's organizations, faith-based actors, and community peacebuilders as indispensable partners in the operationalization of the Covenant.

* * * * *