

CSW67 Side Event Concept Note

Title: How Embracing the Geneva Consensus Declaration Advances the Well-being of Families, Women and Girls

Date: Friday, March 10, 2023, 6:30PM

Location: UN Headquarters, Conference room 8

Sponsor: Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Event Organizer:

Center for Family and Human Rights

Contributing Civil Society Organizations:

Center for Family and Human Rights

Asociación La Familia Importa (AFI)

The Global Center for Human Rights

The Institute for Women's Health

Background:

The Geneva Consensus Declaration on Women's Health and Protection of the Family (UN Document A/75/626) is a historic declaration that brings together 36 nations in a commitment to create international and domestic policies that promote women's health while at the same time protecting the family and upholding sovereignty.

The defense of consensus as the basis for international policymaking is a key aspect of the GCD, which is based on negotiated consensus documents from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the present. Too often women's health is polarized in UN policy as debates over controversial issues like abortion continue to threaten consensus. But the truth is there is much countries can work on together.

There is longstanding agreement that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, and the context in which most girls are raised and in which most women thrive. But in recent years, the idea that the family has an internationally agreed definition has come under attack. The GCD demonstrates that, for a growing number of countries, it has become necessary to reaffirm what they—and the global community—already agreed to through negotiations: that the natural family is entitled to protection by society and the state and that this is essential to promoting women's health.

The GCD supports women at all stages in life: not only in adulthood and girlhood, but also in the womb, where abortion—including discriminatory sex-selective abortion—has taken the lives of so many. The GCD reaffirms the consensus that abortion is not an international human right, and that nations have the sovereign right to restrict abortion in accordance with their values and priorities.

The GCD aligns with the value of "leaving no one behind" and caring for the most vulnerable, supporting women throughout pregnancy and birth while not disregarding the health and

rights of the child at every stage of development. And it promotes the important goal that international and domestic policies must strive to promote “optimal health” for women, children and families to reach their full potential and become full contributors to society. This is in marked contrast to recent multilateral initiatives that only focus on risk reduction approaches that don’t even try to help populations reach their full potential.

Guatemala is a GCD signatory and has been designated as the pro-life capital of Latin America. Guatemala has led by example by adopting laws and policies protecting human life in the womb and protection of the family, enshrining the right to life from conception in its constitution, and taking pro-life positions in both global and regional negotiations.

This event will highlight how pro-life policies safeguard the dignity of women and girls and promotes optimal health outcomes by protecting their emotional and physical well-being. It will also examine how multilateral programs properly focused on holistic primary and maternal health care is what women and girls need most throughout their life cycle.

Opening Remarks:

H.E. Ms. Carla Maria Rodríguez Mancia, Permanent Representative, Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Panelists:

“The purpose of GCD and the way forward”, **Valerie Huber, M.Ed**, President, Institute for Women’s Health and formerly U.S. Special Representative for Global Women’s Health for the Trump administration, architect of the Geneva Consensus Declaration

“The need for enhanced multilateral maternal health policy for better outcomes for mother and baby,” **Rebecca Oas, Ph.D.**, Director of Research, Center for Family and Human Rights

“Guatemala: A model for pro-life policy in Latin America,” **Ligia Briz**, Asociación La Familia Importa(AFI)

“Preserving a pro-life landscape in Latin America”, **Neydy Casillas, Esq.**, Vice President for International Affairs, The Global Center for Human Rights

“Assisting pregnant women around the world,” **Ellen Foell, J.D.**, International Program Coordinator, Heartbeat International

RSVP:

Event pass required to attend without UN credential. RSVP to xxx by March 1, 2023
Event passes will be distributed one hour before the event outside the UN entrance at 45th and 1st Ave. Passes are not transferrable.