



UNFPA/Armenia Praised Armenian Families and Held Public TV Debate to Mark World Population Day 2008

"...I compare our family with a beautiful carpet woven during 20 years, carefully, with love, selecting quality and unique color of every single thread, and this carpet I would not trade for all the treasures of the world."

Laura Karapetyan

These were honest and hearty thoughts shared by one of the Armenian families participated in **"My Happy Family" photo & story contest** organized by UNFPA/Armenia to mark the World Population Day 2008.



Within the framework of the contest, a photo exhibition with the works of winner participants - more than 20 families, was opened at the UN Armenia Hall on Monday, July 14, 2008.

This day the UN hall was filled with the invitees: Government, Civil Society, Business and Mass Media representatives who came to share the excitement of this event with their UN colleagues, Armenian families and general public.

The theme of this year's World Population Day was **"It's a right, let's make it real"**, a slogan which reflected on the basic right of individuals to determine freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of the children in family.

The exhibition aimed at demonstrating how the family happiness is pursued and expressed by the participants through the art of photography and thematic stories. The

presented photos depicted different images of Armenian families and different stories behind.

Yet, while each family shared a different and unique vision of happiness, be that through posted photos, or through sincere and emotional creative writings on the topic, all of them drew on a common conclusion that the right to decide the number of children, to plan the family and the future, as well as gender equality are the pillars of love, harmony, and happiness of every single family.

Following the theme of the day, the event opened with the welcoming speech of the UN RC/UNFPA RR Ms. Consuelo Vidal Bruce who stressed the importance of the roles international donor community and the State play in the field of providing equal access for men and women to all appropriate health-care services, including reproductive health in Armenia.

"...I can tell from my own experience that women are masters to create, keep and regain the happiness. I feel it every minute in my family. ... May be man shaking strong fist is efficient, but I prefer kissing hands that are ready to join together for HIS EXCELLENCY HAPPINESS OF THE FAMILY..."

Davit Vardazaryan

Lots of words were said by the UNFPA and Armenian Civil Society representatives to underline the importance of family planning, and reproductive rights. Speakers also called upon Government to support the social and healthcare systems of the Republic of Armenia.

As an appreciation of courage and good will to participate in the contest UNFPA Armenia granted each participant family souvenir cups with “My Happy Family” inscription. To thank the organizers, participants took the floor and expressed their gratitude for being given a unique opportunity of self-expression through the creative approach and cherished a hope that in the future UNFPA Armenia will continue working on the improvement of the Armenian family’s wellbeing to bring “happiness” into all families.

“...I think every family can rejoice in happiness if its every single member earnestly respects parents and understands his/her moral responsibility for deeds in front of the entire society. I am proud to say that we do have a healthy family environment and we are bringing up our children based on the above mentioned values.”

Artyom and Olympia Geghamyan



Mass Media that covered this event and the audience took a particular interest in a family of disabled people, a couple who despite all hardships and challenges of life are bringing up their small girl and who shared their happiness of being a family with the rest of the participants. This small yet strong family won sympathy of all people who attended the event and was awarded with a special prize.



This special day entirely focused on families, their values, challenges and future perspectives and was marked by two major activities: the above mentioned photo exhibition, and a **TV Public Debate held during the “5th Wheel” TV Program** with participation of UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator, Governmental officials, correspondent-member of the RoA Academy of Science academician and NGO representatives working in the field of family issues and reproductive health.

This particular issue of the prominent analytical TV debate programme was organized by the UNFPA initiative and focused on the issues of concern related to family planning, reproductive health and ranging from demographic situation in the country, challenges and reforms of the health sector to the reproductive rights and education. The main idea mainstreamed throughout the show was to stress the importance of improving services in the field of reproductive

health to secure health and wellbeing of each Armenian family through improved family planning and better reproductive health services.

