

## WORDS OF WELCOME

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Let me begin by thanking Mrs. Margarita Zavala, Commissioner Cecilia Romero, Dr. Richard Wilkins, Jesús Hernández Ramos, Ambassadors, Members of Congress, and all of you present, and warmly welcoming you to the International Colloquium on "The Family of the Migrant Worker".

*Family and Society* is a civic association that supports the integrity and dignity of the family and person, against aggression, violation or infringements undermining their rights. For this reason, *Family and Society* is interested in advocating public and private policies and programs that recognize the role of the family as a source of support, education and care, and as the primary center for community life, safety and reliability, with full respect for the various cultural, religious, ethical and social values.

In the current scenario of international migration, the family faces new challenges and a number of problems that sometimes lead to its disintegration.

I would like to think of those people living in extreme poverty, who are homeless, with no food, no clothing, and who have to travel long distances, who are victims of corruption, crime, kidnapping, prostitution, and death, who are surrounded by apathy and neglect, passing from one country to another, expecting to find their way, but without knowing where to go, sometimes even children, traveling alone.

When families reach their destination, they need to be welcomed; they need assistance for their basic needs. The elder children and the parent, mother or father, need a decent job to support the family. The younger ones, especially, deserve a comprehensive education according to the will of their parents. They need to be able to develop fully in a healthy family environment of happiness, harmony, love and

understanding. Many migrants are seen negatively, almost as a threat or a political nuisance, without their values and the potential contribution they can make to the host country being taken into account.

Let us not forget the ones left behind, young children, teenagers who grow up alone, disoriented youth, abandoned grandparents, all with a common aim of contacting their loved ones.

All of us here had a father and a mother who gave us life, many of us grew up at their side and had the opportunity to be educated by a family who were with us always and have been the mainstay in our lives. But many others live very sad and painful situations, and for years await the return of their loved ones. It is therefore necessary to make every effort to reunite migrant families and, if not possible, at least try to find a community with a family atmosphere.

Humanitarian aid is available through individuals and public and private international and national institutions. These are committed to enthusiastically promoting the respect for the rights of migrants, especially in areas affecting family unity. This is the beginning of a world of peace, of family, where there are no borders, no walls to tear down.