

## Concept Note

### Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family, 2024 Pretoria, South Africa, 23-25 January 2023

#### *Demographic Changes and Family Wellbeing in Africa*

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The Department of Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria in cooperation with the Focal Point on the Family, Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) and the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on “Demographic Changes and Family Wellbeing in Africa” to be held 23-25 January 2023 at the University of Pretoria in Pretoria, South Africa

The meeting is organized as part of the preparations for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024 (IYF+30) and will build on the findings of the Expert Group Meeting held in 2020 which recommended focusing on several megatrends to guide the preparations. Those recommendations were reflected in the Reports of the Secretary-General (2020-2021). In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Preparations for the IYF+30 endorsed those recommendations and advised focusing on the trends of new technologies, migration, urbanization as well as demographic trends and climate change as part of the preparations for IYF+30. It is in accordance with this resolution and relevant United Nations mandates, that the Expert Group Meeting is to address demographic trends and their impact on families in Africa.

To mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF) in 1994, the African Union Commission adopted the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa which advocates for the “promotion, formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies to ensure the protection of and support to the African family so as to enable it to play its vital role more effectively in the development of Africa.”

At the time the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa was adopted, key challenges affecting the family in the region included high levels of poverty, inadequate social protection mechanisms, low levels of educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, gender inequality, rural to

urban migration, displacement, family disintegration, poor sexual and reproductive health indicators and high levels of communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

In the three decades since the adoption of the Plan of Action, however, there have been significant socio-economic and demographic transformations that have direct and indirect implications for the well-being of families and their members in the region. It is for this reason that a focus on the family continues to be underscored in other regional instruments such as the African Union Social Policy Framework for Africa (2009) and the African Union Agenda 2063 (2013).

The planned Expert Group Meeting provides an opportunity to share good practices on policies and programmes that have improved family well-being, take stock of remaining and new family challenges, and recommend a way forward for the post-2024 period.

### **Purpose of the meeting**

The primary objective of the Meeting is to bring together experts to discuss and explore the issues noted above. The conclusions and recommendations of this meeting will provide Member States and other stakeholders with expert analysis regarding a number of issues impacting the family in Africa in the context of demographic trends.

The findings and recommendations from the Expert Group Meeting will be reflected in the upcoming Report of the Secretary-General on the Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

### **Methodology**

Experts are asked to provide a paper; make a short presentation; participate in group discussions and give their expert opinion and policy recommendations on family policy development, monitoring, and implementation in the areas mentioned above. The experts are also expected to provide specific examples of good practices on topics under discussion and offer detailed recommendations on further development of policies, programmes, and strategies supporting families in the areas noted above.

### **Outcomes**

- Background papers (5-7 pages, single-spaced, excluding references, figures, and statistical tables) prepared by each expert on issues in the attached provisional agenda

and including policy recommendations. Papers by experts will cover issues identified in the agenda, explain their relevance, provide quantitative and qualitative evidence, analyse the roles of social institutions, give examples of good practices, and offer conclusions and recommendations.

- Report of the meeting containing the summary of discussion and policy recommendations prepared by DISD/DESA. The report and experts' papers will be posted on the website of the DISD/DESA.
- Academic research output based on selected presented papers.

### Organizational matters

- The meeting will be held *in-person* at the University of Pretoria, in Pretoria South Africa on 23-25 January 2023 from 9:30 am on each day ((GMT+2). The venue will be the Merensky 2 Library on the Hatfield Campus
- A minimum of ten experts will participate in the Expert Group Meeting. Experts will include academics from the fields of family policy, demography, migration, urbanization, and other related issues. Experts will be representing various African regions and will participate in the meeting in their personal capacities.
- Each expert is required to provide a short presentation based on their written paper (not exceeding 15 minutes).
- The presenters should submit their papers to the Secretariat by 15 January 2023.
- The participants will meet in several working sessions.
  - Each session will have brief introductory remarks or presentation/s (PowerPoint is encouraged but not required) by expert/s which will introduce the topic and provide context for ensuing discussion.
  - A moderator for each session will lead the group discussion and will be responsible for a brief summary and compiling the recommendations from each session.
  - Discussions and brainstorming will be the preferred method of work and no formal conference-style presentations are envisioned.
  - The working language of the meeting will be English. There will be no interpretation provided.

- All submissions should be made available to the Secretariat in English

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