



FAMILY MATTERS



Circular No. 31

Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004) April 2001

FAMILY UNIT

Preparations for the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004) is the responsibility of the Family Unit, Division for Social Policy and Development within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Activities are in accordance with intergovernmental mandates e.g. General Assembly resolutions 50/142 of 21 December 1995, 52/81 of 12 December 1997, and 54/124 of 17 December 1999 respectively.

Current Activities of the Family Unit

This issue of "Family Matters" will provide a brief description of activities concerning the preparation for and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The observance of the International Year of the Family (IYF) culminated in 1994. That was the first phase. The second phase, the follow-up to the IYF lasted from 1995-1999. The basic objective of the follow-up phase was to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions. The third phase commenced in January 2000 and will last until 2004. This third phase is geared to the preparation of and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the IYF.

The Family Unit will be responsible for coordinating the preparation for and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and will seek to (a) coordinate activities for the preparation and observance of the 10th Anniversary; and (b) promote an exchange of information and experience, through, inter alia, the organization of international meetings and the compilation of information on family-related issues in different countries.

The Family Unit's Activities for the 10th Anniversary of the IYF will be grouped around 5 areas of focus:

- (a) Technology and its impact on the Family
- (b) Indicators and statistics for family well-being
- (c) Approaches to the development of family policies
- (d) Parental roles and intra-familial support system
- (e) HIV/AIDS and its impact on Families

Within the parameters of the 5 core areas cited above, the Family Unit will provide substantive servicing to intergovernmental bodies to assist them in the monitoring of progress achieved in the preparations for the 10th Anniversary. Moreover, the Family Unit will prepare parliamentary documentation for future sessions of relevant intergovernmental bodies.

Research:

The Family Unit has initiated the following studies for 2001:

- (1) Families Affected by HIV/AIDS in Selected Countries
- (2) A Study on Information and Educational Technology and its Impact on Families in Selected Countries
- (3) A Study on Indicators and Statistics for Family Well Being

International Day of Families:

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The Family Unit will undertake a broad campaign to promote the observance of the 10th Anniversary at all levels. This also includes activities such as the promotion of the annual observance of the International Day of Families to encourage the active follow-up to the IYF at the national and local levels. Provision of high visibility to the family issue is a priority in social development planning. To this end a Message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations will be prepared for IDF 2001.

The International Day of Families, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, will be observed for the seventh time on 15 May 2001. This annual observance reflects the importance, which the international community attaches to families. The international theme for 2001 is 'Families and Volunteers - Building Social Cohesion'. The theme was suggested in view of the fact that the year 2001 was proclaimed as the International Year of Volunteers.

At headquarters, the International Day of Families will be launched on 17 May 2001 at 10am at the United Nations Secretariat, Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium. All participants will talk about the theme from their perspective and engage in a panel discussion, with questions from the audience. UNV invited Ms. Pam Warwick, Vice President for non-profit outreach of the 'Points of Lights Foundation'. Together with Mr. Carmine Magazino, Managing Director of 'Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City' and Ms. Perdita Huston, a journalist and writer, these will be the three speakers.

Technical Cooperation:

The Family Unit will provide, through the UN Trust Fund on Family Activities financial assistance for activities specific to the family and projects of direct benefit to it, with special focus on least developed and developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. In addition, activities will be undertaken to identify and exchange international "how-to" approaches to developing productive and sustainable frameworks on family policy development.

Organization of Meetings:

A Meeting with Regional Commissions is planned for later this year on coordination of activities for the Tenth Anniversary of IYF. The Governments of Austria and Trinidad and Tobago are planning meetings with the Family Unit in 2001 and 2002 respectively.

Inter-University Network:

The Family Unit intends to establish an Inter-University Network to facilitate and coordinate global exchange, access to and distribution of the latest research findings on national family policies.

In General Assembly resolution 54/124 of 17 December 1999, research and academic institutions are inter alia called upon to 'contribute to developing strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening the economic and sustainable livelihood of families'.

In the Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly (54/256) entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family", paragraph 8(a), reference is made that 'there is a need to improve the knowledge base through research, data collection and collaboration among Governments and research institutions, nationally, regionally and internationally'.

An objective of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 is to 'strengthen national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families'. An Inter-University Network would address these formulated goals as well as contribute to the preparations for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations, calling for more research, dissemination of knowledge as well as increased cooperation among institutions of higher learning.

----- **Family Unit**

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