



FAMILY MATTERS

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Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004) October 2002

PROGRAMME ON THE FAMILY

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.

Interim Progress Report on Preparations for the observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004

Actions at the national level

There is recognition by many Governments that the tenth anniversary is, in the context of development, an important global initiative to draw renewed attention to International Year of the Family objectives and to undertake concerted actions to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes within national development planning (e.g., in Barbados, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Gambia, Guatemala, Mali, Mongolia, Namibia, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Spain and the United Republic of Tanzania). Various Governments are developing family-enhancing employment policies that enable both male and female workers to achieve a satisfactory balance between work and family responsibilities.

Numerous Governments have established, or in the process of establishing a national coordination mechanism to deal with the planning and effective observance of the tenth anniversary. These mechanisms are sensitizing public opinion on family-related issues, mobilizing resources from the private and public sectors

From those responses, it appears that the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is gaining support and is attracting a growing number of partners at all levels. Measures at the national level include the setting up of national coordinating mechanisms, elaboration of national programmes of action and identification by Governments of focal points

for the implementation of tenth-anniversary programmes and facilitating channels of communication through the dissemination of information between government and family-related governmental organizations.

Various Governments have initiated family legislation and codes to ensure that such legislation is non-discriminatory and respects the human rights of all family members (e.g., in Ecuador, Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Mauritius, Morocco, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and New Zealand).

Within the context of the tenth anniversary, numerous Governments are promoting gender equality in the family and intend to adopt laws, regulations and other measures to that effect. Several Governments have taken measures to ensure equal access of women and men to employment, education and job training and to encourage the sharing of domestic responsibilities (e.g., in Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Norway, Senegal, Singapore and Slovakia). In Japan, a Gender Equality Bureau was created as a new Council for Gender Equality. In 2001 the Republic of Korea created a Ministry of Gender Equality, responsible for planning and coordinating policies for women, promoting gender equality and taking measures to eliminate violence against women. In Antigua and Barbuda, a country research programme is planned with respect to abused women and children.

As at 24 June 2002, responses to the note verbale sent by the Secretary-General to Member States on 22 February 2002 had been received from Burkina Faso, Chile, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Italy, Jordan, Mauritius, Morocco, New Zealand, the Philippines, Romania, Slovakia, the Sudan, Thailand and Turkey.

for the anniversary. Major elements of national programmes for the anniversary year include awareness-raising, streamlining old policies and programmes and developing new ones, improving the socio-economic conditions of families through legislation and other means, enhancing the rights and well-being of family members and dealing with specific issues of direct relevance to families.

Thus, in Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity is responsible for the observance of the tenth anniversary. The Government has paid attention to issues of poverty, family rights and responsibilities and the role of education in family life.

Chile has created a body called the National Service for Women, which is responsible for family-related policies. During the last two years, it has coordinated an Inter-Ministerial Commission that has, among other things, designed a Policy and Plan of Action for Families.

In the Czech Republic, a new department for family policy was established within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Ministry focuses, inter alia, on equal opportunities for men and women, and provides assistance to job seekers re-entering the labour market. It introduced parental leave and improved conditions for childcare by both parents. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs envisages a report on the family by 2004. A review of the existing labour code is also planned, and the needs of families with children with disabilities will be addressed.

The National Institute of the Child and the Family in Ecuador has undertaken actions in collaboration with relevant Ministries and non-governmental organizations to observe the anniversary. A Committee will be established soon for its observance.

In Egypt, preparations for the tenth anniversary are underway, under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs. A comprehensive programme of activities is envisaged with the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The focus is to reinforce efforts to improve family well-being by strengthening local and national actions and to increase budgetary provisions for family programmes and projects. Governmental and non-governmental organizations organize meetings and seminars on diverse family issues such as social protection, the rights of children, the rights of women and poverty.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines is currently evaluating the Plan of Action on the Philippine Family and plans to create a national coordination mechanism.

In Romania, the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity is the body responsible for family-policy development. It focuses, inter alia, on family legislation, access to employment and proper working conditions, the protection of paid leave for women and access to social protection. By the end of 2004, the State allowance for children will have increased.

Finland aims to strengthen national family policies by 2004. More detailed plans or working groups for the preparation and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family have so far not yet been reported by the Government.

In Italy, under the direction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, initiatives include the relaunching of the National Families Observatory (a network of municipalities and family associations) and the preparation of a white paper on welfare.

In Jordan, tenth-anniversary preparations have included the creation of the National Council for the Family by Law No. 37 of 2002. The aim of the Council is to improve family well-being, with the focus on a comprehensive review of family issues.

Mauritius has prepared a national policy paper on family protection and welfare for the observance of the tenth anniversary, as well as education programmes for parents of children. It has set up a preparatory committee to undertake a nationwide sensitization campaign. It launched an educational and promotional campaign on the preservation and transmission of family norms, values and culture.

In Morocco, a National Charter on Family Policy has been elaborated within the context of preparations for the tenth anniversary. It includes principles and provisions to improve the well-being of Moroccan families by, for example, reinforcing the linkages between family well-being and sustainable development, promoting family strength, providing for family needs and strengthening partnerships in support of families.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development is responsible for tenth-anniversary activities. They will include a review of initiatives and projects on work and familial responsibilities; intra-familial support systems; families in poverty and marginal circumstances; family legislation; education, fertility and family planning; and individual family members.

The Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies, created by the Government of Slovakia on 1 December 1991, under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, is an expression of the Government's effort to pursue International Year of the Family objectives. In December 2001, the Government and the United Nations extended their memorandum of understanding for a second time, for another five year to facilitate international cooperation in family research.

In the Sudan, the General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs within the Ministry of Welfare and Social Development is responsible for tenth-anniversary preparations. This has so far included a review of legislation concerning the rights of families and an assessment of strategies and mechanisms related to family affairs.

In Thailand, tenth-anniversary activities have been planned in collaboration with both governmental and non-governmental organizations. These include community-based family well-being projects at the provincial and district levels. The National Commission on Family Development is responsible for family development processes and is chaired by the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister. Its members comprise heads of relevant governmental organizations, representatives of non-governmental organizations and experts. It sets guidelines for action plans in connection with the National Policy and Plan on Family Development, and coordinates, follows up and evaluates the implementation of the National Policy and Plan. Moreover, it established a committee on the preparations for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

In Turkey, the Family Research Institute organizes education and public awareness programmes directed at family members. It organizes conferences and conducts family-centred research. In connection with the tenth anniversary, the Institute is planning to commission a research project on the structure of the Turkish family; integrate research on family issues; organize a competition on family-based research; and prepare an action plan concerning family issues.

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