



Family Matters



Circular No.1

Follow-up to the International Year of the Family

July 1996

-
- [The Subprogramme on the Family](#)
 - [International Day of Families](#)
 - [Visitor=s Programme for Studying Exemplary Family Benefits and Family Services in Austria](#)
-

[\[Back to *Family Matters*\]](#)

The Subprogramme on the Family

The follow up to the International Year of the Family is the responsibility of the Division for Social Policy and Development within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The follow-up activities to the International Year of the Family are in accordance with intergovernmental mandates e.g. General Assembly resolutions 47/237 of 20 September 1993 and 50/142 of 21 December 1995 respectively.

The priorities of the Subprogramme on the Family (within the abovesited Division) are:

- (1) The preparation of intergovernmental reports on the Family.
- (2) The development of an inventory of best practices in family policies and to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of ideas and experiences on family issues.
- (3) To encourage policy makers to reassess anew and objectively, a range of family issues and dispel Amyths@ that make debate contentious.
- (4) To mobilize resources to support salient initiatives and to utilize the UN Trust Fund on Family Activities to respond to family-specific needs at the national level.
- (5) To encourage relevant research that informs policy and ensures their availability to developing and developed countries.

International Day of Families

The International Day of Families was observed for the third time on 15 May 1996. Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, this annual observance reflects the importance which the international community attaches to families as basic units of societies as well as its concern regarding their situation around the world. A message of the United Nations Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of Families was disseminated widely.

The international theme, *>Families - Victims of Poverty and Homelessness*, = was suggested for this year=s observance, in view of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty [1996] as well as the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996.

To commemorate the Day, a Panel discussion was held at United Nations Headquarters on 15 May 1996. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Clovis Maksoud, Director of the Center for the Global South at the American University in Washington, D.C. Participating panelists were: Dr. David Tobis (Director, Center for the Study of the Family, Hunter College), Ms. Vinie Burrows (NGO Committee on Southern Africa), Ms.

Meg Gardinier (Executive Director, International Catholic Child Bureau), Father Luis Dolan

(Special Adviser, Temple of Understanding) and Ms. Jenny Field (New York NGO Committee on the Family).

Visitor=s Programme for Studying Exemplary Family Benefits and Family Services in Austria

Within the scope of follow-up activities, to the International Year of the Family, Austria is, once again, offering a one-week programme to study model family benefits and family services in Austria, which is open to one representative each from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The applicant must be employed in a field that will ensure that he/she will be able in the long term to use the experience gained in Austria in shaping family policy at home.

The Division for Social Policy and Development is assisting the Government of Austria (The Federal Ministry for Youth and Family Affairs) in the selection of candidates as well as in the assessment of the Visitor=s Programme. Three nominations have been received from the Governments of Ghana, Costa Rica and the Philippines. This Visitor=s Programme is scheduled to take place from

13-20 October 1996 in Vienna, Austria.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

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