



FAMILY MATTERS



Circular No. 27

Follow up of the International Year of the Family

August 2000

FAMILY UNIT

The Follow up to the International Year of the Family is the responsibility of the Family Unit, Division for Social Policy and Development within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The follow-up activities to the International Year of the Family 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. [The Family Unit welcomes ongoing information and data on family-related policies and programmes from concerned actors and focal points].

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (2004)

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 third phase commenced in January 2000 and will last till 2004. This third phase is geared to the preparation of and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the IYF.

From 1995 to the present time, the Family Unit has served as a focal point for family issues within the UN Secretariat. The main objective of the Family unit is to assist Governments and civil society, including research and academic institutions, strengthening family-centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated approach to development. The specific objectives of the subprogramme are:

- (a) to increase awareness of family issues among Governments, policy-makers and the public;
- (b) to strengthen national capacity for the elaboration of policies and programmes, including systematic and integrated approaches to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies for families.

The Family Unit will be responsible for coordinating the preparation for and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the IYF. The Family Unit's activities for the 10th Anniversary of the IYF will be grouped into 5 areas of focus:

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

The Family Unit will further initiate a public awareness campaign to stimulate local, national, regional and international actions to: (a) increase awareness of family issues among Governments and civil society and to highlight the importance of families; increase a better understanding of their functions and problems; and promote knowledge of the economic, social and demographic processes affecting families and their members; and (b) strengthen national institutions/mechanisms to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families [family-sensitive actions].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

The idea for the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family arose in late 1999. The deliberations of the Third Committee during the 54th session of the General Assembly in October 1999 led to, among other things, the introduction of a resolution entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family". It was sponsored by the representative of Benin on behalf of Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ghana, Liberia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Panama, the Philippines, Senegal, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Botswana, Cameroon, the Congo, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, France, the Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Madagascar, Malta, Mongolia, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Zambia and Zimbabwe joined in sponsoring the draft resolution and Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Nigeria withdrew their sponsorship.

The text of General Assembly resolution 54/124 of 17 December 1999 entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family" is below.

54/124. Follow-up to the International Year of the Family

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/82 of 8 December 1989, 46/92 of 16 December 1991, 47/237 of 20 September 1993, 50/142 of 21 December 1995 and 52/81 of 12 December 1997 concerning the proclamation, preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family,

Recognizing that the basic objective of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family should be to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions and to build upon their strengths, in particular at the national and local levels,

Noting that the family-related provisions of the outcomes of the world conferences of the 1990s continue to provide policy guidance on ways to strengthen family-centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development,

Emphasizing that equality between women and men and respect for the rights of all family members is essential to family well-being and to society at large,

Noting with concern that the contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities have steadily decreased, reducing its resource base, and that, unless this trend is reversed and the Fund strengthened, many priority concerns relating to family issues will not be met.

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the International Year of the Family (A/54/256),

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary General and the recommendations contained therein;
2. *Invites* Governments to continue their actions to build family-friendly societies, *inter alia*, by promoting the rights of individual family members, in particular gender equality and the rights of the child;
3. *Urges* Governments to continue to take sustained action at all levels concerning family issues, including studies and applied research, to promote the role of families in development and to develop concrete measures and approaches to address national priorities to deal with family issues;
4. *Recommends* that all relevant actors including Governments, research and academic institutions and civil society, contribute to developing strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening the economic and sustainable livelihood of families;
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to play an active role in facilitating international cooperation within the framework of the follow-up to the International Year of the

Family, to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information among Governments on effective policies and

strategies, to facilitate technical assistance, with a focus on least developed and developing countries, and to encourage the organization of subregional and interregional meetings and relevant research;

6. *Invites* the Commission for Social Development, when adopting its next multi-year programme of work, to consider undertaking a review of the global situation of the family in 2004, bearing in mind that, in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, on the appropriate ways and means to observe the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

83rd plenary meeting
17 December 1999

Additional Professional Staff

Robert Venne joined the Family Unit on 1 September 2000 as an Associate Social Affairs Officer. Mr. Venne was born in 1970 in Freising, Germany and received his degree in sociology with minors in political science and psychology from the Free University Berlin. He also studied for one year as an exchange student at the New School for Social Research in New York. Mr. Venne joined the UN three years ago as a consultant for the Information Support Unit of DESA and worked for one year as an Associate Expert at the Mortality and Migration Section of the Population Division of DESA.

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