



# *Family Matters*



Circular No. 9

*Follow-up to the International Year of the Family*

1997

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## **The United Nations 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 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 47/237 of 20 September 1993 and 50/142 of 21 December 1995 respectively.

In support of national and local family-related activities, several initiatives at the regional level have been taken by the regional economic commissions of the United Nations.

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## **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

In the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, and as a follow-up to the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, ESCAP has incorporated various aspects relating to family in the following areas: (a) the enhancement of social security for the poor; (b) development of a policy framework for lifelong preparation for old age; and (c) promotion of community-based support

services for people with disabilities.

ESCAP has formulated a project document entitled A Strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection@ for implementation in 1998. The project objectives are: (a) to promote awareness in the Asia-Pacific region of the impact of development programmes on family functioning and provision of social protection; (b) to examine issues relating to the role of the family in providing social protection; and (c) to develop a set of policy proposals on means of strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection. The main project activities include preparation of 8 national policy papers, formulation of a set of regional proposals on means of strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection and organization of a regional workshop.

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### **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

An International Seminar on the Real Situation of the Families was held on 23 and 24 of October 1996; organized by the University of Concepcion, Chile. Preparations are under way for a chapter on family and poverty, for the Social Panorama of Latin America, 1997 edition. ECLAC is actively participating in the IV Interamerican Conference on Families: Family, Work and the Quality of Life (8-12 September 1997).

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### **Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Within the context of follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, a Regional Programme for Action was adopted by the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs in September 1996. This Programme for Action focused on three themes of priority for the advancement of Arab women: poverty as the economic dimension, decision-making and political participation as the political dimension, and support to the Arab family and values as the social dimension.

Within the context of follow-up to global conferences, ESCWA has formulated a project document on support to the Arab Family and related family issues and values. Also, a multidisciplinary database on social indicators and social policies and measures, including those on women and the Arab family, is being built at ESCWA.

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### **Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)**

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has been coordinating data collection and research in the area of the family through a series of national

Fertility and Family Surveys (FFS). These surveys have now been conducted in 21 ECE Member States. The long-term objectives of these survey is to draw the attention of policy makers and programme managers to the changing nature of the family in Western society and its implications for best practices. Also, two types of studies are being published as part of the FFS research programme on the family. Their common objective is to enhance national capacity building to formulate and evaluate programmes and policies targeted towards the family.

The first type of FFS studies encompasses a series of national Standard Country Reports, the first of which (Norway) was published by the ECE in 1996. The second type of studies are regional comparative studies that focus on specific issues related to fertility and family behavior that are deemed to be of special policy relevance.

The technical assistance to countries with economies in transition that the ECE provides is twofold: direct consultations and expert advice, especially on the processing and analysis of FFS data; and the transfer of knowledge and know-how through a series training workshops.

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Updated: 29 November 1999. Comments and suggestions: [desktop@un.org](mailto:desktop@un.org)

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