



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
Division for Social Policy and Development

Recommendations for relevant stakeholders

United Nations Expert Group Meeting,
New York
1 – 3 June 2011

**“Assessing family policies:
Confronting family poverty and social exclusion
&
Ensuring work-family balance**

Convened as part of the preparations for the
twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014

Family policy development and assessment

- Apply a family-centred perspective to policy decisions by routinely asking how families are affected by issues, in what ways they contribute to them, and whether involving families in the response would result in better solutions.
- Establish at the national level a specific agency, organization, or governmental body with official responsibility for: (a) designing, evaluating and monitoring family policies; (b) analyzing how families affect and are affected by policy; (c) promoting families as a priority for study, investment, partnership, and political action.
- Develop social policies focusing on the whole family unit rather than only on individual family members.
- Ensure that family policies are sensitive to regional and socio-cultural variations within and across nation states.
- Recognize that the achievement of Millennium Development Goals require an explicit attention to family context and content.

- Include family-focused strategies in poverty reduction and other national frameworks for development.
- Define policy aims prior to the assessment of family-focused policies.
- Collect more systematic national and local data on the implementation of family policies and indicators of family policy outcomes.
- Develop and disseminate a comprehensive and flexible set of performance measures based on these data to monitor the achievements of Member States in family policy development; increasing child- and family well-being; eradicating family poverty and ensuring work-family balance. This is crucial for the understanding and evaluation of policies and can provide important policy lessons.
- Communicate with policymakers about the value of investing in family policies by focusing on the contribution families make to society. Focusing on families is an effective and efficient means for generating productive workers and raising caring, committed citizens.
- Share knowledge and good practices about effective family programmes around the world.
- Document the effects of globalization on families and mitigate its negative impacts.

Confronting family poverty and social exclusion

- Recognize that adequate and sustainable family support programmes are indispensable tools for promoting children's development; reducing family poverty and for preventing intergenerational transfer of poverty.
- Ensure that investment in child well-being starts during the pre-natal and early years and continues through adolescence. Such a strategy potentially has high social rates of return and helps avoid more costly interventions later in life.
- Raise awareness and mobilize key actors, including donor countries and agencies to ensure a broad base of support for the implementation of home-grown social protection programmes. Such an approach tends to be more successful at mobilizing domestic political constituencies behind initiatives and programmes.
- Increase access to care and improve the health outcomes of those afflicted by HIV/AIDS, including support for home care.

- Explore and adopt effective and equitable means of delivering family-centred benefits and services.
- Design cash transfer, taxation and other programmes with the intent of enhancing long-term family economic self-sufficiency and considering diversity of needs of family members and respect for gender equality.
- Recognize that cash transfer programmes and the provision of basic services can alleviate poverty and prevent intergenerational transfer of poverty. Investments in job creation are indispensable for enhancing family empowerment, self-reliance and dignity.
- Improve access to housing, especially for young couples starting families, through tax breaks, preferential loans and other measures.

Ensuring work-family balance

- Provide early childhood education and care to enhance working parents' ability to reconcile work and family responsibilities.
- Support a wide range of family care arrangements, including home care, grandparent care and community care with decisions made by parents based on child's individual needs and a family's specific circumstances.
- Create incentives and remove regulatory obstacles for the business sector to establish parental leaves, offer child care services, introduce flexible work and part-time job opportunities, and institute other creative ways to increase work flexibility.
- Recognize the value of unpaid care work that family members provide and acknowledge the social and economic role of caregivers and domestic workers in societies through communication media strategies.
- Provide regular training to enhance entrepreneurship, boost employability, and expand social protection for vulnerable family workers.
- Offer family-focused solutions to ensure work-family balance, such as parenting skills training, marriage and healthy relationship education and family counseling services.
- Ensure a life-cycle approach to work-family balance that acknowledges the changing needs of families caring for young children, adolescents and older persons.
- Facilitate parents' return to the labour force and provide opportunities for retraining.

- Promote fathers' involvement in families, including paternal and maternal equitable participation in family duties. Set up or improve mechanisms to discourage and sanction neglect of family responsibilities.
- Facilitate sustained compliance with existing International Labour Organisation's conventions, including the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention and the Maternity Protection Convention. Encourage Governments to ratify these instruments.
- Develop or expand gender-sensitive curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes and teach girls and boys concepts of gender equality, interdependence, and mutual respect.
- Raise awareness among employers, policymakers and the public about the value of family leave for children, parents and society through media campaigns featuring research findings and use of public figures to model the use and benefit of family leave.
- Promote policies and programmes supporting migrant families and support family reunification. To prevent economic migration, promote sustainable economic growth and job creation in the countries of origin.

Civil society

- Encourage civil society organizations to increase their collaboration with the public and private sectors to form more holistic partnerships that better meet the needs of families.
- Conduct further studies highlighting good practices and effective collaborations between local, national, and transnational NGOs, Governments and private sector that support and strengthen families.