

# Second UN Consultative Meeting of Regional and International NGOs on the Family



Family Unit  
DSPD / DESA, UN Secretariat  
New York, 9 February 2000

## Introduction

1. The second United Nations Consultative Meeting of Regional and International NGOs on the Family was held on 9 February 2000 in New York. The Meeting was held in conjunction with the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development, held from 8-17 February 2000. The Meeting was organized by the Family Unit of the Division of Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
2. The Meeting was attended by major NGOs dealing with the family, New York NGO Committee on the Family, the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, International Federation for Parent Education, and PRODEFA. The list of participants is contained in Annex 1. The agenda is contained in Annex 2.
3. The Meeting was opened by Mr. Amr Ghaleb, Officer-in-Charge of the Family Unit, who welcomed the participants. In his opening statement, he stated that the joint cooperative efforts is vital for the preparation for and observance of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Mr. Ghaleb went on to say that notwithstanding the achievements since 1994, there remain a number of problem areas requiring attention. One area involves the need to develop common ground and common understanding among constituencies viewing family issues from different perspectives. Another concerns the lack of basic knowledge in many countries on many aspects of the family, with the result that policy often remains based on outdated information or on stereotypes.
4. Mr. Ghaleb reaffirmed the importance of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. In this regard, he underlined that the global community recognizes that the basic objective of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family continues to be to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions in particular at the national and local levels.
5. Mr. Ghaleb provided an assessment of the follow-up phase of the International Year of the Family. He noted that five years after the International Year of the Family, the discourse and debate at the global level continue to express the concern of Governments for actions that support families as the basic units of society. A common understanding exists that all actions policies affect and impact on families as well as that specific measures are needed to preclude negative consequences in the attempt to support and strengthen families. To this end, many Governments have so geared national development strategies as to take into account the role of families in society or the effect of those strategies on families. They have recognized the need to build family-friendly societies.

## Observations

6. The Participants reported on and discussed their various activities and programmes in the area of the family. They exchanged information on activities foreseen in 2000-2001 in light of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The overviews presented by the participants underlined the importance of the objectives of the International Year of the Family. The Participants referred to major family concerns and issues, which are of concern to their own organization such as parent education, migration and immigration, family policies for families, capacity building, HIV/AIDS, family impact consideration, statements, family legislation, etc. It was clear that non-governmental organization are important vehicles for facilitating international cooperation in the area of the family.

## Conclusions

7. The Consultation reaffirmed the utility of the 1998 consultations<sup>1</sup> as well as the current one. The Group recommended that they should continue to meet and address priority topics. The importance of strengthening international cooperation in the area of families was stressed. The participants underlined that the areas of cooperation should continue to be: (a) Lobbying and advocacy; (b) Research; (c) Technical assistance/cooperation/project formulation, particularly at the grassroots level; (d) Collective inputs into the forthcoming sessions of the Commission for Social Development and the General Assembly; and (e) Provision of technical assistance to projects. National capacity building was seen as a priority, particularly the training of personnel to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate appropriate policies and programmes related to families.

8. The Group fully endorsed the recommendations cited in the report of the Secretary-General [A/54/256]. These were:

(a) There is a need to improve the knowledge base through research, data collection and collaboration among Governments and research institutions, nationally, regionally and internationally. To this end, the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, should play a supporting role, including providing technical cooperation as appropriate and as requested by Governments;

(b) Priority should be given to the building up of local capacity in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition and to the training of personnel to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate appropriate policies and programmes related to families;

(c) Attention needs to be given to the most appropriate way of observing the tenth anniversary of International Year of the Family in 2004 in order to strengthen follow-up, especially at the national and local levels. In this connection, the Commission for Social Development might be invited to undertake in 2004 a comprehensive review of the global situation of families based, *inter alia*, on information made available by the Secretary-General in collaboration with other concerned entities of the United Nations system;

(d) In order to meet the requests from Governments for assistance in formulating and implementing family-related policies and programmes, and to strengthen the family component of development projects when requested, the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities need to be increased.

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<sup>1</sup> The Report of the First UN Consultative Meeting of Regional and International NGOs on the Family [New York, 9 February 1998].

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**AGENDA**

- I. Opening Statement by the Family Unit
- II. Approval of the Draft Agenda
- III. Exchange of Views and Information of Participants
- IV. Joint Actions concerning the Thirty-eighth Session of the Commission for Social Development
- V. Long-Term Joint Cooperation