

Third UN Consultative Meeting of Regional and International NGOs on the Family



Family Unit
DSPD / DESA, UN Secretariat
New York, 11 February 2002

Introduction

1. The third United Nations Consultative Meeting of Regional and International NGOs on the Family was held on 9 February 2001 in New York. The Meeting was held in conjunction with the 39th session of the Commission for Social Development, held from 13-23 February 2001. The Meeting was organized by the Family Unit of the Division for 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, Baha'i International, PRODEFA, Foundation for Peace and Cooperation and Parents Forum. 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, Chief, Family Unit, who welcomed the participants. In his opening statement, he stated that the joint cooperative effort is vital for the preparation for and observance of the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Mr. Ghaleb reaffirmed the importance of the 10th 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.
4. Mr. Ghaleb noted that the observance of the Year resulted in a significant record of accomplishments at all levels. These included, inter alia, greater awareness of the role of families and family issues; advancing the subject matter of families in the context of development; increased recognition of the importance of supporting families and of bringing about positive changes in the family realm; new initiatives and long-term activities in support of families all over the world, particularly at the local and national levels; strengthening and development of mechanisms devoted to family policy and research; mobilization of a global network of partners, particularly non-governmental organizations; and the recognition that, despite the diversity of families, many key issues relating to families are common across countries and regions, and that international cooperation on family issues is valuable.

Observations

5. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family constitutes an important opportunity to give a new impetus to the follow-up of the Year. In its resolution 54/124, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the follow-up to the Year and of the observance of its tenth anniversary.
6. The objectives of the tenth anniversary of the Year would be to:
 - (a) Increase awareness of family issues among Governments as well as in the private sector;
 - (b) Strengthen the capacity of national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families;
 - (c) Stimulate efforts to respond to problems affecting, and affected by, the situation of families;

- (d) Undertake at all levels reviews and assessments of the situation and needs of families, identifying specific issues and problems;
- (e) Enhance the effectiveness of local, national and regional efforts to carry out specific programmes concerning families, generate new activities and strengthen existing ones;
- (f) Improve collaboration among national and international non-governmental organizations in support of families.

7. The tenth anniversary of the Year could be launched in December 2003 at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The observance of the tenth anniversary during 2004 could also culminate in the holding of plenary sessions of the Assembly on the topic of families. Results sought from the plenary sessions of the General Assembly in late 2004 would be devoted to: (a) an assessment of global trends that impact on families; (b) a review of progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of objectives of the International Year of the Family since 1994; (c) a reaffirmation of commitments made and the identification of further actions, including encouraging the incorporation of effective family policies and programmes into national development strategies; and undertake research and development of policies related to family issues.

8. Preparatory activities would start in 2001. At present, it is envisioned that preparations by the United Nations secretariat will entail a wide range of activities, including an interregional meeting, along with efforts to encourage action-oriented research and the development of frameworks on family policies. The United Nations will strive to promote dialogue and consensus for furthering international cooperation on families. Greater efforts will be made to support the efforts of Governments in formulating family policies and programmes and in building their national capacities. Attention will be devoted to monitoring trends, identifying significant family-related issues and analysing their policy implications, with a view to helping the international community to respond to long-term and emerging family-related issues.

9. The Year 204 should also be the occasion for a discussion by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and other bodies of specialized agencies of the global situation of families and of how the United Nations system might approach family issues as an integral part of development. The organizations of the United Nations system should be encouraged to give wide support to the tenth anniversary and specifically to those aspects of the Year that are of particular relevance to their programmes.

10. United Nations agencies and bodies, including the regional commissions, will be encouraged to develop plans for the celebration of the anniversary. Within the parameters of the mandates of the United Nations organizations and agencies, regional and global cooperation will be promoted and strengthened to support national action. This will entail enhancing advisory services provided to Governments upon their request, with a view to increasing their capacity related to family policies. The dissemination of information relating to the family and the sharing of experiences between countries should be facilitated. Furthermore, research activities on emerging and specific family issues should be carried out in cooperation with national, regional and international organizations and academic institutions. This would facilitate the exchange of information and stimulate international cooperation in the field of family research.

11. 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 organizations are important vehicles for facilitating international cooperation in the area of the family.

Conclusions

12. The participants underlined that major demographic, economic, cultural and social changes have affected both the family as an institution and family members as individuals. In that context, Governments have striven to undertake actions to support and strengthen the family as a basic unit of society in the performance of its central functions. This requires an increased understanding of the problems and the current and future role of the family as an institution in different socio-economic and cultural conditions. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family can be the occasion to reflect on those issues.

13. The Commission for Social Development is encouraged to review the proposals contained in the present report on the preparations for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and provide appropriate recommendations to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

14. The participants felt that special attention needs to be directed to strengthening national capacities for policy analysis, formulating of options and evaluation. Political will and commitment, the provision of adequate resource, infrastructure and personnel are key factors impacting on the situation of families.

15. The participants suggested that research and academic institutions should be actively involved in the tenth anniversary in the related policy research. Partnerships should be strengthened between the producers and users of family-related research.

16. During the preparations for the tenth anniversary, interaction between non-governmental organizations and families should be strengthened, with a view to mobilizing public opinion, contributing to the dialogue on international families and developing a culture of partnership.

**Second United Nations Consultative Meeting
of Regional and International NGOs
on the Family**

List of Participants

Ms. Diana Skelton
Representative to the UN
International Movement ATD Fourth World
172 First Avenue, New York, NY 10009
Tel: 212-228-1339
Fax: 212-777-6491
Email: un-ny@4thworldmovement.org

Mr. David Roth
UN Rep. - Child Welfare League of America
Vice Chair - NGO Committee of the Family
1067 E. 19th St., Brooklyn, NY 11230
Tel: 718-338-1395
Fax: 212-558-9991

Mr. Moncef Guitouni
President, IFPE
International Federation for Parent Education
2120 est, rue Sherbrooke, bureau 212
Montreal, Quebec, H2K 1C3
Tel: 514-523-5677
Fax: 514-523-9999
Email: fiep@guitonim@hotmail.com

Mr. P. Luc Dupont
President, North America Region
International Federation for Parent Education
2120 est, rue Sherbrooke, bureau 212
Montreal, Quebec, H2K 1C3
Tel: 514-523-5677 or 613-598-2860
Fax: 514-523-9999
Email: fiep@sympatico.ca

Ms. Rosina Santa Ollala
Secretary General, Foundation PRODEFA
Board Member, Deputy Chair
Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
Avenida de Baviera, 8 28028 Madrid, Spain
Tel: 3491-355-1441
Fax: 3491-561-8083

Ms. Eve Sullivan
Founder, PARENTS FORUM
144 Pemberton Street
Cambridge, MA 02140-2509
Tel: 617-864-3802
Fax: 617-253-8674
Email: info@parentsforum.org
Web: www.parentsforum.org

Ms. Lee Ann Frigilietti
Board Member, PARENTS FORUM
149 Webster St.
E. Boston, MA 02128
Tel: 617-567-7806

Ms. Nikoo Mahbouvian
Baha'I International Community
866 UN Plaza, Suite 120, NY, NY 10017
Tel: 212-803-2500
Fax: 212-803-2566
Email: nmahboub@bic.org

Mr. Joaquin Antuña
Foundation Paz y Cooperacion (Peace & Co-operation)
ECOSOC Special Consultation Status
Melendez Valdes 68-4, Madrid, Spain 28015
Tel: 3491-549-6156
Fax: 3491-543-5282
Email: pazycoop@eurosur.org

Mr. Peter Crowley
Chairperson, Vienna NGO Committee
on the Family
Bluecher Strasse 14a
D-40885 Ratingen, Germany
Tel/Fax: 49-2-102301643
Email: Peter.Crowley@t-online.de

Mr. Amr Ghaleb
Chief
Family Unit, DSPD, DESA
United Nations
Tel: 212-963-3238
Fax: 212-963-3062
Email: ghaleb@un.org

Mr. Robert Venne
Associate Social Affairs Officer
Family Unit, DSPD, DESA
United Nations
Tel: 212-963-4540
Fax: 212-963-3062
Email: venne@un.org

Ms. Emma Dumalag
Secretary
Family Unit, DSPD, DESA
United Nations
Tel: 212-963-2395
Fax: 212-963-3062
Email: dumalag@un.org

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