

**Economic & Social Affairs**

**Good Practices in Family Policy Making:  
Family Policy Development, Monitoring  
and Implementation: Lessons Learnt**

New York, 15 – 17 May 2012

Report of the Expert Group Meeting convened as part of the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014



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## DESA

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## Contents

		Para	Page
I.	Background of the Meeting .....	1- 20	3 - 5
II.	Summary of the Proceedings .....	21 – 110	5 - 21
III.	Recommendations .....	111 – 118	22 - 28
Annex I	Final Meeting Agenda .....	-	29 - 34
Annex II	List of Participants .....	-	35 - 36

## **I. Background of the Meeting**

### ***Family policy in the UN context***

1. The Expert Group Meeting on good practices in family policy making was held from 15 to 17 May 2012 in New York. It was organized by the Focal Point on the Family in the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The theme of the meeting was “Good Practices in Family Policy Making: Family Policy Development, Monitoring and Implementation: Lessons Learnt”. The meeting was convened as part of the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014.
2. The meeting took place in response to several General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions on the follow-up to the International Year of the Family (IYF), 1994. One of the objectives of the IYF and its follow-up processes is a sustained, long-term effort to strengthen national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families.
3. The General Assembly has encouraged Governments to continue to make every possible effort to integrate a family perspective into national policymaking and recommended that the United Nations agencies and bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions, research and academic institutions and the private sector play a supportive role in promoting the objectives of the International Year and contribute to developing strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening national capacities. (A/RES/62/129, A/RES/60/133 of 2007 and 2005 respectively)
4. The recent resolution of the Economic and Social Council on the “Preparations for an observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family” noted the importance of designing, implementing and monitoring family-oriented policies, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, work family balance, social integration and intergenerational solidarity. The resolution further encouraged Member States to continue their efforts to develop appropriate policies to address family poverty, social exclusion and work-family balance and share good practices in those areas. (ECOSOC Resolution 2011/29 of 2011)
5. Further, in 2011, the General Assembly invited governments and regional intergovernmental entities to identify and ensure support for constructive family policy development, including exchange of information on good policies and practices. (A/RES/66/126) In addition, in 2012, the Commission for Social Development invited relevant stakeholders to provide information on their activities in support of the objectives of and preparations for, the twentieth anniversary of the IYF and share good practices and data on family policy development to be included in relevant reports of the Secretary-General. (E/CN.5/2012/L.3)
6. According, the Expert Group Meeting aimed to explore good practices in family policy making in the areas of poverty and social exclusion, work-family balance, social integration and intergenerational solidarity and offer recommendations for further action.
7. The primary objective of the Meeting was to provide Member States and other stakeholders with expert opinion and recommendations regarding good practices in family

policy making in the areas of family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance and promoting intergenerational solidarity.

8. Experts dealing with various aspects of family policy and good practice were invited from a broad geographical distribution to participate in the meeting in their personal capacities. Experts were asked to provide a paper, participate in group discussions and give their expert opinion and policy recommendations on family policy development, monitoring and implementation in the areas mentioned above. The experts also provided specific examples of good practices in family policy making and offered detailed recommendations on further development of policies, programmes and strategies supporting families in the areas noted above.

#### ***Family oriented policies and good practices for poverty reduction and social inclusion***

9. Family-oriented policies are gradually gaining ground in overall development efforts. Aiming at preventing the intergenerational transfer of poverty, family-focused social transfer programmes are being institutionalized, with Government agencies responsible for their delivery. Among them, cash transfers reduce families' vulnerability, improve child nutrition, health and educational outcomes and reduce child labour.

10. Social security benefits, such as old-age and disability pensions reduce poverty risks of vulnerable family members. Non-contributory pensions in some regions helped reduce overall poverty and hunger rates. In other regions, in-kind transfers and food subsidies are often used to help poor families and public work-programmes offer parents supplementary employment opportunities. Income and in-kind support for families, however, are not sufficient if they are not accompanied by access to social services, including health, education, housing, water and sanitation.

11. The very success of poverty alleviation programmes depends on the extent to which they focus on families and incorporate internal family dynamics while encouraging specific activities for individual family members and taking into account their different needs and motivation mechanisms.

#### ***Family oriented policies and programmes for work family balance***

12. Policies and programmes promoting work-family balance vary across the regions. They may range from parental leave to child benefits and access to quality and affordable childcare.

13. Parental leave policies, including maternity and paternity leave upon the birth of a child and parental leave to care for a young child, differing in length and coverage, have become a norm in the majority of developed countries. In developing countries, however, few countries provide benefits in accordance with the ILO standards.

14. Maternity leave provisions have a great impact on family life and have been associated with reduction in infant mortality and morbidity and higher rates of breastfeeding. Paternal leave taking has the potential to boost fathers' practical and emotional investment in infant care and has been linked to higher level of father involvement in family responsibilities later on.

15. Flexible working arrangements result in better health outcomes for parents. At a company level, they have also been associated with employee productivity, organizational commitment, retention, moral, job satisfaction and reductions in absenteeism.

16. Investments in early childhood education and care are another form of support for parents with young children to help them remain engaged in paid work. In addition, other policy objectives such as gender equality and fair distribution of family responsibilities between both parents help achieve work-life balance for all family members. Good practices in promoting professional support and advice and efforts to create a more family-friendly culture in the workplace are equally important.

### ***Family oriented strategies supporting social integration and intergenerational solidarity***

17. Strategies promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity are critical for families and societies. They promote social cohesion and shared responsibility and contribute to developing positive relationships across age groups and have been shown to strengthen the quality of ties between family members. In times of economic crises, intergenerational ties grow in importance, with family members shielding one another from the consequences of the loss of employment or housing.

18. Strategies promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity include family focused child and older care support; variety of care benefits and tax credits; old age pensions; appropriate housing laws; investing in cross-generational community centres and volunteering programmes for the young and the old alike. Initiatives in schools and in the workplace, such as mentoring programmes also improve interactions between generations.

19. A growing body of research indicates that intergenerational programmes contribute to healthy development of older adults, children and youth. Older adults in intergenerational programmes reported health benefits; children had higher personal and social development scores; youth showed increases in school attendance, attitudes and behaviours relating to substance use as well as improvement in related life skills.

### ***The importance of family policy design, development, implementation and monitoring and sharing of good practices***

20. The design, development, implementation and monitoring of family-focused Policies are indispensable to do away with family poverty, ensure work-family balance and support intergenerational solidarity. It is then important to exchange information on regional, national and local efforts undertaken around the world to that effect. It is expected that the exchange of good practices in family policy making will contribute to a wider development of family-oriented programmes and strategies for the benefit of families world-wide.

## **II. Summary of the Proceedings**

21. At the outset of the meeting it was noted that despite the lack of a specific instrument to advance the family perspective in development, family-oriented policies have been gradually gaining ground in overall development efforts. Similarly, the importance of families for development and their need for assistance has been recognized by many governments and other stakeholders. There is also a growing recognition that the Millennium Development Goals are very difficult to attain unless they focus on families. So far, however, at the international forum, the family is appreciated but not prioritized and contributions of families to development go mostly unnoticed. Families, however, are agents of development and their role in the achievement of both broad and specific developmental goals should be more widely recognized. The upcoming twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is an opportunity to focus on families worldwide and advocate for family-based solutions to achieve development goals.

22. It was further acknowledged that the previous Expert Meetings and Reports of the Secretary-General have mainly focused on the importance of families for the achievement of development goals and pointed to the need for family policy development, while this meeting was to focus on how to achieve this goal by sharing of information on good policies and practices.

### **Defining good practice in explicit family policy making**

23. There are various benefits of focusing on families in general policy making ranging from having happier families to ensuring more comprehensive and cost effective public policies. The main purpose of family policy is to support families in fulfilling their numerous functions for the overall benefit of society.

24. Countries differ in their approach to family policies. Some have extensive expertise in family policy field, while others have not developed national family policies, often due to limited resources and research in this area. Similarly, some countries have a Ministry or a Department tasked with family policy development, others focus on families across several ministries, while still others assume family policies are those focusing on specific family members, especially women or children.

25. In order to demonstrate the importance of focusing on families in policy development, we need substantive research focusing on families with the family as a unit of analysis. Conducting quantitative and qualitative and multiple informants (parents, children, grandparents) studies would provide a comprehensive analysis of family issues necessary in the elaboration of family policies and programmes and in their assessment. It is important to note that household surveys are not sufficient in this respect as they do not cover intra-familial interaction, such as marital quality, parental monitoring or conflict within families. National surveys on family dynamics could be used instead (such as National Surveys on Families in the United States and on Households in Japan).

26. Experts noted that there is a transition from traditional implementation-based approaches towards results-based approaches examining not only Government's capacity to implement policies but also the effectiveness of these policies in terms of results achieved. It is then critical to focus on the effectiveness of current family-friendly policies and promote evidence based policies relying on high quality research and on sound theoretical frameworks

such as Family Systems Theory or Ecological Theory. Family policy monitoring and evaluation should identify the most effective use of resources as well as ineffective practices that should be discontinued.

27. Good practice can be defined as a policy or programme that has reported positive impacts and/or evaluation results and that can be used as a benchmark. Good practice dissemination is essential for further improvements in family policy development at a national level where countries can learn from their experience. It is important to keep in mind, however, that using one model or technique from one country to another requires its adaptation to local norms and socio-economic conditions with local assessments in place.

### **Family law development**

28. In many countries, family law became key to ensure the rights of women. In other countries, especially in the MENA region, however, family laws are not based on the principle of gender equality, especially with respect to divorce, custody of children and inheritance and tend to discriminate against women. Several countries undertook reforms to expand women's rights under family law. In the Islamic world, Tunisia and Morocco put in place many law reforms to guarantee women's rights. In both countries legal reforms transformed the legal construction of gender roles within the family and women's rights advocates played a key role in the promulgation of family law reforms.

29. Starting in the 1950s, the law reforms in Tunisia eradicated some of the most patriarchal arrangements of the legislation previously in force, namely abolished polygamy, allowed women to file for divorce, established the principle of alimony and increased women's rights to the custody of children. Further reforms in 1993, transformed women's citizenship rights of nationality as defined in the transmission of nationality to their children. In Morocco, the *Mudawwana* reforms extended the protections of women within the family unit with greater rights with regards to marriage, divorce, polygamy and custody.

30. Although in an extensive survey of women's rights in the Arab world by the Arab World Freedom House Survey (2005), Tunisia and Morocco were ranked the highest regarding women's legal rights in the categories of nondiscrimination, access to justice, autonomy, security and freedom of the person, important dimensions of gender inequality in the law remain to be addressed in both countries. Issues of special concern include domestic violence, insufficiently addressed by legislation and inheritance which continues to be unequal between men and women (who generally inherit half as much as men in similar family situations). In addition, law reforms implementation depends on the judges who are often not sufficiently trained or willing to apply the new laws. Moreover, women, even when they know that reforms have occurred changing their legal rights, may lack a full understanding of specific regulations and demand their rights. Finally, families themselves often continue to hold on to patriarchal norms making it difficult for women to avail themselves of their new rights under family law.

31. Experts noted the importance of institutional responsibility for family-policies design, monitoring and implementation. In some countries, Ministries of Family Affairs with centralized responsibility for family policy implementation work well, in others such centralization of responsibility for families is shared by different ministries instead. One should also be careful about assigning names to specific institutions, e.g. Ministry of the Family may communicate that only a traditional type of family is recognized and others are not valid. From a practical point of view, the goals and financial capacity of any given ministry are more

important than its name and it was up to each country to name the ministry and pursue family-oriented policies within its national priorities framework. It would be advisable, however, to have a focal point on families within Government structures tasked with designing policies to confront challenges faced by families.

32. There could also be more emphasis on the well-being of families and their overall level of happiness and not only purely economic outcomes. Extended family dynamics should also be taken into account when establishing family policies (e.g. availability of next of kin to care for children often determines the number of children born). Further, it's important that researchers communicate the result of their findings to policy makers. Legislators should also be informed of the family research outcomes. It is also important that, at the national level, family policies as well as other social policies are kept independent of regime changes and are not subject to changes according to dominant ideologies.

33. Experts observed the dichotomy between family rights and individual rights, noting that it would be difficult to give rights to an entity that is not well defined. Moreover, it is important to focus on individual human rights and the fact that the right to marry and form a family is not an obligation and should be respected. Moreover, as diversity is the main characteristics of individuals as well as families and is much more complex than current research indicates, the diversity of families should be supported and equity within families promoted.

34. At the same time, policies should not be considered in silos and focus on groups, such as older persons only. To the contrary, social policy design should be family sensitive and include an intergenerational lens demanding family policies for all generations. In addition, policy making should be evidence based and long lasting so that people can trust it. Moreover, educational systems should be well equipped to train professionals and work with families starting at the elementary school level.

### **Good practices in work family balance**

35. Recent global changes in the world of work necessitate better support for working families around the world. Estimates indicate that 930 million children under the age of 14 live in households where all adults work outside the home with 340 million of these children being under the age of six. As extended family members are increasingly no longer available to care for young children, parents find it more and more difficult to succeed at work and meet the needs of those at home. Workplace policies, however, continue to be designed with the assumption that one parent is able to stay at home and care for children.

36. The researchers at the Institute for Health and Social Policy at McGill University, have developed the World Policy Analysis Centre – a growing collection of globally available and quantitatively comparable information on key laws and policies around the world, including labour policies. The review of original labour legislation and other sources demonstrates what countries are doing to support working families.

37. A study of paid leave for new mothers in 141 countries indicates that an increase of maternity leave by 10 paid weeks is associated with 9 to 10 per cent lower neonatal mortality, infant mortality, and under-five mortality rates. Paid leave benefits have a positive impact on children's health in all countries, including high-income countries as indicated by studies in OCED countries. Paternity leave benefits although increasing, are not available widely. Failing to ensure that fathers take leave following the birth of a child may lead to labour market

discrimination against women and deprive men and their children of important early interactions.

38. Breastfeeding contributes to healthy development of children and many women would like to continue breastfeeding after they return to work. Constraints at work however, severely limit their ability to do so. Currently, 125 countries guarantee breastfeeding breaks and require employers to provide at least unpaid time for new mothers to express milk or feed their infants. Many others, however, still do not provide this workplace protection.

39. It is also important to emphasize early childhood care beyond infancy. Children who go to school also need care especially when they are ill but less than a third of countries offers paid sick leave to parents. Consequently, between 28 and 62 per cent of parents had lost pay, missed out on job promotions, or were not able to keep their job due to their caring responsibilities. Only 49 countries guarantee working parents have paid leave to care for health needs of their children and 16 offers unpaid leave.

40. Similarly, parents need time to help children with their educational needs with research indicating that parental involvement is linked to school achievement. As parents are mostly available to spend time with school-aged children in the evenings, the increasing prevalence of evening and night hours, especially in the European Union countries and the United States, prevents them from full involvement in school work of their children. A study of working parents in the United States indicates that children of parents working at night were 3 times more likely to be suspended from school, yet only 5 countries provide either paid or unpaid leave specifically to meet children's educational needs. All in all, the sets of issues described above require more visibility and concerted action if we are to advance work-life balance agenda.

41. Turning to regional experiences, East Asian countries share common cultural backgrounds, recent demographic changes in fertility trends and a similar pattern in the process of family policy development. East Asian countries can be described as family-reliant welfare states as families have played a key role in delivering social welfare services instead of Governments. In Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, Province of China, social policy was subordinated to economic policy and thanks to the economic growth in the region, it was possible for families to be self-reliant. Since the 1990s, however, economic growth has been slow and the family reliant model has been difficult to sustain. In response, Governments introduced work-family balance policies including parental leaves, childcare subsidies and family-friendly workplace practices, including reduced working hours for workers who are eligible for parental leaves and flexitime policies for start and finishing times. However, the quality of childcare is not satisfactory with low usage. Moreover, due to prevalent workplace culture, employees are reluctant to take parental leaves. Despite their implicit goals, the policies did not affect fertility trends either.

42. In the Republic of Korea, a Framework Act on Healthy Families was introduced in 2004 and Promoting Family Friendly Society Act in 2008. The acts aimed at changing the work-oriented culture into family-friendly culture by reducing working hours; involving men in family life; providing family-friendly programmes at workplaces; establishing family programs at local Healthy Family Support Centres and launching a national family campaign on Family Day (every Wednesday employees in the public sector are encouraged to leave earlier and spend time with their families, with no overtime offered to discourage staying at work late). For family policies to succeed, however, more attempts have to be made to change

workplace culture; target men better and provide workplace-based education and services. In addition, the provision of childcare services should be complemented by other family-friendly and work-family balance policies. Moreover, increased collaboration across government ministries is needed.

43. In Latin America, substantial changes have occurred in household composition, including greater diversity, smaller number of children, longer life expectancy and a greater prevalence of dual-earner and single-parent families. Over the last two decades, growing female labour market participation grew (from 42 to 52 per cent), was not accompanied by an equal transformation in the social organization of care, which is still sustained by unpaid home care work done mostly by women. This unfair organization of care is also accompanied by poor labour conditions, restrictions to female labour participation, segmented and limited access to private care services and limited improvements at the corporate level.

44. The challenge is to make it easier for families to choose the way to organize care of dependent family members. Better organization of care with guaranteed right of access to care services and other work-family balance strategies would also help reduce poverty and inequality, improve productivity at corporate level, advance economic efficiency at macro level and create new employment opportunities. As a matter of justice and rights, better social care organization would promote a more fair society as well.

45. Strategies for better organization of care should target vulnerable household as is the case of *Chile crece contigo*. Care services could also be integrated with conditional cash transfer programmes and offered at community level. Expansion of education infrastructure and services for early childhood is equally important. In national care systems, care could be considered part of social protection.

46. Moreover, building of national care systems in Latin America requires expansion of parental leaves, promoting initiatives for the gradual extension of the school day and early childhood education as well as expanding the supply of child care in nurseries and campaigns to promote family trust in these institutions.

47. Quality and affordable child-care provision is very important for work-family balance as well and should be seen from a child's rights perspective of non discrimination, best interest of the child, survival and development, protection of harmful practices, abuse and neglect and participation. The issue is gradually gaining momentum at the international forum with a UNICEF-ILO initiative linking child care to decent work currently being put forward and to be raised at the 2012 ECOSOC Ministerial Roundtable.

48. The World Fit for Children Declaration notes that children should get the best possible start in life so that they can be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn. To ensure that, quality child care based on a sound relationship between a child and significant adults is indispensable. Child development depends on supportive home and care place environment with beneficial factors including caregivers' engagement with young children, support for learning and availability of books and toys, while risk factors include inadequate care and violent discipline. At the level of access to services and community support, access to early childhood education, health services and birth registration are of importance as well.

49. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, families should be considered main care providers and parents are also claim holders from Government to provide child care support. It is important to note that children are at a high risk of growing up without a biological parent, usually their father, making it more difficult for single parents to provide proper child care, with an analysis of 40 countries indicating that this risk ranges from less than 5 per cent to over 50 per cent. It is also clear that the poorest children are at a greatest risk of being left alone or with inadequate care and poor children are less likely to attend child care and education programmes.

50. All children are entitled to good quality care and education services irrespective of their parents' work obligations and access to affordable child care is an important determinant of parental employment opportunities and workplace productivity. Services currently available are often inadequate to meet families' needs for child care, especially in developing countries. An adequate child care outside home should be clean, properly lit and hygienic, with proper supplies, professional staff and all inclusive, able to provide care for children with disabilities. Child care facilities should be regularly inspected to ensure they conform to the standards in place.

51. Concerning the work-family balance practices in action, examples of innovation and barriers in the private sector were noted. There is a growing correlational evidence of base for 'business benefits' of work-family practices, indicating that greater flexibility leads to higher productivity and retention and lower absenteeism. These benefits, however, are not widely recognized in the private sector. Instead, as indicated by international comparisons, many companies, sometimes called 'contaminating companies' when they have no formal policies to support employees' family obligations, disregard or assume no responsibility for life-work balance conducting their business with an assumption of an autonomous worker. In contrast, 'family-responsible' companies enrich both the business and social environment of their communities. Although company policies vary, considerations of a wider family context of workers' lives are becoming a key component in modern corporate responsibility approach.

52. Labour unions play an important role in promoting work-family balance policies in the work place, however, there is a need for awareness raising leading to stronger demands for work-place flexibility on the part of the unions. In this context, it is important to promote a business dialogue with Governments and other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of country level work-family problems. In countries with developed work-family policies and practices both formal and informal channels of communication exist. For examples in Japan a special private summit for the promotion of work-life held in 2010 led to the development of a "Work-Life Balance Charter and Action Policy" which contained a set of new societal principles embedded in revisions of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law. In Australia, the Productivity Commission inquiry led to the introduction of universal paid parental leave in 2010. Similarly, the European social partners' dialogue led to revisions in the EU Directive on Parental Leave providing for better protection against discrimination and smoother return to work

53. In France, comprehensive family-oriented policies, including long and well-paid maternity leaves, an extension of paternity leave, flexible parental leaves, as well as freedom of choice in access to a variety of child care arrangements is often seen as contributing to comparatively high fertility rates in Europe. The Observatory of Parenthood in Corporations established in France in 2008, takes an annual survey on the expectations of working parents and the evolution of business practices. Employers signatories to a Charter of Parenthood in

Corporations undertake to educate managers and human resources personnel to take better account of parenthood and create a favourable environment for employees with children.

54. To balance professional and family life in developed countries, easier access to childcare for all parents wishing to work should be provided. This includes simplifying access to child care and helping parents resume their employment after leave periods. Moreover, parents should have a choice with regards to specific work arrangements, such as full, part-time work, parental leave, etc. Child care choices should vary (e.g. maternal assistants, public day care centres, nannies, etc.). Moreover, greater use of new technologies is advisable as they offer possibilities for more flexibility in the workplace and care services.

55. Experts noted that it was important to identify key goals of family-oriented policies in order to guarantee gender equity, freedom of choice and intergenerational solidarity. There are particular challenges for families with children with disabilities, where best interest of the child and respect for personal choice is especially important. Policies should be developed in accordance with relevant conventions, such as CRPD, CRC and CEDAW.

56. Flexibility should be promoted not just in workplace but in child care arrangements and at schools as well. Promoting flexibility may include job-sharing as well as tax credits for companies who offer on site care. In countries of transition work arrangements are too rigid to allow for much flexibility and cultural norms guiding work-family arrangements may need changing. Similarly, the very uptake of parental leave may not be high depending on cultural norms. For instances in some countries, including those in the Arab world, the mere availability of paternity leave is not sufficient to ensure men actually avail themselves of it.

57. Experts noted that the monetary compensation during the periods of parental leave was usually too low to allow parents make full use of their entitlements. Similarly, flexibility in timing of parental leaves was rare. In this context a good practice from India was mentioned, where maternity leave entitlement of 2 years is often taken when children are older, e.g. 15 or 16 years of age when they need supervision while preparing for university entrance examinations.

58. Experts noted that the change in the work place takes a long time to take root. In Sweden, work-family legislation was introduced in the 1970s and change took 20 years with the help of the media. Similarly an uptake in paternal leave entitlements was followed by media campaigns focusing on men's ability to care for young children. Now, efforts are made to use new technologies to appeal to young people.

59. Global Compact is a good mechanism to promote corporate responsibility. It would be advisable to evaluate companies on the basis of their family friendliness and social responsibility. The Observatories of family-friendly policies proved useful to keep a watch on private companies' family-friendly policies as well. Specific indicators should be developed to measure companies' performance. Examples of family-friendly certificate programmes were also noted as useful to encourage family-friendly practices in private enterprises. Another aspect of work-family balance is allowing families to stay together as mobility in search for jobs is on the rise. Facilitating work leaves, helping family members to find jobs in the same geographic often depends on private companies' initiatives and should be encouraged.

60. Turning to issues of equity, due consideration should be given to family benefits provisions for different types of families, including single parent families as well as gay and

lesbian families. In some countries coverage is extended to second care providers which may also include second generation caregivers and subsidies for grandparents taking care of their young grandchildren, as is the case in Australia and Hungary. Several experts also pointed to the importance of agreeing on common grounds and set of principles guiding all family-oriented policies such as gender equity and best interest of the child.

### **Policy responses to family poverty and social exclusion**

61. Turning to recent trends in family poverty and social exclusion in developing countries, experts noted that families were diverse in terms of composition, income and capabilities. Family poverty is often defined as a state in which a family earns less than a minimum amount of income-typically \$1.25 per day per person hampering the family's ability to adequately cover basic cost of living. Poverty as lack of income affects people's capabilities in education, health and work but income is not the only generator of capabilities. Inequalities in income and capabilities can be seen at individual and family levels with some inequalities, such as those based on gender often perpetuated at a family level (e.g. girls may receive less education). Women, indigenous and afro-descendants, especially in Latin America, have disadvantages in nutrition, health and education and access to productive employment. Poor populations have lower life-expectancy and difficulties to gain new capabilities through income. Moreover, poor women in afro-descendant and indigenous families tend to have more children, be poorer, spend more time caring for children and experience more discrimination in the labour markets.

62. In most developing countries, half of the extremely poor people live in urban areas with urban population growth due more to the high fertility of urban poor women than to the rural-urban migration. Close to 60 per cent of workers in Latin America are in informal markets with 33 per cent of urban poor working in the formal sector contributing to health and pensions plans. High housing costs and legal fees prevent the working poor from gaining access to affordable housing for their families. Housing shortages in the cities increase the cost of rent, housing and land property, generating overcrowding population in urban dwellings. Moreover, market distortions lead to higher market prices for informal housing alternatives compared to prices in the formal market. Although women need childcare facilities and maternity protection to secure labour market access, day care facilities in most developing countries are very limited (e.g. in Brazil only 14 per cent of children attends them).

63. So far the main response to family poverty in developing countries has been the provision of social protection. Two main categories of social protection are: social security in the form of contributory schemes protecting income earners and their dependants against temporary or permanent involuntary loss of income due to contingencies impairing earning capacity and social assistance as well as non contributory assistance or benefits provided to the poor and needy. Social security programmes can be categorized into five main groups: old-age disability and survivor benefits; sickness and maternity benefits, work injuries benefits, unemployment and family benefits. In most developing countries, a vast majority of such benefits are only offered through formal labour force participation with family allowances generally scarce. It is also noteworthy that benefits target individuals and not families per say and tend to perpetuate gender inequality due to males' higher formal employment. Moreover the lack of portability of benefits increases the vulnerability of many migrant workers and their families.

64. In Africa, contributory social protection instruments include contributory pension schemes, national health insurance and private health insurance programmes as well as

community based and weather or crop insurance schemes. In South Africa *Unemployment Insurance Fund* provides unemployment, illness, maternity, adoption and dependents' benefits thus contributing to family poverty alleviation. Non-contributory social protection instrument can be categorized into pure income transfers (cash transfers to poor households, child and family allowances and social pensions), income transfers plus (public works, asset protection and accumulation) and integrated poverty reduction programmes. *Basic Income Grant Project* in Namibia reduced food poverty from 76 to 37 per cent; increased people's participation in income-generating activities from 44 to 55 per cent; reduced the number of underweight children from 42 to 10 per cent with average household debt falling by around 30 per cent. In South Africa child and family allowances range from foster child grants to child support grants and care dependency grants for children with disabilities. In addition, old age pensions contributed to poverty alleviation in households in Southern Africa.

65. In relation to the rest of the developing world, Latin America has the most stable and long-running cash transfer programmes. Cash transfers adopt the capabilities approach and seek to protect family income and consumption levels in the short term and contribute to human development in the long term. They make poor families co-responsible for children's education and nutrition. Over the last 15 years, conditional cash transfers (CCTs) covered 25 million households (133 million people) in 18 countries of Latin America. Their central focus is on poor families or households with children, rather than on individual or specific family members. Women, typically mothers are their primary recipients.

66. Although different in design and execution, CCTs share several commonalities. They mainly focus on poor families with school age children, target women as recipients and aim to provide freedom and autonomy to poor people to decide how to use them. They have been credited with improved nutrition, education and overall poverty reduction and contributed to the strengthening of local economies, citizen empowerment, social inclusion and cohesion. In Brazil and Mexico they have been sometimes reinvested at the local level and mobilized local markets in the poorest regions. Challenges faced by CCTs relate to the quality of health and education services provided with evaluations pointing to the need of improving budget, coverage and quality of these services.

67. In other regions, cash transfers are less popular due to underdeveloped infrastructure for their delivery and financial constraints. In Sub-Saharan Africa and increasingly in East Africa, unconditional cash transfers, mostly in the form of categorical old age pensions are provided. In South Asia cash transfers are at best rudimentary, used in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh only, mostly targeted at older persons and children from poor households.

68. Public works programmes provide a cushion against unemployment risk for the poorest workers by offering monetary compensation for short-term work, usually in the maintenance, upgrading, or local infrastructure construction. They have a potential to address poverty and provide assets and infrastructure at the same time promoting pro-poor growth. *Expanded Public Works Programme* in South Africa created one million temporary jobs but they were short with pay below market wages. *Productive Safety Net Programme* in Ethiopia offered cash or food aid to vulnerable households in exchange for public work or direct support to people unable to work and resulted in improved nutrition but was not able to provide long-term food security. Wide-spread in the 1990s in Latin America, they have been implemented in many countries but the only family-focused anti-poverty programme: *Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* was implemented in Argentina.

69. Food programmes or subsidies although important for nutritional rehabilitation for families and children, are generally not family-focused programmes. They are usually used in response to hunger and have relatively high operational and administrative costs and are less widespread in developing countries relative to other social assistance programmes. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a trend turning to predictable cash transfers for hunger reduction instead of food aid. Food programmes are also scarce in South Asia, where they are limited to India and Bangladesh, where female heads of households are their main recipients.

70. Some policies aiming at poverty reduction also include child care provision for women who want to work or study. Some examples of programmes promoting reconciliation of productive and reproductive work for poor women include day care programmes in Latin America, such as *Child Development* in Ecuador, *Community Homes* in Guatemala or *Maternal Companies* in Honduras. In Mexico a child care programme is being implemented by the National Social Security Institute in collaboration with the private sector combining the creation of new small child care facilities as small businesses owned by women. In Brazil *Pro Infancia* programme is a collaboration of national and local governments to provide equipment for day-care and pre-schools for children with special priority given to children with special needs. The programme has increased the coverage of poor children in the favelas but it does not link child care provision to mothers' inclusion in education, training and labour.

71. Interestingly, in Africa, the contribution of extended families to development has been recognized at a regional level by the African Union Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, which recommended action to invest in families for poverty reduction. Its mid-term review, however, indicated that only 10 out of 25 AU Member States who participated in the review have purposely adjusted their respective programmes and policies in accordance with the Plan of Action's recommendations and only 2 created government ministries or departments responsible for the family (Cameroon & Uganda). At a sub-regional level Southern African Development Community's *Charter of Fundamental Social Rights* (2003) mandated Member States to ensure workers are given adequate social protection and its 2007 *Code on Social Security* extended to social services and development of social welfare. At a national level, only Senegal has developed a *Road Map on Family Policy* and South Africa is in the process of preparing a white paper on family policy.

72. Despite the lack of resources and competing priorities, a growing number of African Governments are designing and developing specific policies, usually in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers aiming at achieving economic growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Overall, anti-poverty, family-focused policies and programmes mostly in the form of social protection are more prevalent in East and Southern Africa where they are largely aimed at mitigating the effects of HIV and AIDS.

73. Turning to types of good practices for poverty reduction in the OECD countries, they are intended not just to reduce poverty but to improve child development; promote parental choice in reconciling work and family life; enable people to have children at the time of their choice and thus mobilize unused labour supply and enhance gender equity. Despite innovations in spending and policies on families and children as well as new efforts to encourage more families into work, there is no evidence of consistent poverty reduction in OECD countries. In fact, income poverty rates among families are on the rise. Moreover, mounting evidence points to the fact that poverty is more common among single-headed households and has been linked to family breakdown, social exclusion and depression.

74. Although continued focus on income poverty is important as it is a prominent and agreed international measure of family living standards, enabling a detailed policy evaluation of Government efforts to support families, it is important to be aware of the limits of income poverty measure, such as overemphasis on making up differences in income instead of focusing on building healthy, well-functioning families. In addition, often families living in poverty are not included in many of the cross national statistics such as indigenous families, Roma families, homeless families or families where the parents or children are institutionalized, who are at the most acute risk of poverty. In the light of the limitations of the income-poverty measure, eradication of poverty would be meaningless if it leaves families living in the same conditions only above an arbitrary line of acceptable income standards. Importantly, income poverty in families reduces the efficiency of efforts put into services, such as education or health, to improve the standards of living of families in developed countries. It may be then advisable to reconsider the priorities and build capacities and resilience of families.

75. Policies for income poverty reduction in developed countries include cash benefits such as family allowances (universal or means-tested as well as family tax credits) to support the costs of raising children. Parental leave benefits to support families to care for young children, birth grants in one or multiple payments and other cash benefits paid to meet specific needs of families with children with disabilities or sole parent households are common as well. Further, family specific tax breaks or allowances have been used across the OECD countries since the early 2000s as welfare to work schemes became more popular. There are also services delivered in kind such as free or subsidized childcare and afterschool care services or help with housing and transportation costs. Such services are mostly delivered at the local/municipal level. Further, pensions, social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits may include supplements for children which may vary in amount and depend on children's age and family size.

76. Better outcomes for children and families are linked to overall higher spending and interventions in early years. In most countries, however, investment in children begins with their school entry at the age of six. Importantly, fertility gains have been linked to better child care provisions rather than child benefits. Moreover, education and health services for families as well as subsidies for grandparents caring for children positively impact poverty reduction as well.

77. In countries in transition, family support remains crucial for young couples coping with parenthood, lack of affordable housing and sometimes caring responsibilities for older family members. To help young couples with access to affordable housing many benefits focus on enabling families access independent housing. In Russia, a federal housing programme was introduced in 2011 with a sub-programme *Securing housing for young families* offering special subsidies and credit facilities for families with a second child. *Maternal vouchers*, introduced in 2007 aim at promoting fertility and are offered only to families with a second or any consecutive child either born or adopted. Although the certificate is issued to mothers, the intended beneficiary is a family unit. The voucher in the amount of \$13,000 can be used to improve housing conditions, invest in children's education or to contribute to mother's pension fund. Since the start of the programme some 5 million women in Russia have obtained maternity vouchers. The programme, to be in force till the end of 2016, may be extended until 2025. In addition, taxation benefits provided to families with children are used to promote fertility as well.

78. Experts noted that maternity vouchers as well as birth grants generally do not impact fertility and have to be used in conjunction with other policies, such as special assistance for young couples with housing so that it's easier for them to form families. In this context employment promotion, especially investments in small and medium size enterprises are especially important in Eastern Europe. In general, an overall economic situation influences decisions about having children, rather than specific pro-fertility policies.

79. Pointing to the detrimental effects of social exclusion, the experts emphasized that the special needs of families with children with disabilities deserve wider recognition. According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "persons with disabilities and their family members should receive the necessary protection and assistance to enable families to contribute towards the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities." Despite this provision, children with disabilities and their families are largely invisible in research, policy and programmes. Families of children with disabilities encounter negative attitudes and prejudice, lack support and services and are more likely to experience family break ups while the children themselves often experience abuse or overprotection.

80. In the design of policies for children with disabilities, it is important to note that the family and not the professional caregiver is the constant in the child's life and in most cases the family is best positioned to determine the needs of the child. That is why families should be supported to exercise choice and control over the supports and services for themselves and their children. Among the family centred policies that overcome exclusion are cash transfers, supports for working parents and tax relief. It is also important to promote the empowerment and partnership models for organizations of families with children with disabilities through capacity building measures.

81. In the discussion on specific family-oriented anti-poverty programmes, experts noted that although cash transfers have been credited with good outcomes in Latin America and parts of Africa, their introduction in Asia was not successful but in kind transfers and services provision (education, health, housing) proved to work better. Consequently, cash transfers should be continued where they work while in kind measures should be used where they are more effective. In all cases, however, access to services should be improved. Moreover, the issues of cash transfer recipients should be explored more. Although women are their primary recipients, family expenditure decisions are taken together and men should be taken into account. There are men in vulnerable situations, such as lone fathers and those with disabilities who need assistance as well.

82. Several experts also cautioned that cash transfer programmes may have unintended negative consequences, for instance when women in receipt of cash transfers may be discouraged from entering the labour market. Delegating family expenditure decisions to women only may also cause tension and even lead to violence in families.

83. Some experts noted the need to transition from conditional cash transfers to family policies promoting the inclusion of women and youth in formal labour markets. This transition is necessary as poverty is most likely among informal workers, especially the youngest and female heads of household. Moreover, poor young people who remain living with their parents and work in family businesses stop their education and their capacities are underdeveloped. That is why it's important to develop policies to invest in young people's capacities strengthening their potential as skilled workers. Social protection mechanisms are also needed for the whole family, including those who dropped out of school and those working in informal

and low productivity sectors. A combination of such policies is needed to increase workers' productivity, promote formalization of employment, social protection and effective poverty reduction.

84. Several experts emphasized the importance of involving families in policy formulation and decisions concerning the allocation of resources. In this context, a partnership model with families coming together is often working well. At the same time, caution should be exercised over family decisions e.g. concerning pensions or disability allowances. For instance, it should be recognized that the vast majority of adults with disabilities have a capacity to make their own decisions.

85. It is also important to improve statistics on so called hidden populations, including families with children with disabilities. So called *Busca Activa* has been enacted in some Latin American countries to search for people who although eligible do not receive the benefits. In Brasil, the programme *Brasil sin Miseria* focuses on those living in extreme poverty, who are often difficult to reach (e.g. homeless, migrants or ethnic minorities). Across the OECD countries, attempts are being made to conduct surveys of populations not captured by standard methods.

86. Experts expressed concern over unemployed youth who may become the sources of social instability and emphasized that it was important to take advantage of demographic dividend in countries with large youth populations ageing slowly, where investments have to be made in increased nutrition, health services and productivity improvements and the promotion and protection of youth.

87. The importance of gradual formalization of the informal sector was noted as well with emphasis on the fact that early childhood benefits should not be linked to employment but offered nation-wide. Quotas for employment of persons with disabilities in public and private companies were also noted as a good practice example.

88. Experts indicated that different measures in support of families should be used in developed and developing countries, and that childcare services should be a top priority in developing countries as investing in children also allows women to enter the labour market. In most developing countries, child-oriented policies and disability policies are still conspicuously absent.

89. It is also vital to prevent family break-ups which often lead to the feminization of poverty with women bearing the burden of caring for children. Prevention of sole parenting and promoting of healthy relationships as well as fatherhood bonds should be higher on the policy agenda. Strengthening of family units themselves to make them better prepared to provide social protection and prevent child labour is also important.

90. Experts emphasized that cultural diversity should be taken into account in family policy design, e.g. in the Arab world, studies in culture and poverty and feminization of poverty demonstrate widespread discrimination against women. Single women are often not covered in social systems and do not account for beneficiaries and often depend on social security as they cannot work.

91. In sum, policies should take into account diversities and inequalities affecting individual capacities and family conditions. Moreover, Governments have a key role in

providing social protection for poor families living in cities and employed in informal economy. It is also important to regulate the ownership of land and housing for the poor, especially poor women who are heads of households. It is equally important to focus on infrastructure provision, including water, electricity and sanitation in poor communities and access to child care, education and health services. Full-time school facilities and childcare are indispensable for poor women so that they are able to reconcile their work and family responsibilities. In the long term, the main challenge remains to generate and formalize jobs with social protection for poor women as well as better provision of childcare for those women who want to work and/or study. Thus, policies for poverty reduction should involve all spheres of economy and society and see development as improving people's capacities in greater freedom.

### **Good practices promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity**

92. Experts noted that social policies are often isolated and age segregated, such as separate policies for children or older persons. Although focusing on families, instead of groups, helps to centre on intergenerational aspect of policies, professionals are not trained to look at families and generations within families and encourage investments across the lifespan. In this vacuum, civil society is often the only advocate for integrated policies to prepare for changes occurring in societies, such as rapid ageing.

93. In some highly individualistic societies, like the United States, people assume that they are fully independent and should be self-reliant. Recent socio-economic crises, however, have demonstrated that we are very interdependent and generations must rely on each other in order to cope with the deteriorating economic conditions. In fact, multigenerational households are increasing in several countries, including the United States and there are more and more grandfamilies, where grandparents and other relatives raise children together.

94. Despite the fact that lifespans are increasing, the policies and programmes to support and engage older adults changed little over the years. The social compact, however, should be based on reciprocity and the belief that society progresses thanks to the investments past generations have made in carrying knowledge and culture forward, recognizing that all generations – past, present and future are bound together in order to survive and thrive.

95. Experts noted that it is vital to recognize that all generations, grandparents, youth and children have a lot to offer and interactions between them are rewarding for all. Moreover, intergenerational practices go beyond their benefit for individuals and families and strengthen interconnectedness within a community. They can also encourage a thriving economy through the 'economies of scope' where a single intervention or programme impacts multiple issues and populations.

96. In India, similar to other traditional eastern collectivist societies, family unity, integrity and loyalty are emphasized. Collectivism reflects taking decisions, such as career choice and marriage within extended kind. With growing urbanization, the traditional joint family, including 3 or 4 generations living together in the same household has been replaced by the modified extended family but many functional extensions of the traditional joint family have been retained. Care for the old and the young is provided within family units.

97. Some good practices focus on intergenerational housing arrangements, such as encouraging proximity in living through tax credits in Singapore. In some regions, like the

Middle East, generations tend to live in close proximity, making it easier to cooperate towards rising children. In Qatar, Government provides free housing on condition that extended families live in close proximity. Moreover, in accordance with land development master plan, land has been allocated for generations to come ensuring that families live together and care for older persons is provided.

98. On the other hand, surveys in Europe indicate that a growing number of people prefer to live alone, including older adults. It is then important to respect their freedom of choice as well.

99. Grandparents are rarely recognized in social policy despite their obvious contribution to their families, in terms of child care, transfer of values and financial support. In many countries, it is the grandparents who have the primary responsibility for their grandchildren. For instance in Singapore and Malaysia grandparents are often main care providers as parents are mostly able to care for their children during the weekends only. In China, estimates indicate that 20 per cent of children are cared for by their grandparents often as a result of parents' rural to urban migration. In the United States, 7 million children rely on their grandparents' social security benefits.

100. In Africa, grandparents are often the majority caregivers for orphaned children, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS. Beyond social protection provisions, some programmes assist grandparents in care provision or focus on older persons' well-being. In Uganda, government initiatives contribute to economic empowerment of older persons; strengthening of the formal and informal community support institutions; providing better access to social services as well as care and support for older persons with disabilities. In addition, programmes are offered at a community level through associations of older persons in partnership with donors. Some programmes aiming at family preservation focus are conducted in several stages (rescue, stability, permanency and exit) with various evaluation methods used.

101. In India, the National Policy on Older Persons recognizes that special attention should be given to older women to prevent a threat of triple neglect and discrimination based on gender, widowhood and age. It also aims at strengthening integration between generations, facilitates interactions and strengthens the bonds between the young and the old. Moreover, the policy emphasized the need for expansion of social and community services for older persons, especially women. The National Council for Older Persons oversees the implementation of the policy.

102. Other initiatives promoting the well-being of older persons include group housing with common facilities, development of education and informational material such as skills in community work and welfare activities.

103. Several observers highlighted the importance of parenting education for intergenerational solidarity and urged to see parenting education, whether stand-alone programming or part of other services, as essential policy and practice supporting intergenerational bonds. Moreover, the lack of parenting education has high societal risks and investments in prevention are needed.

104. Parenting education has 3 basic elements of knowledge about children's growth and development; skills in providing care appropriate to the child's age and support for social and emotional development in both parent and child. Case method used by the International

Federation for Family Development helps parents improve their childrearing skills through the use of practical examples.

105. It is also important to raise awareness of the importance of intergenerational solidarity for societal well-being. At a regional level, European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations, 2012, as well as several national initiatives, such as Grandparents' Days or Days of Intergenerational Activism promote intergenerational bonding and highlight the issues of care and support for older persons.

106. Faced with a growing problem of neglect, which is a form of elder abuse, several countries introduced legislation aiming at holding children accountable for caring for their ageing parents (e.g. Maintenance of Parents Act in Singapore and similar laws in China and India). Experts noted however, that laws of this nature tend to negatively impact family relations. As the prevention of elder abuse is difficult to legislate, more should be done to invest in family relationships education. In general, all new laws should be accompanied by an educational component. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that children may not have means to support their parents and may need help to do so as well.

107. In the discussion on the role of stakeholders in good practice development and implementation, experts noted that family researchers need to effectively translate complex and comprehensive family research to policy makers in order to support family policy development. As the development, implementation and assessment of family policies is a complex endeavour, it requires the collaboration of different stakeholders, such as Governments, academia, civil society and the private sector.

108. In the United States, the National Council on Family Relations, a multi-disciplinary non-partisan professional organization focusing on family research, practice and education, publishes scholarly journals on family issues and fosters dialogue among family professionals and promotes Family Life Education. Its certified Family Life Educator programme encourages application from professionals with preparations and experience in family life education, e.g. teaching, research, scholarship, public information and health care. Developing similar certifications ensures that family professionals are well prepared to help families tackle their problems.

109. At an initiative of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, a project aiming at disseminating good practices in family policy making entitled 'Contributions of Civil Society Organisations to the Well-Being of Families' to observe the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014 is currently under way. The project is to gather data on good practices in family policy making from civil society organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC. Qualitative and quantitative analysis software is to be used to analyze the data received, which will be further categorized. After collecting and analyzing the organizations data, a knowledge common pool resources network will be set up to include the results of the scientific analysis. All data will be searchable by categories. It is hoped that the project will adequately reflect the numerous activities carried out by non-governmental organizations, especially in the areas of family poverty reduction, work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity.

110. Experts and observers concluded that sound family policy development and exchange of good practices in family policy making should be a priority for all relevant stakeholders for

the well-being of families and societies at large. It is hoped that the expert recommendations will guide national efforts in family policy development, monitoring and implementation.

### **III. Recommendations**

#### **Preamble**

111. Family policies and programmes should be consistent with existing international standards, including Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as relevant International Labour Organization's Convention.

112. Family-friendly policies should be based on the principles of gender equity, non-discrimination and best interest of the child and other family members. They should take into account family diversity and family conditions.

113. All member states have a responsibility to invest in families and develop sound policies and programmes that support families and benefit society.

114. Promoting good practices in family policy making is an opportunity to make informed and sound decisions about policies and programmes that support families, intergenerational relations and benefit society.

115. With the family as the basis of society, all member states have a responsibility to invest in families by conducting research on them, teaching about them at different educational levels and developing sound family policies.

116. All relevant stakeholders such as Governments, civil society, private sector and academic institutions should contribute to multidisciplinary teamwork in family policy development, provision of comprehensive and integrated social services and programmes as part of policy implementation, and conduct thorough family policy assessments.

117. Countries already implementing family policies should be encouraged to provide support to other countries in developing effective explicit family policies and in applying a family perspective when designing, implementing and assessing social policies.

118. Activities in support of issues noted above would promote the well-being of families, which in turn would contribute to fostering democratic, stable and cohesive societies.

#### ***Family policy development and good practice promotion***

- Develop family policy on the basis of sound, comprehensive empirical research on families.
- Ensure that family policies have clearly stated goals and evaluation schedules.

- Conduct longitudinal assessments of family policies, their implementation and their impact using multiple methods (quantitative, qualitative) and multiple respondents (e.g., parents, grandparents, children).
- Improve data collection, monitoring, research and analysis on family forms and living standards, especially on populations missing from traditional surveys. At the local level, examine the complexities of domestic situations in poor families in order to design effective policies and render assistance before any punitive measures against parents might be applied.
- Develop appropriate indicators and practical methodologies for assessing the direct and indirect effects of family-focused policies and programmes on overall family well-being.
- Introduce transparent and effective mechanisms to ensure public accountability for family policies at national level.
- Improve partnerships between relevant stakeholders, including Governments, academia and civil society in family policy development, implementation and evaluation.
- Promote regional networks for research and information exchange on policy and programme options, as well as on experiences and good practices to assist in developing national contextualized family policies aimed at addressing family well-being in general, and family poverty and social exclusion in particular.
- Report on family policy developments, implementation and assessments in the international arena, so that policymakers can learn from different experiences.
- Share knowledge of good practices from different regions of the world to facilitate the development of guidelines for effective extension and delivery of family-focused programmes and services.
- Ensure the participation of families from diverse sections of society in designing, monitoring and evaluating family-focused policies through appropriate mechanisms.

### ***Family law***

- Further family law to expand women's rights, promote fair custody rights in the best interest of the child and ensure that access to resources is gender neutral.
- Educate women and men about their rights and obligations under family law through national campaigns and literacy training.
- Ensure family law enforcement at the national level through training of judges and monitoring of court decisions especially in rural and underprivileged urban areas.
- Strengthen the social as opposed to legal contract (e.g. providing supports when neglect is due to lack of means or other social constraints.)
- Ensure that immigration policies do not separate or endanger families.

- Promote family reunification and prevent family break-ups by eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability in immigration and refugee legislation and policy.

### *Family-oriented policies and programmes*

#### *Work-family balance*

#### *Public policy relevant to working families*

- Extend maternity leave, paternity leave, and parental leave, with financing and eligibility mechanisms that reduce gender disparities and maximize coverage. Develop mechanisms to extend the coverage of these regulations to informal employment sectors. Ensure that leave is of adequate duration and with adequate income replacement.
- Ensure that leave is available to meet the health and educational needs of children and youth, and the health and care needs of older adults. Ensure maximum of consideration for the needs of family members with disabilities or other special needs.
- Promote family-friendly work hours, including special attention to evening, night, and rotating shifts, in the public and private sectors in order to accommodate household and family needs. Generate mechanisms that facilitate the implementation of work-family balance measures in small and medium-sized companies.
- Ensure workplace protection for working families in the informal economy and in precarious work situations such as casual, temporary, and part-time employment contracts, through which workers commonly earn less and have access to fewer workplace protections.
- Prioritize social investment in care services for children, adults in need and older persons. Promote initiatives for the extension of the school day when beneficial to the child and/ or provision of out-of-school activities, as well as the extension of high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE). Expand the supply of high-quality care for under-three year olds. Provide high-quality, affordable, appropriate, and accessible care options for older persons.
- Provide care in intergenerational settings, when possible, to ease the burden on families caring for children, older persons and those with special needs or disability.
- Increase collaboration across government ministries on work-family balance policies (e.g. between Ministries of Health, Labour, Gender Equity, Finance, Children, Social Justice, Education, etc.) and across government, employers, unions and community organizations.

- Include work-family issues in major relevant United Nations initiatives such as global social protection floor, Global Compact, relevant family provisions of conventions, etc.
- Examine and implement the best practices in portfolio of legal obligations and incentives to encourage the development of more effective and improved work-family policies.

#### ***Data, monitoring and evaluation of work-family policies and programmes***

- United Nations agencies in collaboration with other international organizations should collect and make readily available information on Government and private sector progress in work and family issues.
- These transparent measurements would provide information for accountability purposes and for countries and companies seeking to improve work-family balance and (a) measure the existence and implementation of country-wide relevant laws and policies and (b) collect and assess company-level information on work-family balance policies and practices.
- The international community, national governments and research/academic bodies should generate and share information that examines the social and economic benefits of work-family balance schemes. A collaborative effort of United Nations agencies, other international organizations academic institutions, and civil society actors can also make a difference by creating a readily accessible policy tool kit, including the compilation and dissemination of information on work-family policy measures among countries and corporations (good practices, legislation, economic cases, and implementation results).

#### ***Employers***

- Endeavour to make workplace culture more family-friendly so workers can utilize different options available to them.
- Take account of and respect employees' family needs to build up an effective profile and assess priority areas for support in their workplace.
- Use imaginative and effective ways to lead and model workplace cultural change towards improved work-family balance, in particular by Chief Executive Officers and supervisors.
- Formulate creative methods to communicate written formal and informal work-family practices and policies within the workplace, including podcasts, blogs, tweets as well as traditional manual and notice-board methods.
- Invest in team skills training of managers involved in work-family implementation.

### *Family poverty and social exclusion*

- In efforts to alleviate family poverty, focus on the family as a unit, taking into account that the interdependence between family members and proper investment in children is necessary to improve living standards, bolster human development and break intergenerational transfer of poverty.
- Ensure that family-oriented social policies are gender-sensitive, given that gender inequality and associated labour market and educational disadvantages play a major role in causing and perpetuating poverty.
- Ensure that families, especially the most vulnerable, have access to social services and social protection for which they are eligible.
- Invest in children in the early years and throughout childhood to promote human development, and avoid personal and social costs later in life.
- Ensure that child support systems have straightforward payment procedures, and maximize coverage so that absent parents enjoy their rights and undertake the responsibilities required of them.
- Detailed data collection, measurement and evaluation are necessary to capture the needs of all family members to improve anti-poverty policy, including for those groups often missing from standard survey data collection (e.g. children with disabilities or grandparents raising grandchildren).
- Provide information and guidance to help families to exercise choice over, and make decisions about, the benefits and services for all family members.
- Ensure respect for the legal capacity of adults who have a disability and the right to make their own decisions about the benefits they receive.
- When relevant, combine public works programmes with skills training and information to workers to aid their search for employment and/or to promote self-employment at the end of such programmes.
- Prioritize social policies that promote access to good quality and stable employment as well as complementary services, such as tax-based initiatives, conditional cash transfers or in-kind services depending on national priorities.
- Encourage all employers to offer part-time employment opportunities and flexible working hours while keeping equivalent labour standards of full-time jobs in place. This would

contribute to making employment opportunities accessible to all families, including those with young children or sole parents.

- Provide a range of social policies and programmes for families with persons with disabilities after consultation with persons with disabilities, their families and their representative organizations. Ensure that receipt of these benefits does not disqualify families from other benefits for which they would normally be eligible.
- Maximize coverage and quality of all-inclusive, affordable childcare, early childhood education, and health services for children.
- Improve housing conditions and infrastructure services for families with children.

### *Intergenerational issues*

- Given the importance of intergenerational perspectives in family policy design, Governments are encouraged to integrate intergenerational aspects into their policies and programmes.
- Create or strengthen ministries or ombudspersons at the national level responsible for using an intergenerational lens to review policies and practices, in order to ensure that they are designed so that all generations are viewed and engaged as resources for and deserving of support from families, communities and each other.
- Initiate or improve supports and services for parents, grandparents, and other adults caring for older persons and family members with disabilities.
- Encourage the allocation of public and private funds towards more intergenerational programmes, shared sites or centers and educational opportunities for people of all ages.
- Ensure that academic institutions provide programmes in gerontology and the study of the life conditions of older persons in different life situations.
- Assess the impact of socio-economic policies on intergenerational solidarity as an essential element of policy design and implementation.
- Raise awareness of the importance of intergenerational solidarity through celebrations, festivals, and holidays while increasing opportunities for intergenerational collaboration.
- Recognize grandparents as caregivers and care recipients, given the extended life span in most world regions.
- Educate across the lifespan to raise awareness of intergenerational issues.

- Invest in parents during each stage of their children's development (this includes but is not limited to investment in parenting education), and in parallel invest in direct services for parents.
- Promote parenting education and research on parenting, especially on parent's relationships, the role of fathers and co-parenting (within policy settings, academic institutions, civil society, etc.) as well as research and education on caregiving for older persons and family members with disabilities.
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing designed for multigenerational households, including grandparents and other relatives raising children, as well as older persons and family members with disabilities in need of care themselves.

## Annex I: Final Meeting Agenda

### Tuesday, 15 May 2012

- 9:00-9:30                    **Registration**
- 9:30-9:45                    **Opening Session**  
**Welcome and Opening Remarks:** Jean-Pierre Gonnot, Chief, Social Integration Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development/Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSPD/DESA)
- 9:45-10:15                   **Introductory Session**  
**Objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting:**  
Renata Kaczmarek, Focal Point on the Family, DSPD/DESA  
**Introduction of the participants**
- 10:15-10:30                Break
- 10:30-12:15                **Session I: Defining good practice in explicit family policy making**  
  
Moderator – Dominic Richardson  
Introductory remarks – Mihaela Robila, Mounira Charrad  
  
*Issues for discussion*
- Demographic, social and economic trends affecting families and the need for adequate policy response
  - Policy focus: families vs individuals
  - Benefits of focusing on families in policy design
  - Family-oriented socio-economic policies
  - Good practice in family policy making: criteria, design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation
  - Types of good practices in family policies
  - Family law reforms
  - Gender equality within families
  - Links between poverty reduction, work-family balance and social integration/intergenerational solidarity
  - Good practice data collection & dissemination
  - Challenges to effective family-oriented policies design and implementation
- Roundtable discussion*
- 12:15-13:15                Lunch break
- 13:15-14:45                **Session II: Ensuring work-family balance - Observance of the International Day of Families**

Moderator - Margaret O'Brien

Presentations:

Jody Heymann – *Families at Work: What we Know about Conditions Globally*

Meejung Chin - *Demographic Changes and Work-Family Balance Policies in East Asia*

Corina Rodríguez Enríquez – *Work-Family Balance Issues in Latin America: a Roadmap for National Care Systems*

Nurper Ulkuer, Chief, Early Childhood Development Unit, UNICEF – *The Importance of Quality Child Care for Work-Family Balance*

*Issues for discussion*

- Trends impacting work-family balance: growing number of dual earner families, increasing women's labour force participation, competition for jobs, anti-social working patterns
- Impact of work pressures on family life
- Benefits of work-family balance for adults and children
- Gender equality and fair distribution of family responsibilities
- The importance of quality childcare
- Family-oriented responses to ensure work-family balance
- Types of policies and programmes
- Examples of good practices
- Perspectives on the role of Governments, UN entities, civil society, private sector and academia in advocacy, design and implementation of work-family balance policies and programmes

*Roundtable discussion with guest participation*

14:45-15:00

Break

15:00-16:45

**Session III: Good practices in work-family balance: types of policies in existence, examples & a way forward**

Moderator – Jody Heymann

Introductory remarks – Margaret O'Brien, Marie-Laure des Brosses

*Questions for discussion*

Types of policies and programmes supporting work-family balance and examples of good practices and innovative approaches:

- Family leave: maternity, paternity, parental & special leaves
- Efforts to increase uptake of parental leave by fathers
- Flexible working arrangements: flexi-time, part-time, annualized hours, time credits, work-sharing
- Early childhood education and care
- Care for older children, including after-school care
- Child care arrangements in the workplace

- Statutory support for informal/kin care
- Gender equality and greater participation of men in family responsibilities
- Caring arrangement for children, older persons, persons with disabilities, including at home care
- What is the impact of good practices in the areas above on working families?
- What other good practices families need?
- Ensuring working with families in good practice implementation

*Roundtable discussion*

16:45-17:00 Summary of the discussion and recommendations from day one compiled by Moderators

**Wednesday, 16 May 2012**

9:00-10:30 **Session IV: Policy response to recent trends in family poverty and social exclusion**

Moderator – Zitha Mokomane

Introductory remarks – Maria Cristina Gomes da Conceição, Diane Richler

*Issues and questions for discussion*

- Dimensions of poverty and social exclusion
- Factors associated with family poverty in developed and developing countries
- Families in poverty and at risk of poverty
- Intergenerational transfer of poverty
- Special focus on exclusion of family members with disabilities
- The role of formal and informal education and employment for poverty reduction
- Gender inequality in families and societies as an obstacle to poverty eradication
- Reproductive and health issues
- Families as beneficiaries and agents of development
- Current focus of policy response to issues above

*Roundtable discussion*

10:30-10:45 **Break**

10:45-12:30 **Session V: Types of good practices focusing on family poverty reduction and social exclusion**

Moderator - Mihaela Robila

Introductory remarks – Zitha Mokomane, Dominic Richardson

*Issues for discussion*

Good policy and practice in the areas of:

- Social security provisions
- Cash transfers
- Provision of basic social services
- Food subsidies
- Child benefits
- Access to employment
- Public works programmes
- Other strategies

*Roundtable discussion*

12:30-14:00

**Lunch break**

14:00-15:15

**Session VI: Good practices in anti-poverty family-focused policies and programmes in developing countries: examples and lessons learnt**

Moderator – Meejung Chin

Introductory remarks – Zitha Mokomane, Maria Cristina Gomes da Conceição

*Issues for discussion*

- Regional, national & local family-focused responses
- Examples of good practices in Africa, Asia & South America
- Assessment of good practices, their successes and limitations

*Roundtable discussion*

15:15-15:30

**Break**

15:30-16:45

**Session VII: Good practices in anti-poverty family-focused policies and programmes in developed countries: examples and lessons learnt**

Moderator – Narender Chadha

Introductory remarks – Dominic Richardson, Andrey Borodaevskiy

*Issues for discussion*

- Regional, national & local family-focused responses
- Examples of good practices in Europe and North America

- What is the impact of good practice on the well-being of families?
- Policy and programme evaluation

*Roundtable discussion*

16:45-17:00 Policy recommendations from day two compiled by Moderators

**Thursday, 17 May 2011**

9:00-10:30 **Session VIII: Social integration and intergenerational solidarity: issues of concern**

Moderator – Lydia Nyesigomwe  
Introductory remarks – Donna Butts

*Issues and questions for discussion*

- Demographic & social trends impacting intergenerational relations
- Grandparents – parents – children nexus, how interdependent are we?
- What trends threaten intergenerational solidarity? (mobility & migration; competition for resources; labour participation; gender inequality; changing value systems; violence in families and communities,)
- What is the current focus of strategies supporting intergenerational relations?

10:30-10:45 **Break**

10:45-12:30 **Session IX: Good practices in social integration and intergenerational solidarity: types of strategies, examples and lessons learnt**

Moderator – Donna Butts  
Introductory remarks – Narender Chadha, Lydia Nyesigomwe, Ignacio Socias, Eve Sullivan

*Issues for discussion*

Types of policies and programmes supporting intergenerational relations, examples of good practices and innovative approaches

- Family focused childcare and older care support and provision
- Care benefits and tax credits
- Social protection, including pensions
- Intergenerational transfers: financial and in-kind support

- Formal and informal education
- Parenting education
- Housing laws supporting intergenerational relations
- Cross-generational community centers
- Young and older persons volunteering programmes
- Initiatives in the workplace: mentoring, job sharing
- Expenditure for benefits for the young vs older persons
- Other strategies

*Roundtable discussion*

12:30-14:00

**Lunch break**

14:00-15:30

**Session X: Good practices in poverty eradication, work-family balance and social integration & intergenerational solidarity: the role of stakeholders**

Moderator – Corina Rodriquez Enriquez

Introductory remarks – Mihaela Robila, Peter Crowley

- Communicating the benefits of family-oriented policies
- Role of Governments, civil society, private sector, educational institutions, academics and the UN system in good practice development and implementation
- Good practice data selection and dissemination
- Collection of information on and exchange of good practices in family policy making: lessons learnt and the way forward

*Issues for discussion*

*Roundtable discussion*

15:15-15:30

Policy recommendations from day three compiled by Moderators

15:30-15:45

**Break**

15:45-16:45

**Session XI: Distillation of findings, finalization and adoption of recommendations**

Moderator – Renata Kaczmarska, Focal Point on the Family

16:45-17:00

**Concluding remarks, farewell and closing**

## Annex II: List of Participants

### *Experts:*

**Prof. Andrey Borodaevskiy**, Faculty of Economics and Law, Moscow State Linguistic University

**Ms. Donna Butts**, Executive Director, Generations United

**Prof. Narender Chadha**, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi

**Dr. Mounira Charrad**, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Texas in Austin

**Dr. Meejung Chin**, Associate Professor, Child Development and Family Studies, Seoul National University

**Prof. Maria Cristina Gomes da Conceição**, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, FLACSO-México

**Dr. Jody Heymann**, Canada Research Chair in Global Health and Social Policy, McGill University

**Dr. Zitha Mokomane**, Senior Research Specialist, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

**Ms. Lydia Nyesigomwe**, Executive Director, Parenting Uganda

**Prof. Margaret O'Brien**, Co-Director, Centre for Research on the Child and Family, University of East Anglia

**Dr. Dominic Richardson**, Policy Analyst, OECD Social Policy Division

**Dr. Mihaela Robila**, Associate Professor of Family Sciences, Queens College

**Dr. Corina Rodríguez Enriquez**, Principal Researcher, Centro Interdisciplinario para el Estudio de Políticas Públicas, Argentina

### Observers

**Dr. Nuria Chinchilla Albiol**, Director, International Center for Work and Family, IESE Business School, University of Navarra

**Dr. Peter Crowley**, Secretary, Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

**Ms. Marie-Laure des Brosses**, President, Make Mothers Matter France

**Ms. Ada Garriga Cots**, Representative, Women's Board

**Ms. Helena Hilla-O'Brien**, Vice-President, Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union, COFACE

**Ms. Noor Al Malki Al Jehani**, Executive Director, Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development

**Ms. Kristen McNeill**, Coordinator, Children's Chances Initiative, McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy

**Ms. Amina Mesdoua**, Director, Family Policy, Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development

**Ms. Cristina Napolitano**, Main Representative, International Federation for Family Development, IFFD

**Ms. Diane Richler**, Chair, International Disability Alliance

**Ms. Vincenzina Santoro**, American Family Association of New York

**Ms. Nadia Shmigel**, Main Representative, World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, Co-Chair, NY NGO Committee on the Family

**Dr. Janet Sigal**, Main Representative, American Psychological Association, Co-Chair, NY NGO Committee on the Family

**Ms. Daniela Simioni**, Social Affairs Officer, Regional Commissions NY Office  
**Mr. Ignacio Socias**, Director General, The Family Watch  
**Ms. Eve Sullivan**, Main Representative, International Federation for Parent Education, President, Parents Forum  
**Dr. Nurper Ulkuer**, Chief, Early Childhood Development Unit, UNICEF  
**Ms. Florence von Erb**, President, Make Mothers Matter International  
**Ms. Lynn Walsh**, Main Representative, United Peace Federation, Marriage and Family Peace Initiative  
**Dr. Sergei Zelenev**, Special Representative, International Council on Social Welfare

**United Nations staff**

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Gonnot**, Chief, Social Integration Branch, DSPD/DESA  
**Ms. Renata Kaczmarska**, Focal Point on the Family, DSPD/DESA  
**Ms. Guillerma Dumalag**, Research Assistant, DSPD/DESA