



Family Matters



Circular No.3

Follow-up to the International Year of the Family

1996

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The Subprogramme on the Family

The follow up to the International Year of the Family is the responsibility of the Subprogramme on the Family of the Division for Social Policy and Development within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The follow-up activities to the International Year of the Family are in accordance with intergovernmental mandates e.g. General Assembly resolutions 47/237 of 20 September 1993 and 50/142 of 21 December 1995 respectively.

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Current and Future Activities of the Subprogramme on the Family

During 1996, the Secretariat, as the focal point within the UN system in matters relating to families, continued its efforts to consult and cooperate with Governments, NGOs and other IYF partners on an effective follow up. Central to collaborative efforts were the advocacy of the family as a prime issue of social policy. The Secretariat has utilized meetings and conferences and general correspondences to promote and publicize family-related topics.

The United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities continued to provide financial assistance to activities and projects of direct benefit to families, particularly in developing and least-developed countries. In addition, positive responses and requests for assistance so far have come from Argentina, Austria, Antigua and Barbuda, Burkina Faso, Chile, Hungary, and the Vienna NGO Committee on Family, among others.

The Secretariat initiated actions for the worldwide observance of the International Day of Families [15 May] by preparing background and information notes on the family and on the international theme to Governments, NGO sector and concerned UN agencies and bodies, including the regional commissions and UNIC offices. The theme was: >Families -- Victims of Poverty and Homelessness=. A message of the Secretary General was widely distributed during 1996. The observance provided an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families, as well as to initiate appropriate action at all levels. The 1996 International Day of Families was a mobilizing factor on behalf of families in many countries. Governments, UN agencies and bodies, non-governmental organizations and numerous educational institutions also celebrated the Day.

In its efforts to promote and strengthen international cooperation on family issues, the Secretariat initiated an inventory on best practices of family policies to facilitate exchange of information and experience and serve as a central reference point for the global network of partners on families. In this connection, the Secretariat is working closely with the Government of Austria.

The Secretariat continues to initiate consultations on family issues within the United Nations System. Particular emphasis has been on annual observances of the International Day of Families, and joint collaboration in the context of the relevant provisions of international plans and programmes of action emanating from the global conferences of the 1990's.

Supportive relationships with the Non-Governmental Organizations Committees on the Family in Vienna, New York and Paris have been reinforced. During 1996, the Secretariat participated in various family-related meetings.

In collaboration with the International Federation for Parent Education, the International Federation for Training and Development, the Centre for the Study of the Global South at the American University, Washington, D. C. and the Centre for Family Studies at the University of Akron, the Secretariat is initiating and promoting action-oriented research and case studies on salient family issues.

The Secretariat will continue to enhance international cooperation in the family field within the context of follow up to the Year. More specifically, the Secretariat will continue to:

- (a) Provide policy guidance to Governments in order to strengthen family-centered components of development policies and programmes;
- (b) Organize a series of regional and interregional perspectives on the family [expert group meetings] to promote a long-term integrated approach to family issues within the context of sustainable development;
- (c) Facilitate the dissemination and exchange of ideas and

experiences on family issues;

(d) Reinforce networking with concerned partners and civil society;

(e) Mobilize resources utilizing the UN Trust Fund on Family Activities to support salient initiatives; and

(f) Develop an inventory of best practices of family policies.

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