

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES****15 May 2004**

This year's International Day of Families carries special significance, because 2004 also marks the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Thus, the International Day of Families is an occasion to recall the importance of the original principles and objectives of the Year at the national, regional and global levels.

There has been progress during the past 10 years. Many Member States are instituting national programmes of action. Efforts are being made to integrate family perspectives in national legislation, policy formulation and programme development. Research on issues concerning the family is enriching and informing policies and programmes, while collaboration across the United Nations system is contributing to an emerging framework for global action. Civil society is mobilizing and coordinating programmes and actions in support of families. Indeed, the interest, commitment and resolve evident among all actors and at all levels indicate that the well-being of families has become a central focus of all concerned with national development and poverty eradication.

Yet more needs to be done. On this International Day of Families, I urge Governments, civil society and individuals to keep working for policies and programmes that recognize and support the contributions each family makes to its members, its community and its society. Let us recommit ourselves to ensuring an environment that sustains and supports families for the benefit of generations to come.