



عضو في مؤسسة قطر Member of Qatar Foundation



2014 - TWENTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF THE FAMILY

Expert Group Meeting,  
Doha/Qatar  
2-3 June 2013

**“Protecting Arab family from poverty: employment, social integration and intergenerational solidarity”**

Convened as part of the preparations for the  
Twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014

## **I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) a member of Qatar Foundation, is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on “protecting the Arab family from poverty: employment, social integration and intergenerational solidarity” to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013 in Doha /Qatar, as part of the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014.

The meeting is taking place in response to several United Nations’ General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions on the follow-up to the International Year of the Family (IYF), 1994.

The resolution.10/1012.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.

Furthermore the recent resolution of the United Nations’ General Assembly A/Res/67/142 on “the preparations and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the family “ encouraged member States ,regional organizations, NGOs and academic institutions to support as appropriate the preparations of regional meeting in observance of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IYF.

**This Expert Group Meeting will undertake a comprehensive review of what has been achieved in the MENA region in confronting family poverty, ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity, highlight challenges and success, explore good practices and lessons learned and provide policy recommendations.**

## **II BACKGROUND**

At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, world leaders committed to achieving the goals of poverty eradication, expansion of productive employment and promotion of social integration. Poverty eradication, full employment and decent work and social integration are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Accordingly the focus of this meeting will be on poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work through social integration and intergenerational solidarity.

### **Confronting family poverty and social exclusion**

Poverty can be both the cause and the consequence of social exclusion. It has multiples and interlinked causes.

In many societies changes in the structure of the household have increased vulnerability and social exclusion of families. The feminization of poverty reflected in increasing number of women who have to work double shifts in environments, in which there is a lack of basic services, are affected by social exclusion .their families often become subject to intergenerational exclusion and chronic poverty. Poverty in childhood also raises the risk of adult poverty and a life of exclusion.

Raising the issue of poverty in the MENA region implies careful consideration of the nature of socio economic systems at the local and national levels that produce inequity and disadvantage, in particular for families. To address the causes, outcomes and dynamic nature of poverty, there is a need for an intervention from all relevant stakeholders in society from governments and civil society to grass-roots and community and for more comprehensive policies to create coherence among different programmes.

Poverty will continue to be structural and persistent if jobs are short-term and precarious and employment arrangements and public policies do not sufficiently recognize or support families and their care giving responsibilities. The success of the anti-poverty programmes depends on the extent to which they focus on families in order to prevent intergenerational transfer of poverty.

### **Ensuring Family and work balance**

With the increasing labour participation of women in the MENA region, both women and men are engaged in gainful employment. Still, the domestic workload remains mostly the

responsibility of women and their contribution to the well being of their families and communities remains unrecognized.

Work-family balance lies at the core of the ability of the family to provide economically and emotionally for its members. A variety of strategies to help families cope with work and family responsibilities is being used around the world. In the majority of developing countries, however, reconciliation of work and family life policies competes with a large number of development priorities.

Moreover, access to work-family balance support systems is chiefly in the formal and regulated labour markets while many workers in the informal sector face not only family-unfriendly but also dangerous work environments. Global employment protection is then needed to secure better working conditions, especially for poor working families.

Family-friendly strategies facilitating work-family balance have a key role in supporting parents to raise the next generation of children and ensure harmonious family relations. Work-family balance policies also demonstrate Governments commitment to the well-being of families and employers' social responsibility and contribute to successful labour relations, employee health and well-being, gender equality and child welfare.

It is important to share experience about good practices in work-family balance being implemented and advocated for by Governments, private sector, civil society and academic institutions. Promoting professional support to create a more family-friendly culture in the workplace is equally important.

### **Promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity**

The financial crisis reduced economic growth worldwide, although some economies in the MENA region have managed to maintain positive growth rates, many experienced increased unemployment and therefore reduction of income .Oil price fluctuation, natural disaster and political instability are leading to greater uncertainty.

The social integration of families living in poverty should encompass meeting their basic human needs, including nutrition, health, water and sanitation, housing and access to education and employment.

Ensuring access to decent work and opportunities is a key component of social integration; full employment and decent work provide a pathway out of poverty and create opportunities for marginalized groups including young people, women, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Strategies promoting social integration and intergenerational solidarity are critical for families and societies. They strengthen the cohesion of society which in turn increases participation, solidarity and the sharing of values and responsibilities.

Policies to promote social integration need to be integrated with macroeconomic policies in a coherent and holistic way in order to promote economic growth with equity, social cohesion and solidarity.

### **III. OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING**

The primary objective of the Meeting is to provide United Nations' member States and other stakeholders with recommendations and good practices in the areas of family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance and promoting intergenerational solidarity.

14 Experts on the MENA region, with various backgrounds are invited to participate in the meeting in their personal capacities. **Experts will be asked to write an original paper, participate in the discussions, give their expert opinion, and provide specific examples of good practices on further development of policies, programmes and strategies as well as concrete policy recommendations in the three areas mentioned above.**

### **IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- 1- Papers prepared by experts on one of the topics in the agenda
- 2- Policy recommendations

The experts' papers and recommendations will be posted on the websites of the DIFI and the UNDESA.

The final report of the expert group meeting as well as expert papers will be used as inputs to the 2013-2014 Report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF).

### **V. PROPOSED AGENDA**

#### **Day One**

Welcome and introduction

#### **Session 1: Poverty Eradication: Confronting Poverty and Social Exclusion**

- Social and economic trends affecting families and the need for adequate policies
- Challenges faced by families living in poverty
- Strategies focusing on gender equality and child poverty
- Role of families in achieving MDG 1
- Anti-poverty policies and strategies focusing on families
- Good practices on Benefits of focusing on family in policy design.

#### **Session 2: Towards Work-Family Balance**

- Promoting employment and creating better jobs.
- Women's participation in job market and its impact on family work balance

- Trends impacting work-family balance
- Benefits of work-family balance for the family
- Importance of Parental leaves and flexible working arrangements and quality childcare
- Participation of men in household responsibilities
- Family-oriented responses to ensure work-family balance
- Policies and programmes and good practices supporting family work reconciliation

## **Day Two**

### **Session 3: Social Integration: A society for all**

- Trends impacting social integration in the MENA region
- Building adequate social protection system for families
- Strategies aimed at promoting social integration
- Policies and good practices focusing on social integration

### **Session 4: Intergenerational Solidarity: Strengthening Social and Economic Ties**

- Demographic, social and economic trends affecting intergenerational relations
- Changes of roles within the family
- Participation of youth in social, economic and family life
- Policies and good practices supporting intergenerational solidarity

### **Session 5: Finalization and Distillation of Recommendations**