

Recognizing the complexity of the issues related to the rapid ageing of populations and the serious challenge it is posing to all societies, the need to undertake lifelong preparation for old age and to have a policy framework for the protection of older people, including social security, income generation, health maintenance and continuing skill development, as well as for the promotion of the contributions that older persons can make to society,

Noting with appreciation that preparations for the International Year of Older Persons have been initiated and coordinating bodies on ageing established in various countries in the region with the objective of formulating national policies for older persons and coordinating activities in support of the Year,

Reaffirming its commitment to according priority to the fulfilment of the goals and targets contained in the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing in 1982, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development and the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region,

1. *Urges* all members and associate members to take early and effective action to implement General Assembly resolutions concerning older persons and make preparations for the International Year of Older Persons, bearing in mind the goals and objectives of the Year;

2. *Calls upon* members and associate members which have not yet done so to set up and strengthen national mechanisms on ageing, *inter alia*, to enable them to coordinate preparations for and observance of the Year and to set specific time-bound targets on ageing and related issues, in the light of the needs and aspirations of older persons, in keeping with indigenous traditions and their milieu;

3. *Also calls upon* all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society to enhance their efforts to generate greater awareness of issues relating to ageing and older persons and to support regional and national initiatives in observance of the Year;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To provide continuing assistance to members and associate members in preparing for and commemorating the Year, including the provision of technical advice and the coordination of regional and subregional activities;

(b) To promote an integrated, intersectoral approach and ensure effective coordination of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and private voluntary and community-based organizations for the benefit of older persons and in support of the Year;

(c) To convene a regional meeting to formulate a plan of action on ageing for Asia and the Pacific, as called for in General Assembly resolution 50/141, and to consider the means of enhancing national and regional initiatives for older persons;

(d) To continue to facilitate the exchange of national experiences and information and to disseminate data and materials concerning older persons;

(e) To report to the Commission in 2000 on the observance of the Year and on progress in the implementation of the plan of action on ageing for Asia and the Pacific and, on the basis of consultations with members and associate members, to recommend further action and initiatives to achieve the goals and targets contained therein.

10th meeting
22 April 1998

54/6. Strengthening the role of the family in social development⁶

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 47/13 of 10 April 1991 on the International Year of the Family in which it reiterated the importance of the family as the basic social unit for socio-economic development and the need for all governments to devise policies specifically in support of national development objectives regarding the family,

Acknowledging that the International Year of the Family (1994) was proclaimed by the General Assembly with the following major goals: to encourage the participation of families in attaining the fundamental human development aims of reducing poverty and providing the basic services for health, nutrition, education, shelter and employment opportunities, to formulate policies sensitive to family issues and help improve national capacity to monitor the implementation of those policies, and to encourage governmental, non-governmental and national and international organizations and agencies to assess how their decisions and actions affect families,

Recalling its resolution 51/4 of 1 May 1995, endorsing the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, which had been adopted on 16 October 1994 by the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, and in which governments were urged to help provide an environment supportive of strengthening the institution of the family and mutual respect within the family,

⁶ See para. 207 above.

Recalling also the relevant General Assembly resolutions concerning the proclamation, preparations for and observance of, as well as the follow-up to, the International Year of the Family, in particular resolution 52/81 of 12 December 1997, in which the Assembly emphasized the need for a more focused and coordinated approach towards family issues within the United Nations system and invited governments to continue their actions to build family-friendly societies, *inter alia*, by promoting the rights of individual family members, in particular gender equality and the rights of the child, urged governments to take sustained action at all levels concerning families, and invited them to develop concrete measures and approaches to address national priorities to deal with family issues,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992 on the Proclamation on Ageing, and the decision to observe 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons, and noting the practical strategy on ageing for the decade 1992-2001 as it relates to strengthening of the family as a system of support in the provision of care and protection for older persons,

Recalling that the family is the natural fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the basis of which the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, particularly with regard to its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children, as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

Referring to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, which recognized the family as the basic unit of society and acknowledged that it played a key role in social development and should be provided with an environment that assured its protection and support, and that there was an urgent need for policies that strengthened the family and contributed to its stability so that it would have a strengthened role in development,

Considering that policies and programmes specially focused on individual members of the family tend to overlook the interrelatedness of the needs of family members and the interests of the family as a whole, which could lead to the breakdown of family functioning,

Keeping in mind that familial stability is crucial to societal stability, and concerned that rapid industrialization and globalization in the twenty-first century pose grave dangers to family unity and solidarity through untrammelled national and international migration,

Also keeping in mind the Manila Declaration on Accelerated Implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, adopted by the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development on 11 November 1997,

1. *Invites* members and associate members to continue their activities to build family-friendly societies;

2. *Urges* members and associate members to view individuals and their needs in the context of the family in order to plan for programmes and projects in a holistic manner, as well as to strengthen multi-generational relationships;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as donor governments and multilateral funding agencies:

(a) To continue to play an active role in facilitating regional cooperation within the framework of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family, by

- (i) Facilitating the exchange of experience and information among members and associate members on effective policies and strategies;
- (ii) Facilitating technical assistance, with a focus on least developed, landlocked and island developing countries;
- (iii) Encouraging the organization of subregional meetings and relevant research;

(b) To further promote the role of the family in regional activities supportive of the International Year of Older Persons and its follow-up, especially on matters relating to the provision of care and protection for older persons and the strengthening of multi-generational relationships;

(c) To convene, within the current biennium, a regional workshop on strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection, and to prepare and disseminate a publication on that topic;

(d) To report to the Commission, in 2000, on regional cooperation strategies to achieve a more focused and coordinated approach to the family within the United Nations system.

*10th meeting
22 April 1998*