

**Overseas Experience in Supporting the Family  
provided by  
The Ex-Steering Committee on Study of Family Council**

**Purpose**

As requested by Members at the meeting of the Family Council held on 14 December 2007, we now attach a copy of the paper on overseas experience in supporting the family by the ex-Steering Committee on Study of Family Council.

**Conclusion**

2. Members are advised to note the paper for background information.

**Secretariat, Family Council  
January 2008**

## Overseas Experience in Supporting the Family

### Purpose

This paper surveys the institutional arrangements adopted in some overseas countries in developing and implementing policies and programmes to strengthen and support the family.

### Pro-family Drives at International Platforms

2. Family issues have received increasing attention since the mid-1970s among industrialized countries. Two main actors have contributed to the increasing visibility of the family on the public policy agendas: the European Community and the United Nations. At the European Community, in 1983, the European Parliament adopted a resolution stressing the need to identify and take into account those aspects of economic, social and cultural policy which relate to the family, and encourage the adoption by the Member States policies that take account of the multiple needs of the family. It also called on the European Commission to draw up an action programme to promote the launching of the family policies in the Member States. Following this initiative, the European Parliament set up an Observatory on National Family Policies in 1989 to monitor the developments of family policy in each of the Member States. The Observatory's main tasks are :

- (a) to analyze political activities and the impact of family policies;
- (b) to monitor demographic, socio-economic and political changes which have an impact on families;
- (c) to stimulate academic debate on social, demographic and family issues as well as on related policies;
- (d) to organize annual seminars of the Observatory experts and invite speakers for a specialized audience. For example, the Milan Seminar in 2001 analyzed family forms and the young generation in Europe, the Annual Seminar 2002 focused on immigration and family while the 2003 Seminar was dedicated to a health topic; and
- (e) to organize two closed meetings per year for the Observatory members.

3. At the United Nations, family and children issues have also received considerable attention. The new Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 recognizes the importance of the family and its right to public support: "the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibility within the community."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Article 10 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also provides that "the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children."

4. The other major initiative of the United Nations in championing the family is the declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family. This event has encouraged governments worldwide to adopt a family-sensitive approach in their countries' development strategies. Through the activities celebrating the International Year, the United Nations aimed at increasing public and private awareness of family issues, and the need to better support families.

5. The strategic drives of the European Parliament and the United Nations have spurred positive responses at national levels. Initiatives launched by governments since mid-1970s feature an increasing interest in family issues. **Annex A** sets out examples of such initiatives, which show a diversity of approaches and foci, with some countries adopting an integrated approach targeting the family as a whole, and others focusing on specific issues (such as family income, parenthood, child care, etc.) or specific age sectors (such as youth, children, etc.). In some countries, studies were conducted before embarking on concrete measures, e.g. the report published by Australia on families in 1986 as part of the government Social Security Review and the report on families published by the New Zealand Social Advisory Council in 1984; while in others such as Italy and Portugal, Commissions on the Family were set up.<sup>2</sup> The family policies adopted by different countries reflect their different social goals. For instance, France and Luxembourg have explicitly linked fertility and family issues and have adopted an explicit pro-natalist attitude in drawing up programmes for family support. In Sweden, family programmes are oriented towards gender equality. Moreover, while governments in countries such as Belgium have opted for a comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> From Preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>2</sup> The information set out in paragraphs 2-5 is summarized from Chapter 9 (pages 148 - 154) of "The State and the Family" by Anne Hélène Gauthier, Oxford University Press (1996). Another book, "Family Policy: Government and Families in Fourteen Countries" by Kamerman and Kaln (1978) provides information on pre-1970s experiences in family policies.

support for families, others, such as the British and American governments, have restricted their intervention to families in greatest need.

### **Selected Case Studies**

6. The following paragraphs set out the institutional arrangements for family support in New Zealand and Singapore, which show recent examples of family-commission type of institutions, with the establishment of the Families Commission in New Zealand in 2003 and the National Family Council in Singapore in May 2006. At Members' request, we have also obtained some information concerning the arrangements in relation to Australia, Mainland China and Taiwan. The following paragraphs summarise the information available so far.

#### ***The Case of New Zealand***

7. In New Zealand, issues pertinent to the family and its constituent members are addressed by several ministers, including Minister for Social Development and Employment, Minister of Youth Affairs and Minister for Senior Citizens, who are underpinned by the Ministry of Social Development (with Ministry of Youth Development and Office of Senior Citizens being parts of it) and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.<sup>3</sup>

8. Matters relating to women are handled by the Minister of Women's Affairs, with support of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Ministry provides advice on policy solutions to improve the status of women, recommends suitable women nominees for state sector boards and manages New Zealand's international obligations in relation to the status of women, in particular under the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. In 2004, the Ministry launched a five-year Action Plan for New Zealand Women.

9. In 2003, the New Zealand Parliament enacted the Families Commission Act to establish a Families Commission. Section 7(1) of the Act provides that "the Commission's main function is to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally". In performing this function, the Commission must identify and have regard to factors that help to maintain or enhance either

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<sup>3</sup> The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services operates under Ministry of Social Development. It works with families to protect children; promote the well-being of children, young people, their families and family groups; manage young offenders; facilitate the adoption process; ensure that children in need are secure and cared for; and help families maintain and strengthen their child-rearing role. From <<http://www.cyf.govt.nz>>.

or both of families' resilience and/or strengths.<sup>4</sup> Its specific work includes :

- to encourage and facilitate informed debate about families;
- to increase public awareness and promote better understanding of matters relating to the interests of families;
- to encourage and facilitate the development and provision of government policies designed to promote or serve the interests of families;
- to consider, and to report and make recommendations on, any matter (for example, a proposed government policy) relating to families that is referred to it by any Minister; and
- to stimulate and promote research into families.

An autonomous statutory organization with its own staff and budget, the Families Commission is in the main an advocacy body, and is not responsible for the development and co-ordination of policy and services for the family. Separately, the Office of the Children's Commissioner has been established to promote children's and young people's well-being through advocacy, consultation, monitoring, research and investigation.<sup>5</sup> With enactment of the Children's Commissioner Act 2003, the Commissioner is given statutory authority to inquire into any matter affecting children and young people in any service or organization and investigate the actions of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

10. The Families Commission and the Office of the Children's Commissioner operate separately on their own, although they often work together with each other and the relevant ministries on issues of common concern, e.g. smacking of children, family violence etc. An extract from the Families Commission's 2006 Annual Report showing its work is at Annex B.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Case of Singapore*

11. Since the 1990s, Singapore has been looking at ways to develop the family as a social resource. As it was put, "with much of the hardware now in place, Singapore has in recent years concentrated more on developing the 'heartware', programmes and community infrastructure to build the individual,

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<sup>4</sup> From Section 7(3) of the "Families Commission Act 2003".

<sup>5</sup> From Office of Children's Commissioner website at <<http://www.occ.org.nz>>.

<sup>6</sup> Interested Members are welcome to obtain a copy of the full report from the Secretariat.

family and grow the community”<sup>7</sup>. A Public Education Committee was established in September 2000 to promote the importance of family and marriage among Singaporeans.

12. As far as initiatives to develop the family go, Singapore has been promoting family values, facilitating and reinforcing marriages, encouraging procreation and fostering a family-friendly environment. A number of bodies were established, including the Committee on the Family to provide advice and feedback to the Ministry on policy and schemes that have an impact on the family as well as research needs, and Family Matters! Singapore to bring about attitudinal and mindset changes in favour of the family.

13. In May 2006, the National Family Council was established, taking over the roles of the Committee on the Family and Family Matters! Singapore. Appointed by the Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports, the Council is an advisory and consultative body to the Singapore Government, and provides inputs on resource allocation to enhance the capacity and capability of the family service sector. The Council has identified five areas of focus for its two-year tenure (May 2006 – April 2008), as follows :

- Strengthen core family values
- Make family a leadership value
- Strengthen the institution of marriage
- Meet parenting needs of young families
- Build strong foundations for teenagers

A copy of the Council’s work plan entitled “Building Resilient Families: The Road Ahead” is at Annex C.

14. Separately, age-specific advisory bodies have also been formed for youth and the elderly, which also come under the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. The National Youth Council was set up in 1989 as the co-ordinating body for youth affairs. In anticipation of population ageing, various advisory committees were also formed over the past decades to tackle the ageing issues. The current advisory body, Committee on Ageing Issues, was established in December 2004 to identify the challenges of an ageing society, determine policy directions for government and non-government agencies in addressing the needs of an ageing population, and steer the holistic and co-ordinated development of policies and programmes for the elderly. There are no dedicated advisory bodies for women and children. For children,

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<sup>7</sup> From “Building a Cohesive and Resilient Society” by Ministry of Community Development and Sports, Singapore (January 2003).

the National Family Council looks at them within the context of the family. For women, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports has a dedicated section to serve as “the national focal point on policy matters and international cooperation pertaining to women”<sup>8</sup>, and to co-ordinate and monitor the status of implementation of Singapore’s obligations in relation to the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

15. One noteworthy feature of Singapore’s institutional arrangements is the integration of social welfare and development functions focusing both on individuals and the family under the umbrella of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. Another interesting feature observed in Singapore’s experience is its vigour in family education and promotion. Apart from promoting family values and building up a family-friendly atmosphere, the Ministry also actively disseminates “tips and information” on family life and facilitates easy access to government services on family matters. To this end, an integrated website “Family & Community Development Town”<sup>9</sup> has been launched to offer families the convenience of handling online tasks at various life stages, and provide advice and educational materials on issues pertaining to family life such as marriage preparation, parenting, grandparenting, family values and work-family matters, etc. A sample page from this website is at **Annex D**.

### *The Case of Australia*

16. In Australia, individual, family, gender and community issues are all handled by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), which “works in partnership with other government and non-government organizations in the management of a diverse range of programs and services which support and improve the lives of Australians”<sup>10</sup>. The Office for Women under FaCSIA has responsibility for gender issues. Separately, a Men and Family Relationships Services has been set up under the Family and Children’s Services Branch of FaCSIA to work alongside men to assist them to manage a range of relationship issues with partners, ex-partners and children.

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<sup>8</sup> From Press Release WOM/1293 <[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/WOM1293.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/WOM1293.doc.htm)>.

<sup>9</sup> “Family & Community Development Town” is a government eService portal under eCitizen Centre. Website : <<http://fcd.ecitizen.gov.sg>>.

<sup>10</sup> From FaCSIA website at <<http://www.facs.gov.au>>

17. Maximizing research efforts is also one of FaCSIA's on-going priorities. To this end, a statutory organization, Australian Institute of Family Studies, was established in 1980 under the Australian Family Law Act (1975), to undertake policy research work on family-related issues and promote the identification and understanding of factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia. Separately, FaCSIA also undertook research on relevant key issues, including longitudinal studies like "The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey", and "Growing up in Australia — The Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children (LSAC)", etc.

### *The Case of Mainland China*

18. In line with the goal of "building a harmonious society" (構建和諧社會), Mainland China has incorporated policies and programmes in support of the family into its national development strategies and taken measures to promote healthy development of the family. Policies supporting the family are promulgated from the Central People's Government and implemented through the provincial, city, county, district, to the street and neighbourhood levels. The rights and duties of family members towards each other are enshrined in the newly amended Marriage Law (adopted in 2001) as well as the relevant legislations on protection of the rights and interests of the elderly, women and under-aged persons.

19. The National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council (國務院婦女兒童工作委員會), chaired by Vice-Premier Wu Yi (吳儀副總理), is the national organ responsible for the affairs of children and women. The Committee comprises senior officials and leaders from 32 ministries and non-governmental organizations. The main functions of the Committee include: to coordinate and promote government policies and measures on the protection of the rights and interests of children and women; to develop and implement programmes for the development of children and women; to coordinate and mobilize the government departments to provide sufficient manpower and resources for that cause; and to guide and examine the work on women and children development of governments of all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.<sup>11</sup> Family matters, which are often closely associated with the welfare of children and women, are also touched upon.

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<sup>11</sup> From <<http://www.nwccw.gov.cn/show/jigoujieshao.htm>>.



20. The All-China Women's Federation (全國婦聯) serves as the secretariat of the Committee and, in partnership with other institutions or agencies, plays an instrumental role in raising public awareness of gender equality, fighting domestic crime, combating abduction and trafficking of women and children, and developing and providing community services and learning opportunities to women, etc. As a major measure to promote healthy family life, the Federation expanded in 1996 the broad-based "Families of Five Virtues" (五好家庭) movement in urban and rural areas, renaming it the "Model Families of Five Virtues" (五好文明家庭) movement, to include new elements for the creation of an ethical, civilized culture, such as the promotion of mutual help and support between husband and wife and the sharing of household chores and child-rearing responsibilities, etc.<sup>12</sup>

21. At the 2004 World Family Summit held in Sanya, Gu Xiulian (顧秀蓮副委員長), vice-chairwoman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and president of the All-China Women's Federation, said that the government institutions and civil organizations had been working together to help poor families and disadvantaged groups, and to promote co-ordinated development between urban and rural areas and harmonious interaction between individual, family and the society.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Case of Taiwan*

22. In Taiwan, the fact that calling on maintaining traditional ethics alone seems unable to respond adequately to the impacts of social and economic changes on families has also received high-level policy attention. A family policy was formulated by the Ministry of the Interior (內政部) with five explicit goals: safeguarding the family's financial security; promoting gender equality; supporting families to fulfil their caring responsibilities; assisting the family in addressing family problems and preventing them from happening; and encouraging tolerance in society.<sup>14</sup> The policy was passed in October 2004 by the Social Welfare Promotion Committee under the Executive Yuan (行政院社會福利推動委員會) for refinement, promulgation and implementation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report of China.

<sup>13</sup> Reported by Xinhuanet on 6 December 2004, available from <<http://www.npfpc.gov.cn/en/en2004-12/enews20041206-5.htm>>.

<sup>14</sup> From <[http://www.moi.gov.tw/upload/m\\_38296\\_6808680556.htm](http://www.moi.gov.tw/upload/m_38296_6808680556.htm)>.

<sup>15</sup> The Social Welfare Promotion Committee is a high-level advisory body set up in 2001, with the Premier as its chairman, to give steer and advice on welfare planning. Ex-officio members include the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Education, and other senior officials of relevant departments. Non-official members include academics and representatives of NGOs, the welfare sector and civic organizations. From <<http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/20/20.htm>>.

## **Conclusion**

23. The present research has pointed to wide variations among different jurisdictions in terms of the government agenda in respect of the family, the nature and extent of government intervention and the corresponding level of support for families, reflecting their different historical experiences (e.g. war), political economies, welfare regimes and cultural traditions which have shaped and differentiated their approaches to family policies. Our research is primarily focused on institutional arrangements in peer domains, and the structure and relationships of their set-ups dealing with family issues. The information available to us does not allow meaningful comparison of the family policies of the countries under study or identify the philosophy underpinning their services and programmes, which would be the subject of another thorough and detailed research if necessary. In this connection, the Central Policy Unit is considering to engage a study on "family policies : international experiences", which will be more comprehensive.

## **For Information**

24. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper for background information, which will be considered in conjunction with Paper SFC-09 on existing institutional arrangements for the formulation and co-ordination of family-support policies and initiatives in Hong Kong.

Examples of Family-related  
Governmental Initiatives since 1975<sup>Note</sup>

Country	Start-up Year	Initiative
Australia	1986	Report on Families' Situation and Trends
	1986	Report on Income Support for Families
Austria	1979	Second Report on the Family
	1990	Third Report on the Family
Belgium	1988	Agreement on Family Policy
Canada	1984	Task Force on Child Care
	1987	Special Committee on Child Care
	1978	Senate Report on Child Benefit
Denmark	1976	Commission on Childhood
	1980	Commission on Family Policy
	1981	Commission on Youth
	1988	Committee on Childhood
	1988	Report on Child Policy
Finland	1980	Report on the Welfare of Families
	1983	Committee on Parenthood and Employment (Working Time)
France	1975	Report of the Prospective Group on the Family
	1985	High Council on Population and the Family
	1985	Report on the Family Policy
	1990	Governmental Plan for the Family
Germany	1975	Second Report on the Family
	1979	Third Report on the Family
	1986	Fourth Report on the Family
Greece	1983	First Plan on Social Policy
	1988	Second Plan on Social Policy

<sup>Note</sup> Extracted From "The State and the Family" by Anne Hélène Gauthier, published by Oxford University Press in 1996.

Country	Start-up Year	Initiative
Ireland	1980	Report on Family Income Support
	1980	Task Force on Child Care
	1990	Working Group on Child Care Facilities
	1991	Programme for Economic and Social Progress (including child care services)
Italy	1981	Commission on the Family
	1982	Report on Family and Income
	1985	Commission on Poverty
Japan	1992	Study on Fertility Trends and Family Policy
Luxembourg	1977	Study on the Family
	1991	Report on Population and Family Benefits
New Zealand	1984	Social Advisory Council Report on Families
	1986	Royal Commission on Social Policy
Norway	1977	Report on Children
	1981	Commissioner for Children
Portugal	1980	State Department for the Family
	1982	Commission on the Family
Quebec	1988	First Governmental Plan of Action on Family
	1992	Second Governmental Plan of Action on Family
Spain	1988	Ministry of Social Affairs (with special responsibility for family policy)
Sweden	1975	Family Assistance Commission
	1979	Commission on the Economic Situation of Families
Switzerland	1978	Report on the Situation of the Family
	1982	Report on Family Policy

Country	Start-up Year	Initiative
United Kingdom	1975	Children's Act
	1980	Child Care Act
	1981	All Party Parliamentary Group for Children
	1986	Children and Young Persons Act
	1989	Children's Act
	1991	Child Support Act
United States	1980	White House Conference on Families
	1992	Commission on Urban Families
European Communities	1975	First European Poverty Programme
	1985	Second European Poverty Programme
	1989	Third European Poverty Programme
	1989	Observatory on National Family Policies
United Nations	1979	International Year of the Child
	1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child
	1994	International Year of the Family

## Extract from the 2006 Annual Report of the New Zealand Families Commission

### Highlights

During 2005/06, we focused on expanding and consolidating our knowledge base by talking with and researching families and establishing extensive networks within communities and government. Key projects were completed, providing a solid platform on which to launch our strategic focus for 2006 and beyond. Key highlights for the Families Commission for the year ending 30 June 2006 included:

#### Families with dependent children – successful outcomes

This project identified factors that contributed to, or acted as barriers to, family well-being, and the trade-offs that families had to make to achieve well-being.

#### Family violence prevention

Our focus was on changing attitudes towards violence. Work included sponsoring a conference and forums, hosting seminars on changing attitudes and participating in the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.

#### Impacts of government policies on families

Methodologies for 'family-centred' policy analysis and evidence of the impact of government policies on the family form were analysed and guidance provided on the most suitable use of the different methods.

#### Investing in research

We administered two research funds, which generated a significant increase in knowledge about contemporary New Zealand families.

#### The Couch

More than 2,000 people joined the Commission's online panel for feedback on family issues. Their views provided a unique insight into the challenges facing New Zealand's families.

#### Community engagement programme

More than 15 large-scale meetings and visits were completed by Commissioners and staff. The views of a wide range of groups and individuals interested in families were obtained.

#### Public education and information

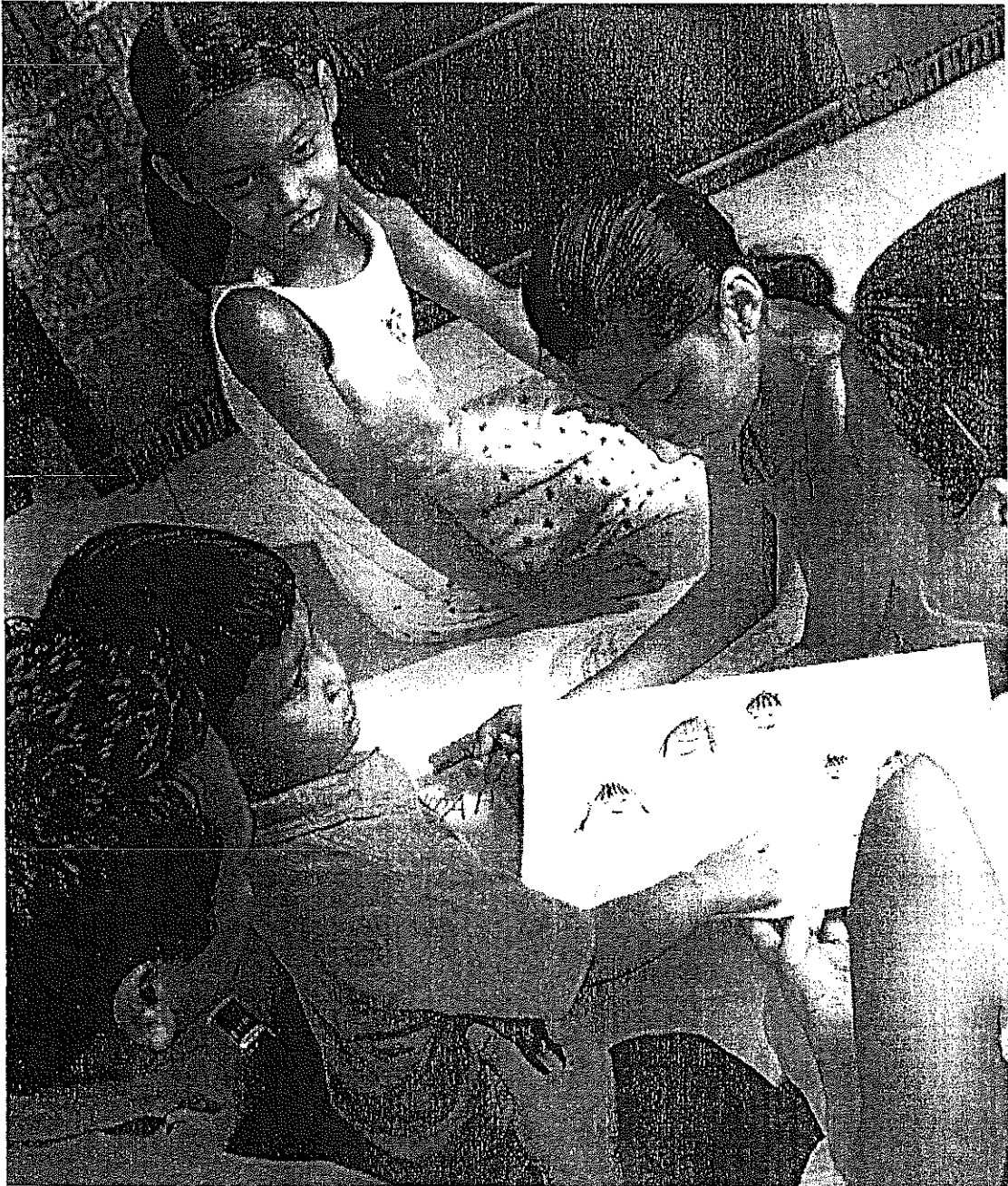
We sought opportunities to promote informed debate on issues important to family life. We published research reports, brochures, newsletters and helped fund a handbook promoting non-physical methods of discipline.

#### Capability enhancement

Personnel and management systems were reviewed and enhanced. We are a leader in family-friendly work policies.

NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

# BUILDING RESILIENT FAMILIES THE ROAD AHEAD



## FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON, NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL



The setting up of the National Family Council in May 2006 underscores our Government's recognition of the important role which families have to continue to play in contemporary Singapore and in the future.

The preservation of our social norms and family values are facing challenges brought on by modern lifestyles. It is vital that the social fabric of our society and our family ethos be maintained as much as possible, as we continue to be exposed to the onslaught of external influences beyond our own cultural and physical boundaries. Against this new social milieu, our goal must be to build on the past accomplishments of Family Matters! Singapore and the Committee on the Family, to make the family emerge as the number one priority in everyone's agenda. Success in life will have to be redefined to include the family as a key component.

Our Council will work closely with key stakeholders to increase public awareness and to promote better understanding on matters relating to the interests of families. To capture more mindshare on the family, we will embark on a new initiative to encourage and facilitate more open discussions and informed debates on matters relating to the family. We will also collaborate actively with the people, private and public sectors to create and promote more opportunities for shared experiences for the family. The family that spends time together, stays together.

Our Council is passionate about anything and everything that can make Singapore a great and better place for families. We are committed to be the champion and advocate for the family. In this regard, we hope to contribute towards the reshaping and formulating of policies that are designed to promote and serve the interests of families.

We are pleased to share with you our Council's plans for our two years in office. This is the result of much deliberation by Council members as we seek to understand the challenges facing the family today and propose measures to help strengthen and support families.

As we do not have all the answers to the many challenges facing the family today, we invite you to join us in our exciting journey to build resilient families in Singapore by giving us your invaluable feedback and useful suggestions.

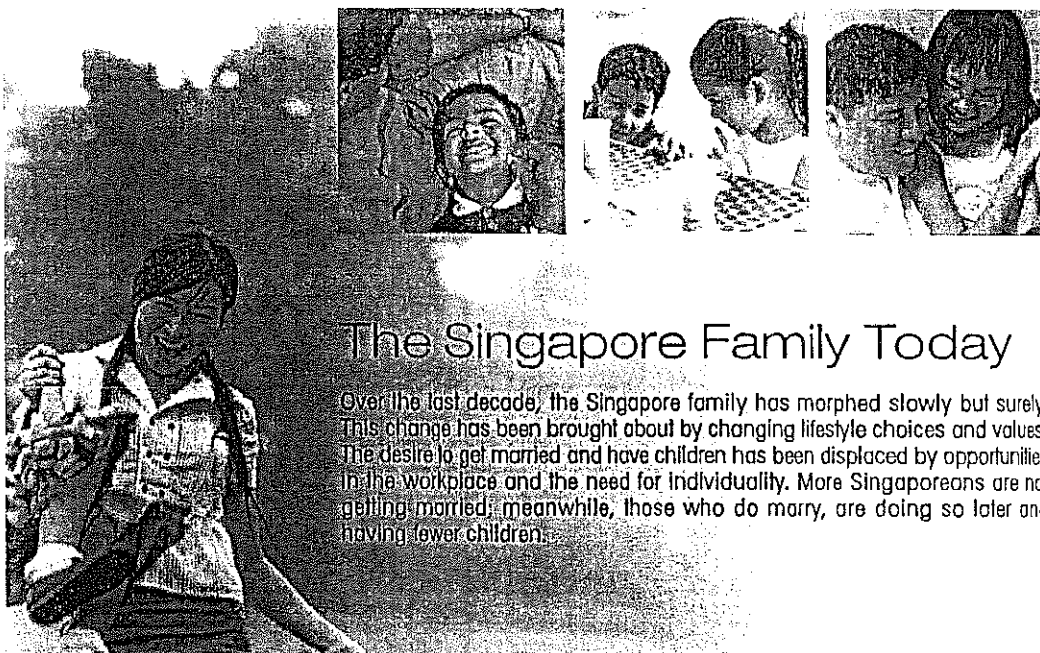
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lim Soon Hock', written in a cursive style.

Mr Lim Soon Hock  
Chairperson  
National Family Council



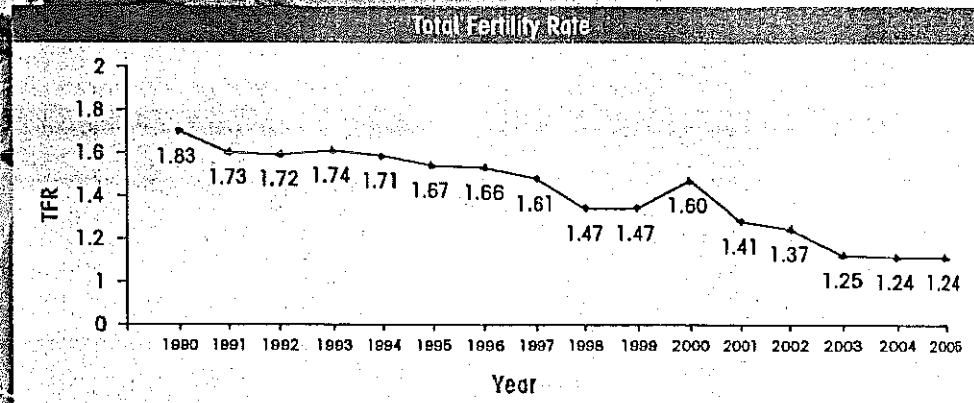


The National Family Council was formed in May 2006 to promote the building of resilient families in Singapore. The Council is led by the people sector so as to be the people's voice on issues of family policy, family education programmes, research and services. For this purpose, it engages key stakeholders in the people, private and public sectors to create a conducive environment for families. The Council is also an advisory and consultative body to Government, and provides inputs on resource allocation to enhance the capacity and capability of the family service sector.



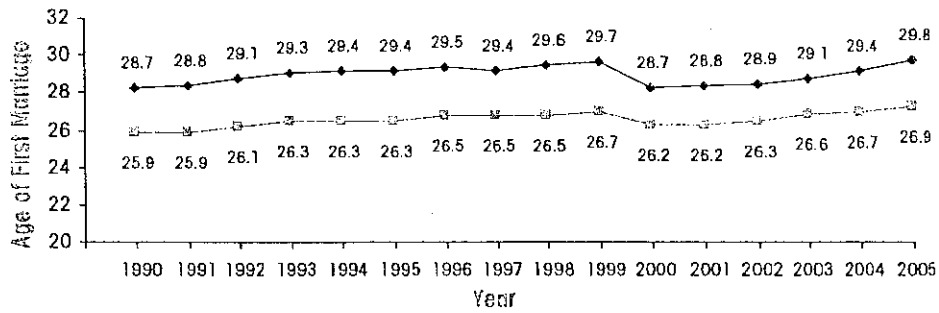
## The Singapore Family Today

Over the last decade, the Singapore family has morphed slowly but surely. This change has been brought about by changing lifestyle choices and values. The desire to get married and have children has been displaced by opportunities in the workplace and the need for individuality. More Singaporeans are not getting married; meanwhile, those who do marry, are doing so later and having fewer children.



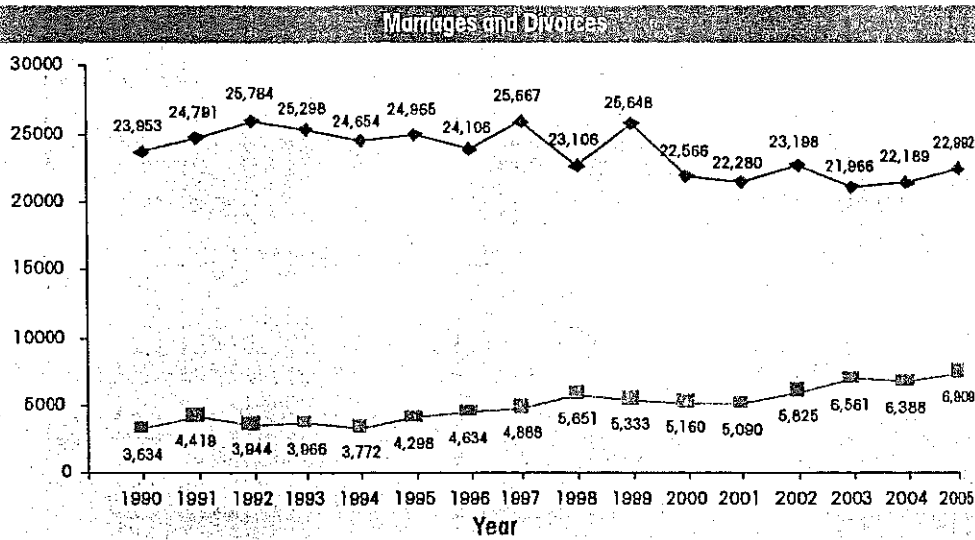
Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

\*The total fertility rate is the number of children that a woman can expect to have in her lifetime if current fertility rates remained constant.



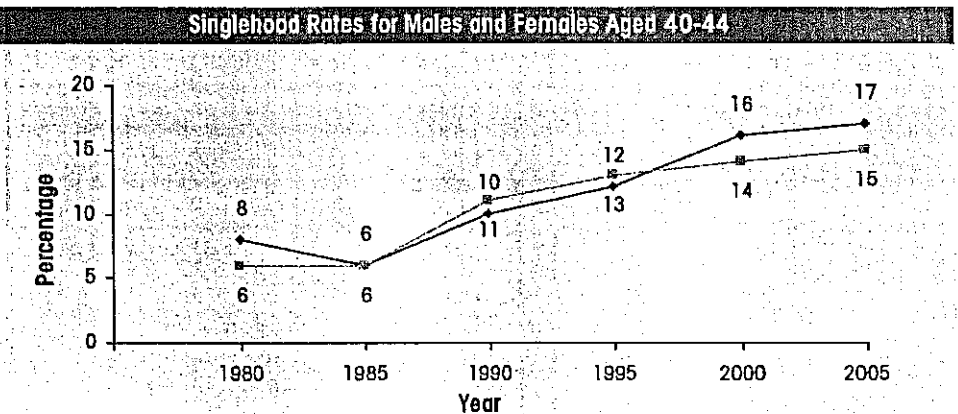
Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

◆ Grooms    □ Brides



Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

◆ Total Marriages    □ Total Divorces and Annulments



Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

◆ Male    □ Female



But with more dual-income families, greater education expectations and time pressures, some troubling signs are beginning to emerge. There are more broken marriages among couples who have been married for less than 10 years and those who have been together for more than 20 years. Sandwiched couples (i.e., those who have to take care of their elderly parents and their own children) feel the squeeze in juggling the demands of work and family commitments.

Despite this, it is heartening to know that family ties continue to be strong, and that the family continues to be the first line of support for its members.

#### FAMILY TIES REMAIN STRONG

Statements	% agree		
	2001	2003	2005
I have a close-knit family	97	93	96
My family members tell me their personal problems	88	86	91
When I am troubled, I would talk to one or more of my family members	88	85	91
People who are earning their own income should regularly give money (e.g., monthly allowance) to their family	98	99	99
I will give money to my family members if they are in need of financial support	99	98	99

Source: Pew's Survey of Social Attitudes, 2001-2005.

## The Five Areas

With more challenges facing the Singapore family today, the work of the National Family Council is important to ensure that families are strong enough to withstand the pressures brought on by modern lifestyle and a more competitive economic environment. For this purpose, the Council identified five areas of focus over the next two years which are intergal to ensure the building of resilient families.

### Strengthen core family values

- Family is important to national resilience and national identity
- Uphold time-honoured family values
- Redefine success to include forming and sustaining a happy and healthy intact family

### Make family a leadership value

- Encourage organisational leaders to enable work-life harmony
- Encourage work-life effectiveness for school children
- Government and businesses play a part in creating a family-friendly environment for both employees and customers

### Strengthen the institution of marriage

- A strong and stable family starts with a strong and stable marriage
- Help women cope with multiple roles
- Help singles get married and start families, earlier

### Meet parenting needs of young families

- Help young couples juggle work and family
- Encourage extended family and neighbours to help with child care duties
- Provide support for elder care needs

### Build strong foundations for teenagers

- Equip parents with parenting skills to establish better communication and trust between them and their teenagers
- Help parents inculcate right values to help teenagers navigate the digital world
- Encourage parents to play an active role in their teenagers' sexuality education



The National Family Council has formed five workgroups, each chartered to look into one of the five areas of focus. The workgroups will study the challenges faced, propose solutions for implementation, and engage the necessary stakeholders across the people, private and public sectors to ensure sustainable outcomes.

The building of resilient families is akin to building a resilient nation – dependent on the shared language, shared culture, and most of all, shared experiences of a people who have lived together in a common home. For this purpose, the Council will be initiating a sustained public dialogue on the family. Encouraging people from all walks of life to share their views and experiences on family will raise the profile of the family in the public's eye and the discussion on family matters to the national level.

The goal of the National Family Council is to make the family the topmost priority for every Singaporean by creating more awareness of the family, and emphasising the importance of a resilient family. The Council hopes to encourage families to spend more time together to understand and support each member's needs and to celebrate each member's success. This is the key to building resilient families.



### Your views Are Welcome

The National Family Council welcomes feedback on family policies, programmes and services. Please contact us at:

Email : [nfc\\_secretariat@nfc.org.sg](mailto:nfc_secretariat@nfc.org.sg)

Phone : +65 6354 7537

Fax : +65 6251 1526

Address : 510 Thomson Road, #12-03 SLF Building, Singapore 298135

Visit our website at [www.nfc.org.sg](http://www.nfc.org.sg)



## National Family Council Members

(May 2006 – April 2008)

### CHAIRPERSON

**Mr Lim Soon Hock**

Mr Lim Soon Hock is the Managing Director of PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd and the Chairperson of the Centre for Fathering, which is a non-profit organisation that champions the role of responsible fatherhood. He is the former Vice President and Managing Director of Compaq Computer Asia Pacific and sits on the boards of several public listed companies and government agencies.

### DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

**Mrs Joni Ong**

Mrs Joni Ong is a Principal Consultant at OTI Consulting and the President of I Love Children, which is a non-profit organisation that advocates a higher priority to having children and promotes a society where children are loved and mainstreamed.

### HONORARY SECRETARY

**Mr Martin Tan**

Mr Martin Tan is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Halogen Foundation Singapore (formerly known as Young Leaders Foundation Singapore), a non-profit organisation dedicated to youth leadership development. He is also a member of the Leadership Team for Halogen Foundation International.

### MEMBERS

**Ms Animah bte Abdul Gani**

Lawyer, Messrs Animah Gani

**Ms Anita Fam**

Chairperson, Asian Women's Welfare Association TEACH ME Services

**Mr Goh Kim Hua**

Member, Youth Development Council of Singapore Soka Association

**Ms Ho Shlong Yee**

Assistant General Secretary, United Workers of Petroleum Industry

**Mr Koh Juan Kiat**

Executive Director, Singapore National Employers Federation

**Ms Natasha Kwan**

Deputy General Manager, OEM Multi-National & Alliance for Asia Pacific Region, Microsoft

**Ms Leong Ching**

Correspondent, The Straits Times

**Mr Lye Fei**

Chief Executive Officer, Care Corner Singapore

**Mrs Rathi Parimalan**

Principal, Bendemeer Secondary School

**Haji Pasuni Maulan**

Former Registrar of Muslim Marriages

**A/P Paulin Straughan**

Associate Professor, National University of Singapore

**Mr Tan Kian Chew**

Chief Executive Officer, NTUC FairPrice Co-operative Ltd

**Mrs Mildred Tan**

Managing Director, Ernst & Young

**Mr Robert Tan**

Director, Alternative Travel and Tours

**Mr Thirunal Karasu**

Managing Director, SingCorp International Pte Ltd

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### Family Life Education Programmes

Click [here](#) for listing of parenting and marriage programmes for January & February 2007.

### When LOVE Blossoms

Feeling excited about your pregnancy or your new role as a parent? When LOVE Blossoms brings together experts from all fields to help you and your spouse through this exhilarating and challenging journey of pregnancy and parenthood. [more...](#)

### I am @ Youth.SG - Blogging Contest

To usher in the New Year, Youth.SG invites you to join "I am @ Youth.SG", our very own blogging festival. All you need to do is write an entry about yourself and your interests based on the theme "I Am @ Youth.SG". The best entries will be featured on Youth.SG and bloggers stand to win attractive prizes! [more...](#)

### Marriage Preparation Quiz

Couples can take part in marriage preparation easily online as they complete their wedding preparation 24/7 free of charge. [more...](#)

### 101 Ways to Enjoy Your Family

Tell us on 101 words how you and your family enjoy your time together. [more...](#)

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