



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY [2024]



[2024] THIRTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE FAMILY

Families and Climate Change

International Year of the Family + 30

Observance of the

2024 International Day of Families

& the 30th anniversary

of the International Year of the Family

Background Note

The 2024 in-person observance of the International Day of Families aims to raise awareness of the impact of climate change on families and the role of families in climate action.

Climate change negatively impacts the health and well-being of families through increased pollution, while extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change, such as hurricanes, droughts and floods, often lead to forced displacement and loss of livelihoods for families and individuals. Such events impact agricultural productivity and access to water, intensifying hunger and vulnerability. They cause economic disruption in industries sensitive to climate impacts such as agriculture and fisheries.

Our lifestyles have a profound impact on the planet. Our use of power, choice of transportation, what we eat and what we consume, from clothing to plastics and electronics, all contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, in the United States close to 20 per cent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions come from heating, cooling and powering homes, and the average carbon footprint of the wealthiest households is over five times that of the poorest.

Without drastic action, adaptation to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change will become increasingly difficult and costly. Consequently, there is an urgent need for more ambitious climate action by governments, the private sector and citizens. Through family and community initiatives, we can foster climate action with education, access to information, training and community participation.

The Climate Ambition Summit held at the United Nations last year demonstrated that action to cut emissions and deliver climate justice is possible and practical by aligning sectoral, local, national and international plans and policies to accelerate decarbonization and advance climate justice through increased coordination and cooperation, with a focus on accountability.

Focusing on the impact of climate change on families and the ways that families can contribute to climate action through education, changing consumption patterns and advocacy is indispensable in finding solutions to challenges posed by climate change. Empowering families for environmentally friendly decision-making, supporting community initiatives and integrating family-centred and intergenerational approaches into policies can ensure more meaningful and effective climate action.

Access to education and information is critical in addressing climate change and fostering climate action. By providing families with tools to form strong foundations and habits regarding climate change, civic awareness and activism can increase. If sustainable habits and climate awareness are present within the family, parents and children can learn from each other. Policies that support and advocate for family empowerment within the context of climate change are crucial in securing a safe, resilient and sustainable future for all.

The concept of a **circular economy** has been suggested as a sustainable model to be adopted in place of the current linear, consumption-based economies of many nations. A circular economy can lead to a sustainable reduction in GHG emissions by 2050. A circular economy aims for sustainable development by decoupling economic growth from natural resources. With proper implementation and management, it is possible to achieve minimal waste and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. A more sustainable economic future can be achieved with innovative technology, smart product design, longevity of use, recycling and regeneration. Families can contribute to a circular economy by being conscious consumers and by recycling and reusing materials. By integrating ideas of circularity into early childhood education, parents can ensure that their children grow up with these ingrained values and practices. Families can also advocate for climate-friendly solutions in their communities and demand climate action at the local and national levels.

The DESA background paper to be launched at the observance, “***Climate Change and Families,***” stresses that families, as central building blocks of society, have a significant role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. As norms and values are learned in families, with proper education about climate action and sustainable living, families can pass on these values through multiple generations. Additionally, families are emerging actors in environmental protection and lobbying, through which they can advocate for sustainable food production, public policy and biodiversity, helping to ensure a healthy, clean and sustainable environment for future generations.

Another publication to be launched at the observance, ***Home, Family, and Climate Change: Understanding the power of home to transform societies in the face of climate emergency,*** resulting from the DISD/DESA collaboration with Nottingham Trent University and the Home Renaissance Foundation, emphasizes that to limit global warming, efforts should be concentrated on household activities and limiting CO2 emissions. The publication addresses the following key themes: care of the planet, climate change and public health, consumption, ecological footprint, remote economy and home-based work, connected locality and building climate resilience.

The 2024 observance of the International Day of Families and the commemoration of the IYF+30 will include the launch of the publications noted above and offer recommendations concerning families and climate action.

Moreover, the observance will focus on the achievements of the IYF+ 30 preparatory process, featuring outcomes of the major regional expert group meetings, symposia and awareness-raising events organized in preparation for IYF+30. Numerous civil society initiatives, including the Civil Society Declaration on IYF+30, will be featured, followed by an interactive discussion.

The commemorative event will include the following:

- ✚ Launch of the Background Paper on **“Climate Change and Families.”**
- ✚ Launch of the Study on **“Home, Family and Climate Change.”**
- ✚ Presentation of the outcomes of the **regional expert group meetings and events organized in preparation for the IYF+30.**
- ✚ An **overview of recommendations on family-oriented policies** in response to climate change.
- ✚ Presentation of **civil society initiatives for IYF+30**, including the **Civil Society Declaration on IYF+30.**
- ✚ **Interactive discussion** with audience participation.

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