PLAN OF ACTION ON THE FAMILY IN AFRICA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IYF	International Year of the Family
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information System
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
STD (STI)	Sexually Transmitted Disease (Sexually Transmitted Infection)
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.   The Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) articulates the determination of Member States to promote peoples' rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law. In addition, it resolves to take up the multifaceted challenges that confront the continent and peoples in light of the social, economic and political changes taking place in the world. Recognition that the family is the basic and most fundamental unit of society, a dynamic unit engaged in an intertwined process of individual and group development, justifies the need to place the African family at the core of society which needs to be strengthened as part of Africa's development process.

2.   As the core of the society, the Family can be seen in three dimensions: firstly, as a psycho-biological unit where members are linked together by blood ties – kinship relationship, personal feelings and emotional bonds of its members; secondly, as a social unit where members live together in the same household and share tasks and social functions; and thirdly as the basic economic production unit. It is, therefore, imperative to provide sustained support and encourage cohesion of the family to enable it play its role.   In this regard, it is necessary to develop and implement social policies to address the various concerns of families.

3.   In Africa, the family is an equally important institution of society but it is undergoing tremendous changes and facing many formidable challenges thus increasing pressures on the family, including: increasing poverty, civil strives and conflicts; and vulnerability. Other constraints faced by the African family include: the debt burden, poor governance, high unemployment rate, inadequate social security mechanisms, rural to urban migration, gender inequality, displacement and disintegration of family. The intensifying impact of HIV/AIDS and other pandemics on the socio-economically productive sector of the population, especially young women, is putting unprecedented strain on the family. To effectively address these challenges, there is a need for an integrated approach that places the family at the centre of a comprehensive development agenda, aimed at sustaining the its integrity.

4.   Cognizant of the multidimensional challenges facing the family the world over, the United Nations and other regional and national agencies have tried to pay particular attention to family problems. A landmark in the UN's effort to address family concerns was the declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF). Pursuant to this was Resolution CM/Res 1466 (LVIII) of the then OAU, urging Member States to give priority to the preparation for and observance of the IYF and establish National Coordinating Committees or similar mechanisms for the Year. Although African governments have put in place institutions and programmes directed to the family, a lot still remains to be done.

5.   It is in this context that, in Decision EX/CL/65 (III), the Heads of State and Government, meeting at Maputo in July 2003, mandated "the AU Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF and other social partners to elaborate a Plan of Action on the

Family in Africa, which will constitute Africa's contribution to the Tenth Anniversary of the IYF".

6.   The main objective of the Plan of Action is to advocate for the promotion, formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes to ensure the protection of and support to the African family so as to enable it play its vial role more effectively in the development of Africa.   The creation of appropriate structures, mechanisms and capacities for responding to the challenges facing the family are an integral part of the Plan of Action.

7.   A management information system (MIS) is proposed for continuous data collection, analysis, utilisation, dissemination, storage and retrieval of information on the status of the family at all levels. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) reaffirms that Africa's development begins with the quality of its human resources and in this context, the African family is the most important human resource.

8.   The Plan of Action focuses on nine priority areas: poverty alleviation; rights to social services - education, health and reproductive health; promoting environmental sustainability - environment, water and sanitation, adequate shelter and land ownership; rights, duties and responsibilities; rights of protection for the family; strengthening family relationships; control of major causes of morbidity and mortality; ensuring peace and security; and follow-up, evaluation and monitoring.

9.   Each priority area has an objective with corresponding activities to attain the goal. The Plan of Action will serve as a framework to guide Member States in developing or evaluating appropriate national strategies and programmes on the African family and does not replace or underplay the role of other ongoing initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and NEPAD. Rather, the Plan of action on the African Family reinforces the focus on the family and aims to create linkages between the activities proposed and existing initiatives as well as build upon gains already made.

10.   Partnerships among all concerned stakeholders are mandatory for the effective implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa.

2.   INTRODUCTION

11.   Sociologists have defined the family as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption characterised by a common residence constituting a household interacting and communicating with one another in their respective social roles and maintaining a common culture. While there are different types of family structures in different parts of the world, the family is universally recognized as the fundamental unit of the society.   The nuclear family usually consists of a father, a mother and children. However, in Africa, the extended family and kinship systems are very common and more recently there has been an increase in single-parent headed families, child-headed families as well as grand-parent headed families resulting from a

number of factors such as wars and conflicts which displace and disperse families; and most recently, the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

12.   In Africa, due to its multiple roles and functions, the centrality, uniqueness and indispensability of the family in society is unquestionable. For generations, the family has been a source of strength for guidance and support, thus providing members with a wide circle of relatives on whom they can fall back. In times of crisis, unemployment, sickness, poverty, old age, and bereavement, most people rely on the family as the main source of material, social and emotional support and social security.

13.   Therefore, the African family network is the prime mechanism for coping with social, economic and political adversity in the continent. It is the principal focus for socialization and education of children and is central to the process of human rights education. In all societies, the family is the setting for demographic reproduction and the seat of the first integration of individuals to social life. As a result, the family is at the centre of the dynamics which affect all societies.

14.   Traditionally, Africa's development has been a result of the strength of the family. Large families were a source of labour and an indication of prosperity. The extended family system ensured that the poor families were generally supported by the rich. The unity within the family ensured its survival in cases of internal conflicts, crises and adversity. The family continues to play a crucial role in Africa's development and development efforts that are family-centred are key to sustainable socio-economic development.

15.   There are several factors bringing about transformations on the African family. The rapidly changing social, political and economic circumstances in the last decades have had adverse effects on the African family.   Information technology, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) coupled with rising inflation, globalisation, internal conflicts and wars, have had significant impacts on the family.

16.   The change from a subsistence to a market economy has affected the African family because traditionally, African families and communities exchanged goods purely for their use-value rather than monetary value – the barter trade. Today, families depend a lot on a cash economy. A large number of families or their members migrate from rural to urban areas while others migrate from their countries of origin to other countries, in search of employment and better opportunities.

17.   In the traditional African family, education, socialisation, behaviour and ethics were taught through "Oral Traditions" by parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, wise old men and women in the community. However, the introduction of formal schooling through written tradition (which was initially western) changed the social and psychological linkages in the family as children have to leave their families in search of education. In addition, the advances in technology have impacted on the education of the children. The early access to computers, videos games and Internet has changed the communication modes among the children themselves and between the children and their families.

18.   Poverty has also been manifested in high rates of illiteracy, increased disease-burden, and limited access to essential drugs as well as food and nutrition insecurity. Family patterns and structures have also been affected as one observes the increasing cases of female-headed households, consensual unions, rising rates of divorce, the impact of HIV/AIDS and other pandemics, domestic violence, sexual abuse, the rising phenomenon of street children and beggars. Children have been most affected as a great number have dropped out of school, are deprived and many are engaged in violence, drug and substance abuse and trafficking, crime and juvenile delinquency.

19.   Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases have changed the demographic structure of the African family. Low life expectancy and loss of household income have considerably increased poverty at the family level. The family has to bear the additional burden of care and support for the terminally ill and women bear a disproportionately larger share of the negative impact of all these changes.

20.   Wars, conflicts and natural disasters have had devastatingly negative consequences on families and on their support structures, forcibly displacing millions inside their home countries or to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Without the protection of their national governments, these groups become vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation and children to recruitment as soldiers or as other forms of slave labour for members of fighting forces.

21.   The role of women in the African family cannot be ignored as it is the women who raise the children, work on the land and produce the food, provide the care and support for all the family. However, women continue to face obstacles and barriers including discrimination and lack of opportunities making them more vulnerable within the family. Women continue to die during pregnancy, at child-birth and in the post-partum period largely from preventable and treatable causes and weak health care systems. Newborns are not given due consideration in a majority of African societies and care for the newborn is not sufficiently developed. Consequently, Africa has the highest maternal and new-born mortality rates in the world.

22.   Building the capacity and resilience of the African family to avoid breakage will be an important contribution in the development of Africa. In general, formulation of policies and a review of legal frameworks for the family by Governments would be determinant factors in strengthening the structure of the family and a critical step forward for development. In particular there is a need to identify existing best practices in the provision of social welfare for the benefit of the African family. Indeed in discussing family issues it is recognized that the family is the basic unit of society around which major concerns for sustainable development are expressed. It is also accepted that the family is one area where prejudice and unfairness along gender lines are very acute, and women face gender-based discrimination and other challenges.

3.   RESPONSES TO ISSUES ON THE FAMILY

3.1   International

23.   Starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which defined the family as "the natural and fundamental group of society," the International Community has continued to give special consideration to the needs and challenges facing the family and its role in development. These concerns have been articulated in a number of blue-prints including: the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the Beijing platform for Action, the Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action, to mention but a few. In addition, three out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focus on family and its well-being.

24.   In December 1989, by its resolution 44/82, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF) with a view to: creating greater awareness on family issues and promoting activities to support it; strengthen national institutions; enhance the effectiveness of local, regional and international efforts; improve collaboration and partnerships; and build upon the results of international activities concerning women, children, youth, the aged, the disabled and the family as a whole. A major principle underlying the proclamation of the Year was that the family constitutes the basic unit of society and, therefore, warrants special attention. These objectives reflect the multi-dimensional approach on issues affecting the family in the process of development. In order to keep the momentum of the IYF and in keeping with the growing consensus in the global community on the integrated, holistic nature of economic and social progress and development the UN General Assembly in its resolution 54/124 reaffirmed the importance to follow-up the IYF and the observance of its tenth anniversary.

3.2   Africa

25.   The principle of Human rights, individual rights and freedom are enshrined in the Charter of the former Organisation of African Unity and the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.   The need to: respect the rights of the family; ensure its protection from all socio-economic distress; up-grade family welfare services and integrate family in effective development; and enhance the capacity of the family to enable it play its meaningful role in sustainable development are highlighted in the various documents such as: the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (1992/93), the African Charter for Social Action ,the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and , the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa and the Programme of Action on the Decade of Education in Africa. Furthermore, the African Common Position on Children highlights the problems of the family and the need to have a holistic approach to ensure the protection of the family, help the family cope with HIV/AIDS, and educate and inform the family on its role towards children. The

Addis Ababa Declaration on Violence against Women, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa focus on the role of women in the family.

26.   In support of the proclamation of the IYF, the 58th OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Cairo, Egypt in June 1993, adopted resolution CM/Res. 1466 (LVIII) urging Member States to lend priority to the preparation and observance of the IYF and establish a National Coordinating Committee or similar mechanism for the Year. The resolution also called on the then OAU Secretariat, in collaboration with the ECA, to undertake an in-depth study on the impact of current socio-economic changes on the role, functions and structure of the African Family and to organise a Regional Workshop/Seminar on the Impact of Social and Economic Changes on the African Family.

27.   Subsequently, an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Impact of Economic and Social Changes on the African Family, jointly organized by the OAU and ECA, was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 1993. The report and recommendations of the meeting were adopted by the 17th Session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission and endorsed by the 60th Session of the OAU Council of Ministers held in June 1994.

3.3   Ongoing initiatives

28.   African Governments have already committed themselves to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the NEPAD Programme; as well as the goals set out in the PRSPs. NEPAD identifies eradication of poverty and the fostering of economic development as the most urgent challenges facing Africa in the new millennium. In the MDGs the key priority areas are: eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and the development of a global partnership for development. The challenge is how African Governments will mainstream family issues in implementing the MDG set targets.

29.   In spite of some achievements in addressing the problems of the family since 1994, some crucial issues are still unresolved and some gaps still remain in policies for the family. Following the recommendations and commitments made in various International and regional Declarations and Plans of Action as well as the adoption of resolution 54/124 by the UN General Assembly reaffirming the importance to follow-up the IYF and the observance of its tenth anniversary, the Third Session of the AU Executive Council meeting in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003 adopted Decision EX/CL/65(III) on the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family which was also endorsed by the Second Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Operative paragraph 9 of that decision "mandates the AU Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF and other social partners, to elaborate a Plan of Action on the Family in Africa which would constitute Africa's contribution to the Tenth Anniversary of the IYF". In February 2004, the WHO regional office for Africa convened a meeting of all partners

to develop a roadmap for the accelerated reduction of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality. Member states are in the process of developing country-specific roadmaps to achieve the MDGs.

30.   In spite of the existence of these international and continental commitments, the African family is still faced with numerous challenges including: increasing poverty, continued violation of family rights; inadequate provision of health and other social services such as education; environmental degradation; and disintegration of the family structure. In addition, family relationships have weakened and rates of morbidity and mortality have increased.   Families also continue to suffer as a result of conflicts and wars, poor governance and the general lack of peace and security within the continent.

31.   At the dawn of the third millennium, Africa must rethink its development strategies. Africa must improve the quality of life of all the families and their individual members through the strengthening of family-centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to sustainable development. In this context, the African family must be treated as the most important beneficiary and active participant in Africa's development process. It is imperative, therefore, that the African family is well positioned to play a crucial role in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The Plan of Action on the African Family is an instrument to guide Member States in the achievement of this broad development goal.

4.   THE PLAN OF ACTION

32.   The Plan of Action is required to strengthen and harmonize family centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to sustainable development. It will also serve as a channel to assist in tackling devastating effects of different political, social and economic conditions facing the African society. It is intended that through the implementation of this plan Member States will promote the inherent strengths of families, including their capacity for self-reliance, and stimulate self-sustaining activities on their behalf, without either perpetuating gender discrimination or otherwise jeopardizing the rights of any of the individual members of the family grouping.

33.   It is recommended that Member States utilize this Plan of Action in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating appropriate national policies and programmes for the family based on their specific requirements and needs.

The Goal

34.   The goal of the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa is to improve the quality of life of all families in Africa.

Objectives

35.   More specifically, the Plan of Action on the family is aimed at assisting Member States to:

i.   formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes to ensure protection of and assistance for the family;

ii.   create structures and mechanisms for responding to problems affecting the family;

iii.   develop a Management Information System (MIS) on the African family, for data collection, analysis, utilization, dissemination, storage and retrieval at all levels;

iv.   develop capacity for the improvement of the standard of living of the family;

v.   share experiences and disseminate information on the family;

vi.   create a conducive environment for all family members regardless of sex, age, status or disability, with special attention to the rights of women and girls; and

vii.   ensure the survival, development, protection and participation of vulnerable groups such as children, youth, women, the elderly, the disabled, the terminally ill and families in difficult circumstances such as, displaced persons and refugees.

5.   PRIORITY AREAS

36.   The Plan of Action concentrates on key priority areas based on the firm conviction that addressing them would contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the African family. These priority issues are listed below:

i.   Poverty Alleviation
ii.   Rights to social services: education, family health and reproductive health
iii.   Promoting environmental sustainability: environment, water and sanitation, adequate shelter and land ownership
iv.   Rights, duties and responsibilities
v.   Rights of protection of the family
vi.   Strengthening of family relationships
vii.   Control of major causes of morbidity and mortality
viii.   Ensuring peace and security
ix.   Follow-up, evaluation and monitoring

37.   Each of these priority areas is outlined below with an objective and activities to be undertaken.

5.1   Poverty Alleviation

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

38.   As Africa enters the new millennium, a majority of its people live in extreme poverty. In the 1990s, Africa's slow growth resulted in an increase in the number of poor people and Africa is now the region with the largest proportion of people living on less than $1 a day. In 1998, records from global figures on income poverty show that in sub-Saharan Africa 46.3% lived on less than $1 per day and 75.6% on less than $2 per day based on 1993 purchasing power parity. In the 1990s, the percentage of people living on less than $1 a day in the Middle East and North Africa declined while the proportion living below $2 a day increased from 25 to 30% because of increases in Egypt, Morocco and Yemen.

39.   Rural poverty poses the most serious challenge while rapid urbanization tends to increase levels of urban poverty. Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; wars and conflicts; risk of violence, drug and substance abuse; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. Women bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, and children growing up in poverty are often permanently disadvantaged. The elderly, the disabled, children in especially difficult circumstances, adolescents and families with special needs are particularly vulnerable to poverty.

40.   A high level of poverty has significant impact on the family and is characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. Poor urban families face special problems such as overcrowding, contaminated water, bad sanitation, unsafe shelter, crime and social problems. Furthermore, gender disparities are evidenced by the increased incidence of female-maintained households. The number of unemployed youths living in poverty is also on the rise, which increases the vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women to early sexual debut, multiple sex partners and thus to HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

41.   Poverty is one of the factors which lead youth to drug and substance abuse, prostitution, juvenile delinquency and other crimes causing problems for their families. Poor governance, corruption, malpractices, mismanagement of public funds and appointments of non-qualified people to key positions in management have a negative impact on the people and Government thus increases the level of poverty. The effects of poverty are particularly detrimental to the family structure resulting in the number of street families and children separated from their families who have to fend for themselves becoming an increasingly familiar sight in many countries.

Objective: To develop national capacities to reduce overall poverty at the family level and increase the income per capita and GDP.

Activities:

42.   While accelerating the implementation of the MDG goal on poverty eradication and the PRSPs, Member States should:

i.   Create opportunities for gainful employment for capable family members;

ii.   Promote social security programmes for the family and in particular for the older, disabled and homebound persons;

iii.   Ensure that family members acquire the necessary skills for living and for income generation;

iv.   Decentralize services to ensure easy access by family members;

v.   Remove restrictive employment policies against refugees so as to afford them the opportunity to become self-reliant and active participants in the development of their host countries;

vi.   Formulate policies that strengthen the family and contribute to its stability in accordance with the principles, goals and commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and in the Programme of Action of the ICPD, 1994;

vii.   Review policies and budgets with a view to ensuring the allocation of more resources to health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation, and housing in accordance with the PRSPs;

viii.   Start reintegration and income-generating schemes for the youth and women;

ix.   Address the specific situation of women through access to, and control over land, access to credit and loans, provision of agricultural inputs and other support for their income-generating activities;

x.   Promote the concept of African solidarity between different groups and stakeholders for combating poverty; and

xi.   Sensitise the International Community on the need to operationalise the World Solidarity Fund, created by the UN General Assembly with a view towards national financing aimed at improving the living standard of the family.

5.2   Rights to Social Services

43.   Declining quality of health services and facilities as well as decreases in literacy, training and education levels are a common feature in several African countries. In sub-

Saharan Africa, the adult female illiteracy rates for those aged 15+ is recorded as 48.0% and the adult male illiteracy rate as 31.1% in the year 2000. The infant mortality rate for Africa is 88 infant deaths per 1,000 live births and life expectancy at birth is, on average, 53 years for females and 51 years for males. Contraceptive use among married women of ages 15 to 49 is only 26% while contraceptive use of ages 15 to 49 using modern methods is only a paltry 20%.

44.   While a majority of countries are signatories to international conventions and declarations for the provision of universal access to basic social services such as health and education, cuts in public expenditure on social services have led to high incidences of maternal and child morbidity, declining enrolments at all levels of education and limited capacity to utilize and understand trends in modern technologies. On current trends, none of the international development goals on health and education are likely to be achieved unless there is a deliberate effort to accelerate the progress especially among the poor.

45.   Benefits such as social security and health insurance for members of the family in general, and the vulnerable groups in particular, are limited and unaffordable for a majority of the families. In addition, welfare issues such as adoption, foster care, displaced children and abducted children require a consolidated regional and inter-country collaboration.

a. Education

Issues and Challenges

46.   The family is the principal provider of basic and informal education for children. Traditionally, children in Africa were educated through informal structures such as oral tradition. With the onset of formal schooling, families are now largely responsible for enrolling their children in formal schools. However, the percentage of children enrolled in primary schools is less than two thirds of those eligible and there are gender disparities at all levels. Wide regional, national and gender disparities persist. High wastage rates through drop-outs and repetition, especially for girls, constitute a heavy burden for African families. Literacy rates for males aged 15 and above is recorded as 70% and that of females as 52%. Enrolment in higher and tertiary education levels is significantly low with only 23% females and 33% males enrolled at the secondary school level.

47.   School curricula, teaching and learning processes, the quality of the teacher and inadequate resources in the education sector limit the skills enhancement and capacity development for many families. Access to and affordability of modern technology for education are limited.

48.   As education is also prerequisite for development, attainment of basic education of all family members, including young children under age 5, and attainment of higher and tertiary education for some, is essential. Unfortunately, the rate of adult literacy and community participation in education in Africa is generally low. Critical issues to be

addressed include lifelong learning and life skills development, particularly, amongst children and adults with an emphasis on girls and women.

Objective: To remove all socio-cultural and economic barriers with a view to ensuring that quality education is accessible to all members of the family and to create favourable conditions for public and private investment in education.

Activities:

49.   While accelerating the implementation of the MDG goal on education and the achievement of the goals of Education for All (EFA) by 2015 and the Decade of Education in Africa Member States should:

i.   Strengthen early childhood and development programmes;

ii.   Ensure free and universal access to primary education and lifelong educational opportunities with a particular emphasis on girls, orphans, and children with special needs;

iii.   Promote access to new technologies;

iv.   Provide facilities and incentives for increasing girls' access to schooling, retaining them in schools and improving their performance;

v.   Provide vocational skills for young adults;

vi.   Rehabilitate and strengthen educational systems in terms of quality and relevance for the family in line with the OAU/AU Decade of Education, the Harare Programme of Action on the Decade of Education in Africa, and the Kampala Declaration and Plan of Action on the Empowerment of Women through Functional Literacy and Education of the Girl-Child and the Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action.

vii.   Allocate adequate funds for the promotion of adult literacy and community participation in education;

viii.   Increase the number of quality schools and ensure an adequate supply of qualified teachers;

ix.   Promote the participation of parents in the educational affairs of their children;

x.   Develop alternative approaches of acquiring skills and knowledge for children who have difficulties in formal schooling;

xi.   Ensure that formal and non-formal education are complementary parts of the education system in each country; and

xii. Build more schools in rural areas to enable more children to attend classes and more parents to send their children without risk to school.

b. Family Health

Issues and Challenges

50. Health systems in Africa have continued to deteriorate as African families and their members die from preventable and treatable diseases. In a majority of African countries the prevalence of neo-natal, infant, childhood, adolescent and maternal morbidity and mortality has continued to rise due to inaccessibility to health and quality medical care. Neonatal, infant, child and maternal mortality rates continue to increase and while there is some reduction in some countries, the overall reduction is too slow to meet the set targets for 2015.

51. There are several manifestations of family health issues in Africa. The absence of adequate and quality health facilities and the inadequate skills of family health care providers at all levels are critical. Primary health care providers in maternal and child health care centres are poorly trained or lack basic skills, water is unavailable in the health care centres and basic medical supplies are in low supply. The prevalent rise in the number of prostitutes as well as the child trafficking phenomenon in many countries have a direct impact on family health.

52. Provision of integrated primary health care is an important step to facilitating quality family health and should include youth and neo-natal health.

Objective: To invest more in the health sector and build national capacities as a way of ensuring quality health for all members of the family.

Activities:

53. While accelerating progress towards the achievement of the MDG goal of improving maternal health, Member States should:

i.   Adopt a life cycle approach for maternal, infant and child mortality**;**

ii.   Promote primary health care services laying emphasis on prevention and commonest causes of morbidity and mortality;

iii. Create a conducive environment for increased investment in the health sector;

iv.   Promote and strengthen the integration of ethno-medical practices within the modern health care system

v.   Enhance community participation in health delivery systems;

vi.   Strengthen the maternal and child health component in the NEPAD health strategy;

vii.   Increase the accessibility, availability, acceptability and affordability of health care services and facilities for all;

viii.   Strengthen training programmes for primary health care providers;

ix.   Ensure community participation in the planning and implementation of health policies especially with respect to long-term care of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those infected with HIV/AIDS and other endemic diseases.

x.   Improve the health and nutritional status of infants and children, and promote breast-feeding as a child survival strategy with special reference to educating HIV positive women regarding breast-feeding;

xi.   Increase immunisation coverage for infants and children under 5 years laying emphasis on Polio eradication and other childhood killer diseases;

xii.   Promote women's health and safe motherhood in an effort to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality and thus promote child survival and family welfare;

xiii.   Provide health education to families;

xiv.   Strengthen and preserve medical and paramedical institutions through training in appropriate skills and competencies;

xv.   Promote household to hospital continuum of care for improved family health; and

xvi.   Accelerate the implementation of the OAU Plan of Action on the Situation of Women in the context of family health.

c. Reproductive Health

Issues and Challenges

54.   Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. It implies that people have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. Implicit in this, is the right of women to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods for regulation of fertility, which are not against the law. Reproductive health also includes the right of access to health care services that will enable women and girls to safely go through pregnancy and childbirth. In Africa the contraceptive prevalence rate is 20% compared to 58% worldwide. The total fertility rate is 5.6% compared to 2.68% worldwide.

Objective: To establish integrated reproductive health services in all health facilities/centres at the local level and ensure they are accessible to families and their individual members irrespective of age.

Activities:

55.   Member states should:

i.   Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health as fundamental human rights;

ii.   Ensure the integration of sexual and reproductive health services into the NEPAD framework;

iii.   Promote safe motherhood and eliminate maternal mortality

iv.   Sensitise parents on the importance of breast-feeding and create baby friendly initiatives and hospitals;

v.   Assist families in need to access family planning services;

vi.   Focus reproductive health services on preventing/reducing maternal mortality, the spread of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, and the treatment of complications of STDs such as infertility;

vii.   Design intervention strategies that recognise and make provision for gender relations within the family and their impact on STIs and HIV/AIDS prevention and management;

viii.   Establish appropriate mechanisms to respond to the special issues of adolescent sexual and reproductive health;

ix.   Establish mechanisms of dealing with obstetric fistula and other major reproductive health problems;

x.   Prevent unwanted pregnancy; miscarriage, STIs and HIV/AIDS;

xi.   Design and disseminate information, education, and communication materials appropriate to the social, cultural and educational status of target groups and vulnerable groups including prostitutes.

xii.   Integrate sexual and reproductive health and life skills training into the school curricula and establish adolescent-friendly services;

xiii.   Eliminate traditional practices that affect women's reproductive health such as female genital mutilation and early marriage; and

d. Families with Special Needs

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

56. A number of families require special services and protection because they find themselves in vulnerable situations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty, ageing, disability, homelessness, conflicts, neglect and abuse of children, orphan-hood, child and youth at risk of offences and crime and substance abuse. Their situation requires urgent attention.

Objective: To integrate the needs and rights of families with special needs into the national policies and programmes.

Activities:

57. Members States should:

i. Develop and integrate policies and strategies to address families in vulnerable and crisis situations;

ii. Institute social security systems to support needy families;;

iii. Provide social welfare services to family members with chronic illnesses, the elderly, those with disability and unemployed ones;

iv. Develop strategies to assist the elderly, orphans, vulnerable children and for preventing child abuse and neglect; and

v. Formulate policies to address crime prevention amongst the youth, establish rehabilitation centres for child and young offenders and provide them with the necessary training and skills to enable them become self-employed

vi. Provide vocational training to the family to enable them secure employment and become self-sufficient

5.3 Promoting Environmental Sustainability

a. Environment

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

58. Environmental problems such as drought, floods, soil degradation, climatic changes, natural and man-made calamities, place greater challenges on the welfare and survival strategy of African families. Africa faces a persistent problem of environmental degradation with decreasing natural habitats leading to increases in poverty levels as well as decreases in growth rates. As a result, millions of families suffer from hunger and acute malnutrition, displacement and loss. In addition, pollution caused by mismanagement of domestic waste, motor-cycles, cars and industrial plants

affect the environment and lead to diseases such as poliomyelitis. In some cases, the families themselves are causes of pollution. A major challenge is for Africa to be able to consolidate early warning and disaster management systems.

Objective: To develop institutional mechanisms for promoting sustainability of the environment.

Activities:

59.   While accelerating the implementation of the Environmental Action Plan developed by NEPAD, Member States should:

i.   Create sensitivity towards environmental deterioration;

ii.   Promote individual, local, regional and international cooperation for environmental protection, rehabilitation, and sustainable use;

iii.   Create a safe environment with recreation centers to occupy youth and children as a way of averting crime;

iv.   Promote environmental education through formal and informal channels;

v.   Preserve primary forests;

vi.   Strengthen environmental surveillance and a rapid response system;

vii.   Formulate or review legislation on the environment;

vi.   Strengthen early warning systems and disaster prevention capabilities;

ix.   Improve monitoring and management of natural and man-made disasters;

x.   Create mechanisms for rehabilitation/restoration of severely degraded areas;

xi.   Provide timely and meaningful support for family who are victims of natural and/or man-made disasters;

xiii.   Ensure implementation of existing instruments and Protocols; and

xiv.   Promote recycling skills.

b. Water and Sanitation

Issues and Challenges

60.   Water is one of the vital needs of the family. However, access to clean and safe water as well as sanitation is extremely inadequate for a majority of families living in rural and urban areas. As a result, women and girls spend many hours each day in

search of water, which is not in sufficient quantities to meet family needs. One major challenge is the ability to preserve and conserve water as well as to manage sources of water such as wells, bore holes and retention of rain-water. Moreover, a low level of education on irrigation systems contributes to wastage of already scarce water resources and contributes to increase poverty and poor health especially from the spread of water-borne diseases and epidemics.

Objective: **To provide water and sanitation facilities and strengthen measures to promote access to clean and safe water in every home, or at reasonable distances.**
Activities:

61.   Member States should:

i.   Involve families and communities in the planning, installing and managing of water and sanitation systems;

ii.   Promote health and hygiene education in both formal and non-formal educational institutions in every community;

iii.   Build wells, sink bore holes and preserve other water and sanitation facilities;

iv.   Promote different ways of drawing water that includes both men and women; and

v.   Develop training programmes on water management.

c. Nutrition and Food Security

Issues and Challenges

62.   One in every three persons in Africa lives on per capita intake below the accepted level of 2300 kilocalories per day. The absolute number of under-nourished has increased beyond 300 million (1998). The majority are often women, children and the aged. Malnutrition underlies about 50% of all deaths of children under five years. Likewise, malnutrition in women of reproductive age is reflected in high prevalence of low birth weight (under 2.5 kg), and a 10-20% maternal mortality rate, which is 60 times that of affluent countries. Nutrition in adolescent and in pregnant and lactating women is a critical issue.

63.   Additionally, women and children are often at a higher risk of nutritional diseases such as protein-energy-malnutrition (PEM); Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD); Vitamin A deficiencies (VAD); and nutritional anaemia (iron deficiency). The overall challenge is that without access to sustainable food and nutrition security, accelerated socio-economic development is less likely to be possible in Africa.

64.   In some countries food shortages have been caused by the increased cultivation of non-food crops. In addition, preserving and storing food is a major challenge for

Africa because Africa loses 35% of its food during the post-harvest period due to poor storage methods.

Objective: To ensure self-sufficiency in food supply at the national level and adequate food supplies for the families at the grassroots level.

Activities:

65.   Member States should:

i.   Promote diversity in food production, distribution and consumption patterns;

ii.   Enhance food and nutrition information dissemination through education and communication activities and public participation;

iii.   Mechanise agriculture to ease the burden on those who till the land;

iv.   Promote better systems of storing and preserving food;

v.   Eliminate malnutrition among children especially those below five years of age;

vi.   Formulate laws to prevent the cultivation of Cannabis and other drug related plants and encourage cultivation of food crops ;

vii.   Establish an Early Warning System for potential causes of food deficit;

viii.   Promote nutrition education and counselling in communities with a focus on children, women and adolescents;

ix.   Advocate and sensitise communities about cultural practices that negatively impact on eating habits;

x.   Establish sustainable and cost-effective marketing mechanisms for food crops;

xi.   Formulate or review agricultural policies as well as food and nutrition policies;

xii.   Achieve food security by ensuring a safe and nutritionally adequate food supply at the national level, a reasonable degree of stability in the supply of food, as well as physical, social and economic access to ensure enough food for all families at all times;

xiii.   Promote community-based strategies for monitoring the nutritional status of vulnerable groups, in particular, children, women especially of child-bearing age and elderly persons; and

xiv.   Promote food storage programmes at household, family and community level.

xv.   Build the capacity of the community, especially women, in agriculture

d. Adequate Shelter

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

66.   Lack of adequate shelter and decent housing leads to overcrowding, establishment of informal settlements such as slums and an increase in families living in the streets. According to UN Habitat, 72% Africans live in slums with no access to safe water and sanitation and other basic needs.

<u>Objective</u>: To ensure that all families have access to decent and adequate shelter and establish appropriate schemes for affordable and appropriate housing.

Activities:

67.   Member States should:

i.   Develop and review housing policies;

ii.   Eliminate slums and other informal settlements;

iii.   Improve the availability of affordable and adequate shelter for all, in accordance with the Global Strategy for Shelter (2000);

iv.   Facilitate family home ownership through micro-finance systems;

v.   Promote the use of local materials in housing so as to reduce costs; and

vi.   Train artisans and workers in housing projects;

vii.   Prevent migration from rural to urban areas by providing adequate and conducive structure and facilities in rural areas

e. Land Ownership

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

68.   In Africa, land suitable for cultivation is limited. As the population increases, demand for land increases and food production tends to diminish.   In addition, traditional land tenure systems favour men over women and yet it is the women who produce about 75% of Africa's food.   Compounding this land tenure system, is a combination of ecological factors, increased industrial activities and an emphasis on cash crop economy which puts food and nutrition security for the African family at risk.

Objective: To ensure that all families have access to, and can own arable land.

Activities:

69.   Member States should:

i.   Enact and implement legislation to preserve land for food crops;

ii.   Review the land tenure laws so that women have equal access to land;

iii.   Limit extreme subdivision of tracts of land;

iv.   Promote agricultural extension services with focus on land and water conservation measures; and

v.   Incorporate vocational education in farm activities especially on how to use different crops, proper storage and how to prevent post harvest losses.

5.4   Rights, Duties and Responsibilities

Issues and Challenges

70.   Several documents have outlined the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children. Although the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights clearly define the rights, duties and responsibilities of the family and children, these are not always adhered to. The biggest responsibility of the family is towards the children especially those who are unaccompanied or separated from their parents and those who head households. However, each family member has a role to play, although women have bigger responsibilities as wives, mothers and indeed caretakers. There is need to enhance the capacity, responsibility, authority and resources of each duty-bearer to enable him/her carry out his/her responsibility.

Objective: To establish institutional mechanisms to promote the rights of the family including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the family and ensure their optimum well-being.

Activities:

71.   Member States should:

i.   Implement existing laws and enact laws as appropriate for promoting and protecting the rights of the family in general and those of women and girls in particular;

ii. Promote the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

iii. Institute policies and legislation to eliminate discrimination against women, in particular with regard to marriage, reproduction, sexuality, family relations and education;

iv. Build institutional mechanisms responsible for ensuring and maintaining the rights and privileges of the family and its members;

v. Strengthen rights-based research and knowledge generating activities;

vi. Preserve and promote the culture of responsibility, accommodation, and respect for one another within the family;

vii. Provide direct support to families to help them in their role as duty bearers;

viii. Promote legal and institutional capabilities to control trafficking in humans especially women and children;

ix. Accelerate behaviour change interventions;

x. Promote human rights and civic education at all levels;

xi. Provide access to information on the national, regional and international human rights laws, conventions, and treaties;

xii. Create enabling conditions to assist the families and their members to satisfy their needs and common interests; and

xiii. Protect the rights of all family members and where necessary, establish courts to ensure speedy and effective prosecution of the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence.

5.5 Rights of Protection for the Family

Issues and Challenges

72. Domestic violence in the form of spouse and child abuse is prevalent throughout Africa. As cases of violence abound in families, children, women, youths and the elderly are suffering. This is attributed, albeit, in part, to some cultural practices that sanction family violence as part of social life; the gap between formal laws and policies; and the shortcomings in implementing action by governments.

73.   In spite of the fact that most countries have signed the CEDAW, a large population of women and girls still undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); others have suffered sexual violence and abuse, early marriage, girl-child prostitution, incest and rape. Women and girls have been denied the right to family benefits such as inheritance and succession due to retrogressive family laws or cultural practices that discriminate against females in the family. Women and girls who return to their countries after living or working in other countries, face insurmountable obstacles in claiming restitution of land and other property rights, to enhance sustainable re-integration and rehabilitation in their home countries.

74.   Children continue to be employed to do hazardous jobs in contradiction to the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour. Children are also being trafficked, sold or bonded.

Objective: To develop and promote legislative frameworks for the protection of the family as a unit and individual members within the family.

Activities:

75.   Member States should:

i.   Establish surveillance and monitoring mechanisms as well as reinforcing judicial systems to control violations against women, children, and the elderly in the family;

ii.   Combat drug, alcohol and other substance abuses affecting family members;

iii.   Promote legal and institutional capabilities to control trafficking in humans, especially women and children;

iv.   Facilitate the tracing and re-unification of children separated from their families;

v.   Promote policies to ensure that all people have adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, disability and old age and address the problems of street children/families;

vi.   Create an appropriate social insurance system:

vii.   Ensure the incorporation of Article 25 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child into national laws;

viii.   Eliminate harmful traditional and cultural practices such as Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation, abduction, forced and early marriage, and sexual harassment;

ix.   Take strong measures to control the negative social, economic, and health effects of drugs and other harmful substances;

x.   Launch rapid rehabilitation programmes for victims of gender-based violence, child and drug abusers and traffickers, criminals and juvenile delinquency

xi.   Provide family with stress management and counselling services as a means of reconciling, preserving and protecting families with emphasis on specialized counselling services for children and youth, and promote family support groups;

xii.   Strengthen existing traditional structures for providing support to families;

xiii. Establish family courts which operate on the principles of respect for human dignity, justice and gender equality, among others; and

xiv.   Eliminate all forms of child abuse and neglect including child labour.

5.6   Strengthening Family Relationships

Issues and Challenges

76.   The structure of the family and the different roles of its members are affected by the changes in socio-economic development on the continent. Over the years, a new type of family structure has emerged influencing the attitudes and relationships of family members. This is caused by: low level of education, poverty and unemployment, urbanization and development, and disintegration of the family. Moreover, lack of information and absence of dialogue and exchange of views among family members have contributed to the break up the family.

Objective: To develop policies and legislation for the strengthening and preservation of the family as an institution and improve the quality of family relations.

Activities:

77.   Member States should:

i.   Raise awareness on the role of the family and strengthen the relationships within the family in order to reinforce its union and stability in assuming its functions;

ii.   Encourage participation of all members of the family in the management of family affairs;

iii.   Strengthen the role of the family in protecting and preventing children and women from the untoward effects of the society

iv.   Establish associations/clubs for youth and adolescents to protect them from social ills and educate them on the positive values of the family (parents should

encourage their children to join these associations/clubs since they play an important role in framing the members of society);

v.   Involve the community at large to raise awareness on the positive role the family can play in society;

vi.   Promote the sense of duty and responsibility among all family members for the well-being of the whole family;

vii.   Promote community associations/networks, which can support families in times of need;

viii.   Promote dialogue among family members about issues concerning the family and those affecting the society;

ix.   Organize youth discussions about their problems and the dangers affecting them;

x.   Organize information programmes (TV, Radio, leaflets, etc) about the adverse aspects facing families in order to prevent the dislocation of the family; and

xi.   Promote mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation within the family especially with regard to the elderly and people with disabilities.

5.7   Control of the Major Causes of Morbidity and Mortality

a. HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

78.   The HIV/AIDS pandemic has placed considerable and novel pressures on Africa's family and kinship system. There are close to 30 million people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and about 55% of HIV adults are women. The pandemic has the effect of dramatically changing the demographic structure of the African family. There will be a shortage of young adults and most probably a gender imbalance among adults as young women contract HIV at younger ages than men. Some of the negative impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a decline in life expectancy; death of parents; an increase in the number of orphans; children infected by HIV through mother-to-child transmission; and an increase in infant and childhood morbidity and mortality. Where both parents have died due to the scourge, this has led to child-headed families and families headed by poor grandparents taking care of orphans. The result is that families become poorer, children's education suffers, and the standard of living of the entire family declines. HIV/AIDS is estimated to slow Africa's growth by about 2.6% in high prevalence areas.

79.   About half of those living with HIV/AIDS are women and women are now becoming infected at a faster rate than men. In some countries in Africa, infection rates among young women are two to six times higher than among young men. Women

experience sexual and economic insubordination and are not always able to negotiate for safe sex or refuse unsafe sex. Twice as many affected households withdraw a girl from school to care for the terminally ill.

80.   Other pandemics that affect the lives of African families include: Malaria, Tuberculosis, other related infectious diseases and childhood diseases such measles, diphtheria, and diarrhea. Malaria alone, accounts for about one million deaths annually in Africa and is estimated to slow down Africa's growth by about 1.4% each year. It has been observed that the frequency of malaria attacks increases during the time of ploughing, planting, harvesting of crops and after long rains. Consequently, malaria is a major constraint to agricultural production and food security.

81.   Tuberculosis is the single biggest killer of people infected with HIV. In many African countries, more than half of TB patients are also HIV positive. On average, a TB patient loses three to four months of work in a year. This amounts to a significant economic loss in the annual household income. Other related infectious diseases also contribute to declines in the family revenue and reduce work force and productivity.

82.   Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS have become a deadly triad in African families especially among women.

Objective: To ensure that families and communities protect themselves against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis and have adequate support and resources to carry the burden of care for infected family members.

Activities:

83.   Member States should:

i.   Mobilize and efficiently utilize resources to combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and other diseases;

ii.   Ensure that resources are utilized to reach the target beneficiaries, especially orphans and child-headed families, and are accounted for;

iii.   Strengthen partnership between families, civil society organizations, government agencies and international organizations in the fight against these diseases;

iv.   Enhance the capacity of the family to provide care and support for members infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and increase access to care, support and treatment for those infected and affected;

v.   Enhance the capacity of the family to address HIV/AIDS prevention issues, and identify the gender dimensions with regard to management and prevention, especially mother-to-child transmission;

vi.   Strengthen the DOTs (Directly observed Treatment) for TB;

vii.   Provide free TB drugs to patients;

viii.   Promote the use of treated bed-nets in malaria prone areas.

ix.   Provide clear and simple information about the prevention of malaria;

x.   Provide adequate medical care and avail anti-retroviral drugs to those who need them at an affordable cost or free of charge;

xi.   Provide for institutionalisation of human rights education on HIV/AIDS and put in place support mechanisms to assist and remunerate care-givers;

xii.   Enact relevant legislation in order to reduce stigmatisation and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs), including orphans and widows;

xiii.   Provide counselling and voluntary testing services for HIV/AIDS;

xiv.   Strengthen information, education and communication for and with families to increase awareness on HIV/AIDS, to foster positive attitudes towards infected members, and to reduce infection;

xv.   Intensify research on methods to control the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to find an effective treatment for the disease;

xvi.   Develop mechanisms for monitoring gains achieved in combating HIV/AIDS and replicating the lessons learnt in other countries/regions;

xvii.   Incorporate HIV/AIDS education in school curricula;

xviii.   Immunize all families and provide maternal and child health care services; and

xix.   Provide integrated primary health care and establish services and programmes specifically for orphans.

b. Other Diseases

<u>Issues and Challenges</u>

84.   In Africa, the rates of neo-natal, infant, childhood and maternal morbidity and mortality are very high; primary heath care is not adequate and health insurance is non-existent in many countries. About 800,000 children die of diarrhoea before they celebrate their fifth birthday, about 1.2 million children die of pneumonia and about 500,000 children die of measles each year. Among other factors, essential drugs are either not available on time or they are not affordable. These have direct impact on the family's well-being, especially mothers as the health and general welfare of other family members rest with them. Malaria and diseases associated with poor hygiene and sanitation and over crowding continue to cause havoc in families.

Objective: To ensure that essential drugs are available and affordable to treat and prevent diseases and develop the capacity of the health care providers at the community level.

Activities:

85.   Member States should:

i.   Repackage essential drugs and make them available and affordable;

ii.   Promote an integrated family health care system;

iii.   Utilize the existing regional and international structures for acquisition of drugs in bulk;

iv.   Build well equipped health centres/clinics especially in rural areas and enhance the capacity of family health care providers;

v.   Train health providers in the management and rationalization of available drugs;

vi.   Develop appropriate policies for the recruitment, retention and motivation of health care providers especially in rural areas.

5.8   Ensuring Peace and Security

Issues and Challenges

86.   Peace and security is a prerequisite for development. However, African families have been confronted with frequent outbreak of wars and conflicts as well as violation of human rights. Wars and conflicts in Africa have led to millions of people being forcibly displaced in their own countries and/or having to seek refuge in other countries. This has led to the separation of a considerable economically active population from productive work; shortage of labour to run family enterprises; death or disability of family members; destruction of infrastructure including schools and health facilities and hence an increase in poverty.

Objective: To promote peace and stability and minimize/eliminate the negative effects of crimes, wars and conflicts on the survival of the African family.

Activities:

87.   Member States should:

i.   Strengthen indigenous conflict resolution and dispute settlement mechanisms;

ii.   Adopt a global and integrated approach for preserving peace and security in the continent;

iii. Advocate Member States to ratify and legislate the Protocol to the African Court of Human Rights;

iv. Promote a conducive environment for the return in safety and dignity of refugees and displaced persons as well as sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation;

v. Promote rule of law, democracy, good governance and respect for human rights;

vi. Develop early warning systems to prevent conflicts before they give rise to major social disruptions;

vii. Involve families, especially women and the elderly, as well as the Committee on Women and Development in mediating and settling local level differences before they escalate into a large-scale crisis;

viii. Respect/observe national and international laws in dealing with the family and its members and in respecting their family life, their rights of access to means of subsistence and other basic needs to ensure their survival during armed conflicts;

ix. Ensure the protection of family property during conflict;

xi. Establish centres to facilitate the reintegration and rehabilitation of persons traumatized by conflict including child soldiers;

xi. Provide assistance to affected families to settle down and lead a normal life again;

xii. Institute mechanisms to protect refugees and internally displaced persons;

xiii. Monitor and protect women and children against sexual abuse and other forms of sexual exploitation during armed conflict especially during flight and border crossing; and

xiv. Ensure the responsibility of the family in the education of child soldiers.

5.9   Follow-Up, Evaluation and Monitoring

88.   In order to implement the Plan of Action, Member States will be expected to elaborate National Plans of Action with clear objectives and milestones as well as roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and partners. In the National Plans of Action, States will indicate how the resources will be mobilised from all available sources including multi-lateral, bilateral and private sources. Financial resources will be required to strengthen the capacity of national institutions for successful implementation of their plans. Mechanisms will also be established to assess and monitor progress made in implementing the Plan of Action.

a. Role of Member States

89.   Each Member State shall:

   i)   Develop National Plans with objectives that are achievable and provide the necessary resources for their implementation within a set time-frame. The Plans should set milestones with clear timetables to be reviewed each year.

   ii)   Establish mechanisms for supervision and monitoring of the programmes at local and national levels. In so doing, the State will use clear indicators for progress covering all variables with regard to gender, children and youth.

   iii)   Establish participatory monitoring mechanisms that involve stakeholders, civil society and families.

   iv)   Develop Management Information Systems (MIS) for generating disaggregated data for analysing the situation of the African family and disseminate findings at AU meetings.

   v)   Create, within the national structure, a forum for discussing and monitoring the implementation of the national plan on the family.

b. Role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

90.   Civil Society Organisations including NGOs shall:

   i)   Advocate for the rights of families and the need to tackle their problems.

   ii)   Forge partnership with different groups including political leaders to take action to ensure better living conditions and the well-being of families.

   iii)   Put pressure to bear on those responsible for carrying out harmful traditional practices on women and children.

   iv)   Be involved in formulating programmes for the family and monitor their implementation.

   v)   Disseminate the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa.

c. The Role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

91.   Regional Economic Communities (RECs) shall:

   i)   Be called upon to include activities related to the family in their programmes.

   ii)   Ensure the implementation of the Plan of Action at their regional levels.

   iii)   Designate focal points to follow-up family related issues in each region.

   iv)   Disseminate the Plan of Action in their regions and ensure its implementation by Member States.

d. The Role of the African Union (AU)

92.   The AU shall play multiple roles:

i)   **Creation of Structures:** Advocate for the establishment/promotion of specific agencies/organs within Member States responsible for family issues.

ii)   **Advocacy:** Ensure that issues pertaining to the strengthening of families in Africa are part of the AU programme and are included in the agenda of AU meetings and communication with Member States.

iii)   **Policy development**: Develop appropriate policies and programmes that project the family as well as the integrity of the individual members.

iv)   **Mobilisation** of resources: Efforts shall be made to involve UN agencies, international organisations, the private sector and the international community as financial and technical cooperating partners.

v)   **Coordination, monitoring and evaluation:** Systems for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this plan shall be developed at regional and national levels. In so doing, Member States will use clearly defined indicators for tracking progress covering all variables providing gender disaggregated data. The AU shall conduct a Mid-term review in 2009 to assess progress made in implementing the Plan of Action and propose appropriate remedial measures.

vi)   **Capacity building:** Efforts shall be made to utilise regional and national organisations for capacity building as needed for the implementation of the Plan.

vii)   **Partnership**: The AU, in collaboration with other partners shall compile a biennial report on the status of the family.

e. The Role of the regional and international community

93.   The UN Agencies, including the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), shall participate actively in assisting Member States in the implementation of the Plan of Action. Other inter-governmental organisations such as the African Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank shall be incorporated as partners.

6.   CONCLUSION

94.   The successful and sustained implementation of this Plan of Action requires broad partnerships at Member State, Regional, Continental, and International level. In particular, each Member State is encouraged to forge and sustain partnerships with the media, Non-government Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations, Religious

Organisations, Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and the private sector. Governments should establish mechanisms in collaboration with the NGOs, CSOs and other Organisations to assess the implementation of the goals set in the Plan of Action. This will move Africa a long way towards improving the standard of living of its people.

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