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Background:

The International Anglican Family Network, one of the official Networks of the Anglican Communion, has been in existence for over 20 years. Its work has been welcomed by three Lambeth Conferences and described by a recent meeting of the Joint Standing Committee of Primates and ACC as "a valuable instrument of unity" within the Anglican Communion. The Network publishes regular Newsletters on issues important to families, circulating these world-wide and sending them free of charge to the Two Thirds World.

The Family Network's aims are three fold:

- To develop mutual understanding about the impact of forces such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, migration and violence in and on families in both the developed and the developing world.
- By publishing articles - written by women and men, lay and clerical - about practical work being done to help families, to provide encouragement to workers in family ministries and the Christian community.
- By telling of practical projects, often from small beginnings and scarce resources, to draw on and share experience and expertise within the Communion and encourage further action by Churches.

Much of the work featured in the Newsletters is unsung and unknown to the rest of the Communion. It is often carried out by women whose voices are not always heard in the Church.

From 1996 – 2007 the IAFN newsletters were published as an insert in *Anglican Episcopal World*. The recent suspension of this publication because of its cost, poses new challenges for the Family Network. The Management Committee are clear that, while electronic means of communication should be used to the full, the printed Newsletters have a particular value as they are accessible to those without easy access to the web, and the developmental content can be shared by many and made available in institutions such as church offices and theological colleges. Through the generosity of a small number of Provinces and Church Leaders, funding has been found to enable IAFN to print and mail out the 2009 Newsletters. Some funding is already pledged for 2010 – 2011 and it is hoped the necessary additional resources can be found to enable the Network's planned contribution to continue.

Current priorities:

- Build up a targeted mailing list of those who wish to receive the printed Newsletters and who will also contribute articles about work being done.
- Produce three specialist–topic Newsletters each year, with colour illustrations. The current newsletter on *Investing in Childhood* has recently been published and copies are available for this meeting. Work is underway on the next publication, on the theme of *Valuing Our Elders*.
- If funding can be found, IAFN plans to hold a regional consultation in 2010 in Oceania on issues of *Violence and the Family*, following the successful gatherings held in Nairobi (2003) and Seoul (2007).

How can ACC members help?

- By informing others in their Diocese about the work of IAFN, its website and the printed Newsletters.
- By suggesting names of people who might like to receive the Newsletters and contribute information.
- By suggesting topics for future Newsletters.
- By encouraging those who can afford it to pay an annual subscription of £10, or US\$ equivalent, for the three issues of the printed Newsletter (cheques payable to ACC (IAFN)).
- By helping identify other possible sources of financial support.

The Anglican Communion has been described as a family. Like most families it needs to know about its members, and value the contribution of the different parts – especially those, as St Paul said, which are often undervalued. Our hope is that the Family Network, by linking the developed and the developing world on matters which affect us all, can deepen our understanding and knowledge of each other and the priorities of God's mission, helping us embrace the Millennium Development Goals in tackling poverty, HIV/AIDS and the suffering of many families.