



ECOSOC Meeting on Care and Support Systems Oral Statement

Estimada Paula Narvez ECOSOC President, excellences, distinguished panellists, it is a privilege to be here today and bring the voices of the civil society. Make Mother Matter federates a network of grassroots organisations active at the community level in about 30 countries across the world. They work with and for mothers, who are the majority of unpaid care providers.

Unpaid care work is work, indispensable work that sustains families, communities, society and the economy – and that benefits us all. In addition to the five R framework. Make Mothers Matter calls for a multistakeholder approach to national care policy, based on the principle of co-responsibility: in addition to governments, communities and private companies have a key role to play in recognising, redistributing and supporting unpaid care work.

For example, governments should support Mothers Centres¹ an initiative which have a proven track record in empowering and connecting mothers to build caring communities across the world.

Grassroots programs promoting the involvement of men/fathers in caregiving to redistribute unpaid care and domestic work more fairly, also deserve support, as they have proven benefits for mothers, children and fathers alike. Our network can provide examples of such programs include MenCare's Programme P, which has been implemented in a dozen countries,² or ACEV's father support programs in Turkey³.

National care and support policy should also directly or indirectly encourage the private sector to implement policies supporting parents and other employees with caregiving responsibilities. Such policy can include: flexible working arrangements, childcare support, emergency leave, adequate paid maternity/paternity/parental leave and support upon return, etc. These policies bring many benefits, not only to mothers and other employed unpaid caregivers, but also to employers in terms of better talent acquisition and retention, as well as improved productivity and employee engagement.

In addition, motherhood – and more generally parenthood and other unpaid caregiving work – is a learning experience that equips those unpaid caregivers with soft skills that include among others: planning and organisation, problem solving, active listening and empathy, crisis or conflict management, negotiating, leadership and decision-making skills... All these skills are very much in demand in the corporate world. Recognising and valuing these skills as part of a broader company's policy to support employees with caregiving responsibilities, is a practical way of valuing their experience as unpaid caregivers.

We at MMM remain committed to continuing to expose the specific discriminations and challenges faced by mothers in the context of the Care economy. We stand ready to work together to achieve the goals of the agenda 2030, and to contribute to a new social contract where care is everyone's responsibility.

¹ See the work of MMM associate members *Mothers Centers International Network for Empowerment (MINE – www.minemothercenters.org)* and *Mothers Matter Center Canada (www.mothersmattercentre.ca)*

² See <https://www.equimundo.org/programs/program-p/>

³ See <https://www.acev.org/en/what-we-do/our-programs/for-mothers-and-fathers/father-support-program/>