



PARENTAL LEAVE IN LAW AND PRACTICE: Enhancing women's equity and global development

Wednesday, March 11 | 2:30pm – 4pm | United Nations Church Centre 10th Floor

This official CSW70 parallel event invites governments, private sector leaders, and civil society actors to engage in a timely, evidence-based discussion on why legally mandated leave is essential for global development and what it will take to expand, finance, and normalize its use worldwide. At a moment when countries are rethinking care systems, investing in human capital, and confronting widening inequality gaps, this discussion offers a rare opportunity to reimagine parental leave as a universal, strategic driver of development rather than a cost to be absorbed.

Background

As the global community gathers for CSW70 under a renewed commitment to women's equity and shared prosperity, one question sits at the heart of inclusive development yet remains insufficiently addressed: How can societies ensure that every parent -mother, father, and caregiver- has the legally mandated time and support needed for women's economic equity and to nurture the next generation?

Maternity, paternity, and parental leave policies are among the most powerful but underleveraged tools for advancing women's economic participation, accelerating men's involvement in caregiving, strengthening family well-being, and shaping the foundations of equitable, peaceful societies. Far beyond workplace entitlements, they are engines of human capital development and catalysts for achieving multiple SDGs -from gender equality and decent work to health, education, and reduced inequalities.

The conversation will address:

- **Why maternity, paternity, and parental leave are cornerstones of gender equity**, influencing women's labor force participation, pay equity, leadership pathways, and shared caregiving norms.
- **Why leave is also a global development imperative**, linked to early childhood outcomes, macroeconomic growth, family mental health, and intergenerational well-being.
- **Where the world currently stands with legal parental leave**, highlighting current status across regions and income groups in the design and enforcement of legally mandated leave. Highlighting case studies of different countries, capturing the diversity of parental leave approaches.

- **What leave looks like in practice**, including barriers such as stigma, informal work, weak enforcement, and workplace cultures that discourage uptake -especially among fathers.
- **How public, private and civil society sectors can strengthen implementation**, across diverse national contexts, through, inter alia, innovative partnerships and campaigns, targeted or localized efforts, supportive organizational norms, family-friendly policies, etc.

Objectives of This Session

- Raise awareness of the impact of parental leave on women's equality and global development, including the potential repercussions of ignoring its advancement.
- Ascertain the current legal environment for maternity, paternity and shared parental leave around the world based on the latest World Bank data and research.
- Explore challenges and opportunities for progress in both, legal reform and implementation, of leave, highlighting cultural, social, economic and other factors contributing to, or detracting from, progress in the lived experience of parental leave.
- Showcase *diverse* examples of member states' progress and challenges in enacting and supporting parental leave within their unique national contexts.
- Call all governments and sectors to converge on the shared principle of parental leave as a mechanism for women's well-being and global development, and in the promotion of parental leave as a net contribution -not a cost- to society.

Program/Agenda

5 mins	<i>Opening Remarks and Introduction: Parental Leave in Law and Practice</i> Farah Arabe (Moderator), UN Representative Make Mothers Matter
7 - 8 mins	<i>Why Parental Leave is Critical in the Transition to Parenthood and What it Means for Global Development</i> Elizabeth Werner, Associate Director, Center for the Transition to Parenthood at Columbia University
7 - 8 mins	<i>WBL 2026 Report: The Current State of Parental Leave Laws and Policies Around the World</i> Julia Braunmiller, Women, Business and the Law Initiative at The World Bank
7 - 8 mins	<i>Social Norms that Enable or Hamper a Culture of Caregiving: Fatherhood and Positive Masculinities</i> José Campi Portaluppi, Head of Communications and Advocacy at Equimundo
7 - 8 mins	<i>Parental Leave and the Labor Market: The Data Behind Virtual Professional Networking</i> Sarah Steinberg, Global Public Policy Partnerships at LinkedIn
7 - 8 mins	<i>Parental Leave in Law and Practice: The Experience of Uruguay</i> Valentina Perrota, Adjunct Director of the National Secretariat for Care, Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay
7 - 8 mins	<i>Parental Leave in Law & Practice: The Experience of New York City</i> Aissata Camara, Commissioner of the Office of International Affairs, City of New York
30 mins	<i>Panel Discussion followed by Open Q&A with the audience</i>
5 mins	<i>Final Remarks from the Panel: Quick Round of Key Takeaways</i>
2 min	<i>Closing Remarks & Farewell</i>

Speaker Bios

Elizabeth Werner, Ph.D.
Associate Director, Center for the Transition to Parenthood
Columbia University



Elizabeth Werner, PhD, is the Associate Director of the Center for the Transition to Parenthood at Columbia University and is a member of the faculty in the Departments of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Psychiatry at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Dr. Werner is the Director of Clinical Intervention Research in the Perinatal Pathways Lab, and the co-developer of the evidence-based PREPP program, a psychotherapy intervention aimed at preventing Postpartum Depression. She also is the Associate Director of Women's Mental Health @Ob/Gyn, through which she also provides clinical care. Dr. Werner specializes in the treatment of mood disorders and stress management, particularly working with people during the perinatal period. Dr. Werner is a Co-Investigator on several projects funded by the National Institute of Health and has published papers on a variety of topics in the fields of perinatal psychiatry and developmental psychobiology. She is the featured perinatal psychologist on the Pregnancy+ app by Philips, the most downloaded pregnancy app worldwide.

Julia Braunmiller, J.D.
Engagement & Impact Lead at the Women, Business and the Law Initiative
The World Bank



Julia Constanze Braunmiller is a Senior International Legal Specialist at the World Bank's [Women, Business and the Law](#) (WBL) project, which benchmarks women's access to economic opportunity across 190 countries. She leads the project's strategies to translate global data into actionable reforms, advising governments, development partners, and private sector stakeholders on laws and policies that foster sustainable economic growth. Her expertise spans [comparative family law](#), access to [finance](#), the [inclusion of sexual and gender minorities](#), and the [rights of women with disabilities](#). Before joining the World Bank, Julia taught international human rights law at Johns Hopkins University and directed programs pioneering clinical legal education across the Middle East and North Africa.

Jose Campi Portaluppi
Director of Communications and Advocacy
Equimundo



José Campi Portaluppi is the Director of Communications and Advocacy. He leads Equimundo's communications and advocacy teams, amplifying research and programming on masculinities and gender justice to inspire action and drive impact in personal opinion, community norms, and public policy. Prior to joining Equimundo, José worked with different international organizations in educommunications, capacity strengthening, political incidence, research and learning experience design. José has a master's degree in gender and media from the University of Sussex.

Sarah Steinberg
Head of Global Public Policy Partnerships
LinkedIn



As Head of Global Public Policy Partnerships, [Sarah Steinberg](#) builds partnerships with governments and organizations around the world to harness LinkedIn's vast data insights to understand the trends that are shaping labor markets and advance inclusive economic growth and competitiveness.

Prior to joining LinkedIn, Sarah led a signature \$75 million global education initiative at JPMorgan Chase, a philanthropic leader dedicated to driving inclusive economic growth in communities worldwide. Through this work, she supported extraordinary local leaders in 10 communities around the world to leverage innovative new practices and policy solutions to expand access to real-world work experience, higher education, and good careers for underserved young people.

Before that, Sarah led workforce research and policy development at the Center for American Progress, including championing a groundbreaking approach to connect more young people to good jobs by dramatically expanding apprenticeships in the United States. Her work has been cited by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post, among others. She has a bachelor's degree in government and sociology from Dartmouth College. Sarah serves as a board member of the National Skills Coalition, the leading organization championing the development and implementation of policies supporting skills training across the United States. She is an Aspen Institute Economic Mobility Fellow, part of a selective cross-sector program for senior business leaders advancing data- and innovation-driven approaches to economic opportunity.

Valentina Perrotta, Ph.D.
Adjunct Director of the National Secretariat for Care
Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay



Dr. Valentina Perrotta is Adjunct Director of the National Secretariat for Care in the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay. Dr. Perrotta holds a bachelor's degree in sociology, a master's degree in Gender, Society and Policies from FLACSO (the Latin America Faculty of Social Sciences) and a Ph.D. in Sociology from Udelar (University of the Republic of Uruguay), where she is also a professor and researcher in the Sociology and Gender Research Group of the department of sociology. Dr. Perrotta is also part of the National System of Researchers at the National Agency of Research and Innovation within the Uruguayan federal government. Her lines of research are centered on gender inequalities linked to the world of work, wellbeing social systems and care policies. She specializes in parental leave and its impacts on gender and the redistribution of care. Dr. Perrotta is also coordinator of the Care and Gender Working Group of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), an international NGO in consultative status with UNESCO. She also coordinates the Master of Care and Gender in Latin America program at CLACSO/Universidad UTE-Ecuador) and the Care and Gender Policies executive program at CLACSO/Universidad de Manizales-Colombia).

Aissata M.B. Camara
Commissioner for International Affairs
City of New York



Aissata M.B. Camara serves as New York City's Commissioner for International Affairs, where she leads the City's engagement with the diplomatic community, the consular corps, and the United Nations. She is the first African-born and Muslim woman and one of the youngest individuals to serve as a Commissioner in the City's history.

Commissioner Camara has served in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs for a decade, holding multiple leadership roles that have advanced New York City's global leadership and deepened its ties with the international community. In her current role, she drives the City's international engagement strategy, connecting local priorities with global opportunities that promote equity, dignity, sustainability, and inclusive economic growth. She works closely with the United Nations, 193 Permanent Missions, 116 Consulates General, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to develop strategic partnerships that deliver tangible results for New Yorkers.

Before her appointment as Commissioner, she served as Deputy Commissioner for Policy & Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff. In that capacity, she advised City leadership on international policy, managed emergencies involving foreign-born New Yorkers and diplomatic incidents, and oversaw City protocol, the Diplomatic and Consular Parking Program, and internal operations to ensure New York City remains a trusted and effective global partner. She has also previously worked in philanthropy at the Rockefeller Foundation and the nonprofit and private sector.

A recognized leader in subnational diplomacy, Commissioner Camara has created and led award-winning initiatives that have positioned New York City as a model for global urban engagement. She launched the NYC Junior Ambassadors program, connecting thousands of students and educators with the United Nations, and spearheaded the global expansion of the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) movement, now adopted by more than 330 cities worldwide, to localize and measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Commissioner Camara is a Fulbright Specialist, a frequent speaker at high-level forums, including the United Nations, and a respected voice on diplomacy, equity, climate, economic development, and technology. Her work and story have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, PBS, NY1, *Deutsche Welle*, *Forbes*, *City & State*, *amNewYork Metro*, and other outlets.

Her contributions have earned her local and global recognition, including the 2023 Bernard M. Baruch College Alumni Changemaker Award, induction into the Most Influential People of African Descent (MIPAD) Hall of Fame, the Jo Ivey Boufford Award for Public Service Innovation, and designation as a Thomson Reuters Trust Conference Changemaker.

Originally from the Republic of Guinea, Commissioner Camara is driven by a vision to build resilient, inclusive, and globally connected communities that leave no one behind.

Farah Arabe (Moderator)
UN Representative and Member of the Board of Directors, Make Mothers Matter
Founder, itotheN | Intergenerational Impact



Farah Arabe is a global policy & advocacy leader, founder, board member and UN representative advancing early relationships, parental well-being and care systems as foundations for sustainable development. With over fifteen years of experience spanning multilateral organizations, strategy consulting, and global advocacy, she bridges science, policy, and human development to influence systemic change.

As Founder of *itotheN | Intergenerational Impact*, Farah leads a small consulting organization that applies the science of early relational health to inform global policies for prosperous and peaceful societies. In 2024, Farah was appointed UN Representative for *Make Mothers Matter* (MMM), an international NGO in consultative status with the UN, representing 10 million mothers worldwide. She currently also serves on their Board of Directors.

In addition, Farah is advisor to the Global Mental Health Action Network championing infant, child and parental mental health, and is Co-President of the Harvard Kennedy School Women's Alumni Network, where she launched and spearheads a partnership with Women20, the official women's engagement group of the G20.

Earlier in her career, Farah helped establish the Democracy & Governance practice at Deloitte Consulting U.S., helped implement Dodd-Frank regulations at a systemically important financial institution, led economic research and performance assessment projects at UN agencies and worked as an engineer. A mother of two, she holds a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering from Lafayette College, a M.Sc. in International Economics, Business and Development from New York University, and executive education from Cornell University and the Harvard Kennedy School.

About Make Mother Matter - MMM

Since 1947, MMM has been at the forefront of advocating for mothers' rights and recognition worldwide, raising awareness amongst policy makers and the general public on the contributions of mothers towards social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations. Working with local partners, MMM advocates on influential global platforms including the EU, the UN, and UNESCO, ensuring that the lived realities of mothers are voiced and acknowledged.

More information on www.makemothersmatter.org