



Human Rights Council 61st Session
General Debate on Item 3
Oral Statement

All over the world, women—especially mothers—continue to shoulder the vast majority of unpaid care and domestic work, a care gap that comes at the cost of their financial autonomy, career progression, and long-term security, including pensions.

This ***Motherhood penalty*** is a key driver of gender inequality and economic hardship.

Yet it remains largely **unmeasured, unacknowledged, and invisible**. Discussions on gender equality continue to **ignore** motherhood.

By failing to even use the word *mothers*, we fail to recognise the **unique discrimination, human rights violations, and systemic barriers** they face.

We also miss a crucial opportunity – because empowering mothers is **not** about restricting women to one role, but about ensuring that motherhood is factored into policies that drive **substantive gender equality** – whether in the workplace, society, or politics.

We urge governments to:

1. **Acknowledge and address** the specific discrimination and challenges faced by mothers in policymaking
2. **Close the data gap** by measuring the *Motherhood penalty* and making it visible

Women should **never** be penalized for being mothers.

At MMM, we say it loud and clear: **It's time to put motherhood at the heart of gender equality and women's rights discussions. This is not an option – it's an imperative.**