



**Oral Statement**  
**41st session of the Human Rights Council**

**Item 8 - Follow-up to and implementation of  
the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action  
General Debate**

Make Mothers Matter would like to remind Member States of the principle of “first call for children”<sup>1</sup>, which is reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. We must put the needs and interests of children first, especially during Early Childhood.

Research has shown the significant negative impact that violence and abuse, or even neglect, can have on a child’s physical, emotional and cognitive development. This can jeopardize their future success at school, and in turn their ability to participate and contribute to society later in life.

We at MMM are therefore calling on Member States to prioritize Early Childhood Education and Care.

Giving a child the best start in life begins with investing in maternal health care, quality childcare and preschools, and targeting the most vulnerable families.

But it also means educating parents, other caregivers, and the society as a whole on child development, on the importance of providing security and nurturing care to their child, as well as on positive parenting. In addition, parents, especially mothers, must be emotionally, socially and economically supported in fulfilling their nurturing and educational responsibilities so that their children and the whole family can thrive.

Every child has the right to live free from fear, free from want and should have the opportunity to develop their full potential.

Investing in Early Childhood Development is one of the best investments a country can make, because it means building a better future for all generations to come.

And ultimately, it also means building sustainable peace.

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<sup>1</sup> "First call for children" - a principle that the essential needs of children should be given high priority in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as in good times, at national and international as well as at family levels.