



59TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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**Socially just transition towards sustainable development:
the role of digital technologies on social development
and well-being of all**

Oral Statement

The Challenges of 'digital Parenthood'

Digital technology has already transformed societies and economies in many parts of the world, opening new ways to communicate, changing lifestyles and creating new types of employment.

However, parents, mothers especially, face specific challenges, which were made even more acute and visible because of the Covid-19 crisis and its subsequent lockdowns:

1. **Remote schooling:** mothers are usually the ones “in-charge” in families – much more than fathers, and this responsibility collides with their own work obligations. Many also lack digital literacy to support their children in accessing online courses. And of course, many families must face the simple fact that the lack of adequate computer or internet access makes remote learning an illusion for their child who risks being left behind.
2. **Teleworking:** for those who are able or obliged to telework, childcare obligations might make it impossible for mothers to attain a reasonable work-life balance. The right to disconnect has also become an issue, and many mothers, much more than men or women without children, have lost their jobs during the pandemic.
3. **Managing children’s screen time, protecting them and controlling internet content:** many parents feel powerless when it comes to setting the right balance in ICT use for their children, finding suitable content, and preventing online violence or access to inappropriate content.

In families with children, mothers, much more than fathers, have seen the time they devote to childcare and unpaid family care work increase during the lockdowns. They have been struggling to balance telework and support for online schooling, with major impacts on their health and their ability to keep their job - a situation which also threatens to reverse years of hard-won progress on Gender Equality.

All These challenges must be recognized and addressed, by both governments and the private sector.

In particular, all forms of care and education work, whether paid or unpaid, must be recognised and properly valued. They must also be seen as an investment (in human capital), not as expenses to be minimised.

The current crisis gives us the opportunity to bring about systemic changes. We are therefore calling on member states to ‘build back transformatively’ and repurpose our economic system to prioritize the wellbeing of people, and place care and education at its heart.

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