



Make
Mothers
Matter

Oral Statement¹

Human Rights Council

Intersessional Meeting of 18 January 2022
'Investing in sustainable recovery, advancing gender equality and strengthening partnerships – Towards a renewed social contract anchored in human rights'

Make Mothers Matter welcomes this important discussion linking sustainable recovery to SDG 5.

Before the pandemic, women – mothers in particular – were already more represented in informal work and less likely to have access to social protection, paid less than men and over-represented in poverty statistics.

The pandemic only worsened their situation. But it was also an eye-opener...

- Revealing how Care is central to our lives, and that whether paid or unpaid, this essential work is not properly recognized and valued in our society and economy
- Highlighting that most of the unpaid family care work falls on the shoulders of women, and that this inequitable distribution is a cause of economic hardship and injustice
- Exposing major gaps in social protection, and the inadequacy of current systems to recognize and support the invisible economy of unpaid caregiving within families and communities

We now have a unique opportunity to address and transform these systemic failures. This begins by changing narratives and shifting paradigms².

Governments must now:

1. Recognise unpaid care work as essential work and a collective responsibility, benefitting the whole of society across generations and sustaining the economy
2. Consider universal social protection to support parents and families as a high-return investment in people, not an expense to be minimized
3. Acknowledge that the multiple crises we face today (Covid-19, but also climate change, environmental degradation, rising inequalities...) are all deeply rooted in an economic system that fails to recognize, value, protect, and invest in what's essential to our wellbeing – Care.

It is time to move beyond the 'GDP growth' narrative, and repurpose our economic system to prioritize the long-term wellbeing of people and the planet. It is time to transition to a wellbeing economy³ – with care and education at its heart.

¹ This oral intervention is drawn from the written statement that MMM submitted to the 60th session of the UN Commission on Social Development – see <https://makemothersmatter.org/care-and-education-at-the-heart-of-a-transformative-recovery/>

² See also the report of our 2021 HLPF side-event: <https://makemothersmatter.org/unpaid-care-work-is-work-that-our-economic-system-must-recognize-invest-in-and-support/>

³ A few governments (Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales) are showing us the way – see www.weall.org

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