



**Human Rights Council – 53<sup>rd</sup> Session**  
**Annual full-day discussion on women’s rights**  
**Panel 2: Social protection:**  
**women’s participation and leadership**

For more than 75 years, Make Mothers Matter has been giving a voice to mothers, denouncing the inequitable distribution of unpaid domestic and care work as a root cause of gender inequalities and economic, social and political injustice for women, in particular when they are mothers.

Whether it's fetching water, raising children or looking after dependents or older persons, it is still mostly women, mothers and daughters who carry out most of these essential tasks<sup>1</sup>. This time-consuming work restricts their access to education, as well as their participation in other activities outside the home, in particular formal employment. It therefore also restricts their ability to benefit from social security systems, which are usually connected to formal work.

As a result, too many women, especially those with care responsibilities, remain outside social protection and invisible to policy makers. For example, 649 million women – that’s 34 % of potential mothers – still lack adequate maternity protection<sup>2</sup>. Not only do women work for free, but it also comes at a cost to them and their children.

Due to their care responsibilities, women are also much less likely to reach decision-making positions - whether in the public or private sectors. Women thus remain under-represented in social policy making, and their specific constraints or circumstances are often ignored.

We at MMM call for the new envisioned social contract to:

1. Recognize that unpaid care work IS indeed work, essential work, which sustains society and the economy, and that deserves adequate support – including through universal social security
2. Promote and support a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work, first between men and women, but also across society – with a view to support women’s leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels
3. Adopt a participatory and inclusive approach to policy making so that social security systems leave no one behind, in particular mothers

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<sup>1</sup> Women perform 76.2 per cent of the total amount of unpaid care work (16 billion hours per day), 3.2 times more time than men.

<sup>2</sup> Source: UN Inter-Agency Task Team, Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, 2022 - [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---soc\\_sec/documents/publication/wcms\\_855481.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_855481.pdf)