



64th UN Commission on Social Development General Discussion – Oral Statement

Make Mothers Matter welcomes the discussion on advancing social development and justice through coordinated, equitable, and inclusive policies. Care and support systems exemplify such policies.

Including this topic in this year's programme marks acknowledges a **fundamental truth: the care gap is a major driver of gender inequality and poverty — and a structural barrier to social justice and development.**

Globally, women perform more than ¾ of unpaid domestic and care work. This disproportionate share often prevents them from accessing education or employment — and thus from providing for themselves — and from fully participating in society. It is a social and economic injustice that traps millions of women — especially mothers — in poverty or financial dependence.

The Covid 19 pandemic made this crystal clear: both paid and unpaid care work are essential for well-being and the sustainability of life — and critical to the functioning of families, communities, societies, and economies. Yet care remains undervalued, taken for granted, and largely unsupported.

This is why progressively building strong, equitable care systems must be a top priority for social development.

This means:

1. Recognizing care as a right — the right to care, to receive care, and to self-care — as recommended in 2025 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights
2. Recognizing unpaid care as productive work that builds valuable skills for the labour market.
3. Redistributing unpaid care more equitably between men and women, and across society — with families, communities, the private sector, and governments at all levels sharing responsibilities and costs
4. Making unpaid care visible in statistics, starting with SDG Indicator 5.4.1, to enable regular monitoring of care policies
5. Ensuring universal social protection — or at least a social protection floor — for unpaid caregivers, including maternity protection and pension credits
6. Guaranteeing access to quality, affordable care services for children, older persons, and people with disabilities
7. Developing policy packages to support mothers and other unpaid caregivers, so families are not forced to choose between earning and caring

In conclusion, our message is simple and urgent: Care and support systems are essential infrastructure. They are also smart investments with multiple returns on health, wellbeing, job creation, household income and inequality reduction. They must be the pillars of our societies.

Without care, there is no economy, no well-being, and no future. But with strong, equitable care systems, we can eradicate poverty and build societies that value and sustain life — the true foundation of social development.