



## 62<sup>nd</sup> UN Commission on Social Development

Priority theme: Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication

### Oral Statement

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, good morning.

As a representative of Make Mothers Matter at the United Nations, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission.

We believe that investing in mothers is key to fostering social development and social justice, and more generally to realise the SDGs.

Everyone has a mother. And yet, a survey recently conducted in the US and the UK shows that a startling 95% of mothers feel unappreciated, un-acknowledged or invisible — and 98 % believe that this “invisibility” severely impacts women’s health.

In addition, motherhood has economic and social costs for mothers. All over the world, women do most of the unpaid work of caring for children and other household members, a work which, although indispensable, remains unnoticed, unrecognized, and undervalued.

Women who are mothers also suffer from specific discriminations induced by cultural stereotypes, biases in perception and social expectations. The so-called ‘motherhood penalty’ hinders their access to formal work, career advancement and perpetuates wage and pension gaps.

In other words, mothers suffer from social and economic injustice - a situation that can and should be addressed. Because when resources, laws and policies are directed towards empowering mothers, the benefits are manifold, and have a ripple effect on children, fathers, families, communities and ultimately society as a whole.

At Make Mother Matter, we believe that more research is needed to get a full picture of this invisible economic activity happening within households and to evaluate the return on investment by focusing more on mothers. To give an example, a (2014) study by the London School of Economics shows that the costs of perinatal mental health problems to society is 5 times more than the cost of improving maternal mental health services<sup>1</sup>.

Investing in mothers in particular addresses the feminization of poverty and the inequitable distribution of unpaid care and domestic work that underpins it. It means recognizing that unpaid domestic and care work is work, valuable work, which sustains the economy and society and ultimately benefits everyone.

Investing in mothers also means equipping mothers with the right tools and support to help them fulfil both their caregiving responsibilities and their roles in the civic and economic spheres. This includes:

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/59885/>

ensuring that every mother benefits from professional training, social protection and health access— including full maternity protection, including access to education - including parenting education— including mental health services - including childcare services, etc.

By doing so, we not only uplift the mothers themselves but also set in motion a positive cycle of inter-generational change-

We at Make Mothers Matter are therefore calling on member States to mobilize resources to recognize and invest in mothers – a smart investment, and a necessary step to move to a much-needed caring society and economy.

Because mothers count –

Thank you!