



PRESS RELEASE

15th MAY 2013: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

Make Mothers Matter International, a global NGO, salutes the International Day of the Families on May 15th by urging governments around the world to review and weigh the socio economic difficulties faced by families. Everywhere in the world, the global financial crisis has created new challenges and burdens, further threatening the structure and wellbeing of the family-unit and endangering the future of our societies.

In many third world countries, unemployed parents often have no other choice than to migrate as a means to support their families. In those instances, mothers leave their children behind to be cared for by relatives, while they find jobs as baby sitters, housekeepers or carers for the elderly in richer countries. Men on the other hand often seek construction jobs abroad. This migration puts much pressure on the families left behind who then are headed by grandparents or often a struggling single parent.

Universally, households are being confronted with extremely difficult situations and choices. Dismal employment prospects offer young adults no alternative other than to “stay and live at home” well into their thirties due to a lack of financial independence. In countries where families are responsible for the care of their elderly members this compounds the burden and forces great sacrifices, causing enormous distress, particularly to the main caregivers of children and parents: mothers.

MMMI urges Governments to focus on the impending demographic age imbalance, when by 2050, for the first time in history, elderly will outnumber the young. It is projected that by that date, in the USA alone, there will only be a ratio 2:6 persons of working-age for every American of retirement age. This ratio was 4:7 in 2008. To compensate, women will be relied upon heavily to fill in the workforce, while also maintaining a positive birthrate. This will only be achievable if serious family/work balance and family friendly policies are implemented; such as allowances for not only childcare but also dependent youth and ageing parents, flexible time work opportunities, and creation of more childcare facilities policies that have proven their beneficial track record in the countries that have implemented them .

The typical governmental approach to family policy, frequently reliant on the individual, ignores the fact that mothers form the cornerstone of society; they not only are the main economic decision makers of households, but spend by and large the most time nurturing and caring for children and elders. If we want a future healthy society it is high time that governments seriously tackle family policies and mother's invaluable contribution to society and the economy, facilitating their dual role of breadwinners while maintaining their supporting role of domestic caregivers and educators.

We join the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner in calling for the need to include a social protection floor and pension systems as a means to protect the most vulnerable populations in the world, reducing ever increasing inequality and sustaining a more equitable economic growth.

We urge governments to partner with the private sector, academia and researches to devise the best family policies practices that would enable mothers to carry on their education and caring role while affording them greater financial security, better health and, in general increased life satisfaction.

About Make Mothers Matter International

Make Mothers Matter International (MMMI), was created in 1947. It is an international, non political and non denominational NGO in general consultative status with the United Nations. MMMI rises the awareness of public opinion and policy makers on the positive action of mothers for peace and their vital contribution to economic, social and cultural development. The MMMI network federates affiliates and associations in 40 countries and represents over 6 million mothers.

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