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Planet 50-50 by 2030
Step It Up for Gender Equality

JOINT STATEMENT: 1 UN for Family Leave and Childcare

We, the Heads of UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNDP and UNFPA, representing over 37,000 UN staff members under the United Nations Common System, are committed to strong gender-responsive, family-friendly policies for all United Nations staff. We are committed to achieving, inter-alia, paid parental leave for all parents regardless of gender, including parents who adopt, foster, or have children through surrogacy or assisted reproductive technology; flexible working arrangements for parents; designated private rooms and appropriate breaks for nursing and pumping; and child-care support for parents with young children.

We encourage the 89th session of the International Civil Service Commission to endorse these policies for the well-being of all UN staff and their families because:

It is the right thing to do:

Family-friendly policies support staff to balance their work and family responsibilities so one need not be chosen over the other. They help reduce the stress and conflict that can arise among families struggling to manage competing work obligations with family demands. They enable bonding between parents and their children, providing a foundation for individual success, family cohesion, and stronger, more sustainable societies.

It is the equitable thing to do:

The United Nations is committed to gender parity for its staff, at all levels, everywhere, as well as to gender equality as a global goal and prerequisite for sustainable development. Companies such as Google, Accenture, and Aetna have reported a significant decrease in employment attrition rates among female employees when effective family-friendly policies are in place. Evidence shows that when such policies support greater paternal involvement in child rearing, this is beneficial to children's social, emotional and cognitive growth, and decreases gender-stereotyping. Additionally, studies show that "the motherhood penalty" – discrimination against mothers in the form of lower likelihood of hiring or promotion, lower salaries, and lower perceived competence and commitment – diminishes in terms of career trajectory in organizations where both parents receive equitable leave.

It is the smart thing to do:

Family-friendly policies are irrefutably linked to better workforce productivity and the ability to attract, motivate, and retain employees. Additionally, by unifying child care and parental leave provisions across United Nations agencies, we not only can streamline human resource systems, inter-agency coordination and career mobility opportunities, but also set good practice standards that support a United Nations-wide enabling environment for high employee morale, job satisfaction and productivity.

It is the healthy thing to do:

Parents in Bangladesh have reported greater productivity and lower absenteeism because of nursing programmes in the workplace, as children were sick less often and parents took less time off as a result. Studies show better development outcomes as well as learning and cognitive improvements for children whose fathers take paternity leave.

We recognize the important consultative efforts of members of formal and informal staff groups from our United Nations agencies who are in support of this statement, including UN Globe who released their Guiding Principles and Proposals on an Inclusive Parental Leave Policy, and advocated for these changes in 2015, UN Feminist Network, UNDP Parents Association, staff associations of all UN agencies through Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations, UNICEF Gender Push group, and UNICEF #EarlyMomentsMatter campaign. It is further supported by UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador Anne Hathaway who [addressed the ICSC](#) on this subject, noting that strong, gender-neutral parental leave policies and child care services for staff are critical to the UN's role as a standard setter and promoter of equality. We also rely on the strategic guidance and support from our respective governing bodies in pursuing these goals.

We commit to reviewing our policies to ensure they reflect best practice and consistency across our agencies, including in the following areas and with a focus on exploring options for:

- Increasing the duration of parental leave (up to 24 weeks) to ensure that all parents have equal rights and adequate time to bond with a child;
- Official designated nursing and pumping rooms and regular breaks;
- Child-care support for parents with young children, and
- Equal treatment and respect for all methods of becoming a parent.

Since its founding, the United Nations has advocated for social and economic empowerment, gender equality, and children's positive development all over the world. As the global champion for human rights, equity and dignity, we consider it our duty to support the women and men who work every day to make these aspirations a reality. We jointly commit to 'walk the talk' for our staff, setting the standards of inclusivity, diversity, and flexibility, that we would want to see in a truly gender equal world, ready to accomplish the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SIGNED BY:



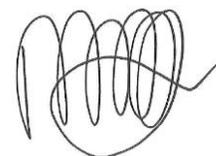
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