

**Intervention by the International Federation for Family Development
Side Event hosted by Hungary – CSW70
*“Intergenerational Solidarity as a Key for Empowering Women in Society”***

Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers, Colleagues, Dear Friends,

Let me begin with a simple observation. Across the world, gender equality is often discussed in boardrooms, parliaments, and labor markets. But in reality, it is first negotiated somewhere much more ordinary: around the kitchen table, between generations, in the everyday organization of care.

At the International Federation for Family Development, present in 68 countries, our central message at this seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is clear: **accelerating gender equality requires investing in parenting in order to rebalance the relationship between caregivers and care receivers. And that balance is fundamentally intergenerational.**

Every day, families quietly sustain our societies. Grandparents care for grandchildren so younger women can remain in the workforce. Adult daughters support ageing parents. Parents invest time, resources, and emotional energy in children’s development.

Yet across the life course, women remain the bridge connecting these generations. Globally, they perform around 80 percent of caregiving responsibilities. Gender inequality is therefore not reproduced only in institutions or labor markets. It is also reproduced in how care is organized across generations.

For this reason, IFFD proposes a **balanced approach to family care and support**, one that recognizes both sides of the equation: those who provide care and those who receive it.

First, **care providers**. Women need real options. Too often, “choice” is framed as a purely individual decision. But **choice without structural support is not**

empowerment, a point we recently emphasized in our written contribution to the United Nations Statistical Commission.

When women must choose between economic security and caregiving responsibilities, that is not freedom. It is constrained decision-making shaped by unequal systems. That is why care must be **recognized, reduced, and redistributed**: recognized in economic and statistical systems, reduced through services and infrastructure, and redistributed among men, institutions, markets, and the State.

But balance also requires attention to **care receivers**. Children need nurturing environments that support their full development, as recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Older persons deserve dignity, autonomy, and participation in society, principles reinforced in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Policies often treat these groups separately. But intergenerational solidarity reminds us that their well-being is deeply interconnected.

When grandparents support childcare, they enable women's economic participation. When fathers take parental leave, they reshape norms for the next generation. When community-based services support older persons, they relieve the pressure on middle-aged daughters who often carry the heaviest caregiving responsibilities. This is what policy coherence across generations looks like.

(Encouragingly, the Political Declaration adopted today at this Commission also recognizes the importance of supporting families in advancing gender equality and social development. This recognition matters because families are not obstacles to women's empowerment. When supported by the right policies, they can be powerful engines of equality.)

To move forward, three priorities are essential.

1. First, invest in care infrastructure. Including accessible childcare and long-term care services. Care systems are as essential to economic development as roads or energy networks.
2. Second, design parental leave policies that actively involve fathers. Without men's engagement in caregiving, redistribution will remain rhetorical.
3. Third, improve the way we measure care. As we argued before the Statistical Commission, statistical systems often measure individuals but fail to capture

the intergenerational networks of care that sustain societies. Without better data on both caregivers and care recipients, policies risk overlooking the real dynamics inside households.

Ultimately, intergenerational solidarity is not only a value. It is a strategy. A strategy to ensure that caregiving does not become the mechanism through which inequality is passed from one generation to the next. Because children learn gender roles first at home. When boys grow up seeing fathers actively engaged in care, equality becomes normal. When girls see caregiving valued and shared, their opportunities expand.

In closing, let me emphasize this: Intergenerational solidarity is strongest when it is **not based on sacrifice, but on shared responsibility**. When caregiving is supported by institutions, not carried disproportionately by women. And when families are empowered—not left alone—to sustain the connections between generations.

If we truly want to accelerate gender equality, we must rebalance care: between women and men, between generations, and between households and public systems.

That is the contribution we hope to advance at this Commission.

Thank you very much.