



Oral STATEMENT
36th session of the Human Right Council

MMM would like to draw the attention of the Council on the particular importance of supporting pregnant women and mothers of very young children in the contexts of migration and the refugee crisis.

Refugees experience severe stress linked to poverty, violence, discrimination, insecurity, anxiety or culture shock. But the challenges are even bigger for pregnant women who must face the nightmare of giving birth in a refugee camp, and mothers with infants or very young children.

It is now well established that such stress can have particularly detrimental effects during pregnancy and early childhood when the developing brain of a child is very sensitive to environmental influences. What children experience during these early years, including in utero, sets a critical foundation for their entire life course.

During this period, parental protective, nurturing and stimulating presence is especially important for a child to develop to their full potential. It is therefore of critical importance to support mothers in their caring and nurturing role, and ensure that stress linked to resettlement is minimized.

MMM therefore calls on States and policy makers to pay particular attention to migrant and refugee mothers; in particular:

- To ensure safe and community spaces for them and their children, with access to adequate healthcare
- To support them in their parenting role through targeted interventions, and promote the healthy physical, emotional and cognitive development of their children.

Every child has the right to thrive, not just to survive. And every mother has the right to see her child thrive.

Thank you!

Make Mother Matter - MMM - 5 rue de l'Université 75007 Paris, France - Tel/fax: +33 1 42 88 27 28
mmmi@makemothersmatter.org - www.makemothersmatter.org
Contact in Geneva: Karen Thorsen & Valerie Bichelmeier - un-geneva@makemothersmatter.org

Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international NGO created in 1947 to raise the awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations, and thus transparently voices the concerns of mothers at international level with permanent MMM representatives at the United Nations (General Consultative Status), UNESCO and the European Union.