



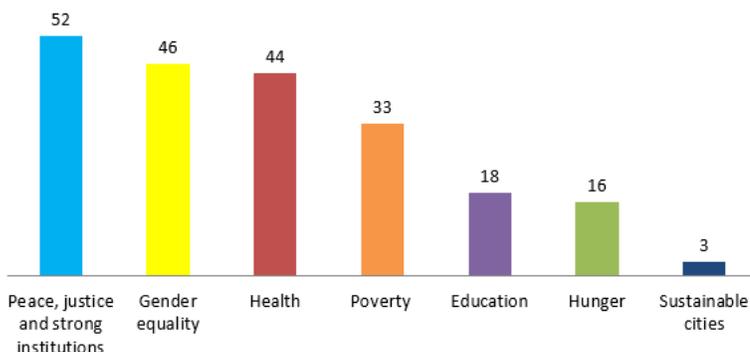
# Family-oriented policies and priorities in Voluntary National Reviews (2016-2019)

The analysis of 127 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by 114 UN Member States (13 Governments reported more than once) indicates that families may be key to ensure progress towards the SDGs by 2030, with close to 90 per cent of countries making specific references to families. Governments consider family policies especially useful for the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, and 16.

Governments mostly refer to families as units of diagnosis or as targets in their efforts towards the achievement of SDGs above, but family-oriented policies are not considered an integral part of overall development efforts.

The potential of families and family-oriented policies to achieve SDGs remains to be fully addressed in overall socio-economic policy making.

## Member States reporting family-oriented policies



## Reporting on family-oriented policies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1-5, 11 & 16 (2016-2019)



Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Saint Lucia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay

Out of the 95 Member States reporting on poverty, 33 are developing sound family-oriented policies to combat it. Some have implemented programmes that work closely with targeted families; others work with families as co-managers of programmes; and some involve parents in planning to overcome their precarious socioeconomic conditions or address their specific needs.

Families are regarded as active agents in development and are well supported in countries that have a robust institutional welfare system. In others, the institutional context is more challenging and assistance to low-income families provided on ad hoc basis.



France, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, New Zealand, Brazil, India, Lao PDR, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Thailand, Australia, Canada, Israel, Indonesia

Some Member States with a well-developed welfare system, have promoted family farming as a tool to reinforce big chains of production-commercialisation-consumption of food to boost agriculture while integrating vulnerable families. Others facing major challenges as a result of hunger and food insecurity, primarily implement it to support vulnerable families.

Few Member States have developed educational and health efforts aimed at changing parental behaviours to improve children's nutrition.



Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chile, Croatia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, Panama, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Zimbabwe



Although substantial progress is reported, several Member States address maternal, neonatal and infant mortality rates primarily through a medical and clinical lens, which has been acknowledged as necessary but insufficient to achieve SDG 3 targets.

Adolescent pregnancy and the use of contraceptive methods are either underreported or are a cause of concern. Due to prevalent gender-biased values, most countries fall behind in developing policies in these areas.



Bhutan, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Iceland, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mongolia, New Zealand, Palau, Singapore, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Switzerland

Early Childhood Education is offered in several countries, but only 11 have implemented programmes to empower parents as collaborative agents in improving the quality of education. They aim at developing parenting skills and engaging parents in school plans to enhance children’s proficiency and competence. Some Member States have extended this to primary education.

Few Member States have introduced the development of values and ‘soft skills’, promoting ethical stands based on civic culture and human rights but families, as intergenerational agents, are not involved in reinforcing them.



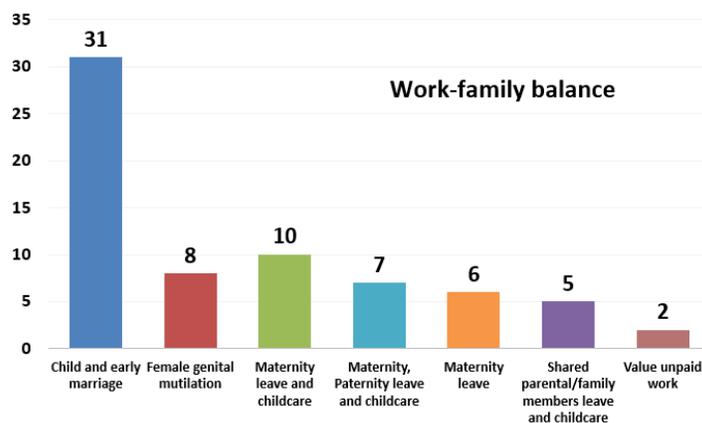
Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

Gender equality remains a widespread and central concern. All reporting Governments have or are in the process of incorporating gender equality issues at the legislative level.

These measures represent most of the efforts undertaken, and several Member States have acknowledged their limited reach to reduce gender inequality due to the deep sociocultural barriers grounded in prevailing traditional gender values.

The most effective family-oriented policies are within the field of family-work balance. 12 Member States provide different, coordinated and comprehensive parental leave schemes to promote a better-shared responsibility and conciliation between family and work. Some also provide flexible work, public or private childcare facilities, or shared parental or family relative’s leave to alleviate women’s work burden and promote their empowerment.

### Member States reporting on family-oriented policies to ensure gender equality



Australia, Sweden, United Kingdom

24 Member States reported progress with respect to inclusive and accessible green and open public areas. However, only 3 involve families, through legislations or programmes, in feeding policymaking, planning and management of local areas, such as residents deciding where new homes, green spaces and other facilities should go and how they should ‘look and feel’.


**16** PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS


Albania, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Singapore, Spain

Although the information is insufficient, violence against children and women are reported as serious challenges by several countries. Strategies to combat it have been focused mainly on victim support and legislative measure. However, comprehensive, family-oriented policies are either lacking or fragile.

Parental violence against children is often reported as a result of domestic violence rather than harsh parenting practices. Hence, only Australia, Germany and Norway have implemented positive parenting programmes aimed at reducing it.

Member States acknowledge that sexual violence against women by age 18 is an issue of concern. It is exerted primarily by intimate partners. Similarly, it is primarily noted as an issue of domestic rather than gender-based violence. Therefore, the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at empowering women and building equal, close and positive partner relationship is hindered.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- To accelerate progress towards SDGs, family-oriented policies should be integrated into overall socio-economic policymaking
- Multidimensional perspectives in policy design, including the role of families, must be reinforced
- Health policies must work at the sociocultural level and in coordination with medical programmes to extend the reach of family-oriented policies
- It is necessary to go beyond legislative measures and address socio-cultural barriers to tackle violence against women and children, adolescent pregnancy, child and early marriage and other relevant issues

## KEY MESSAGES

### The family lens approach is lacking

- Family-oriented policies and priorities are still absent in most national plans and sustainable development strategies.
- Several Member States address families as beneficiaries but the potential of families as agents of development remains underutilized.
- The integrative nature of the 2030 Agenda demands multisectoral and comprehensive actions and the recognition of spill-over effects between SDGs.
- Many VNRs show a transitional trend towards assuming such approaches but a few Governments have undertaken a family lens approach to combat poverty, hunger; overcome education and healthcare challenges as well as gender inequality and violence against children and women.

### Data collection

- Data collection and the development of statistical indicators are lagging.
- The disaggregation of information by sex, age and other factors remains a challenge for many countries. Without these, a correct assessment of needs and challenges for informing policymaking regarding families and SDGs remains difficult if not impossible.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**