

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

15 May 2015

The theme of this year's International Day of Families – “Men in Charge?” – highlights the importance of gender equality and children's rights in contemporary families.

Around the world, more women are becoming recognized as the equal partners and decision-makers in families that they should be, thus helping to ensure a conducive environment for the full and harmonious development of children.

Yet in too many countries, discrimination against women and disregard for children's rights remain built into family laws and Government policies, and prevailing social norms often condone and justify many discriminatory practices.

The social and economic costs are felt by all. Discrimination and neglect often lead to violence, threatening women's and children's health and limiting their chances to complete education and fulfil their potential. The cycle tends to continue into the next generation, as children experiencing violence are more likely to resort to violence in their adult lives.

Equitable social and economic development depends on fair legal frameworks and social norms that support the rights of women and children. Discriminatory laws and practices that do not give equal rights to all, and that suppress women's and children's rights, have no place in contemporary families, communities, societies and nations.

On this International Day, let us resolve to change legal and social norms that support male control over women, reinforce discrimination and prevent the elimination of violence against vulnerable family members. As we shape a new sustainable development agenda and strive for a world of dignity for all, let us stand united for women's and children's rights in families and societies at large.