



**Expert Group Meeting
Families and Climate Change
New York, 15-16 May 2024**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Climate Change

- Recognise the home and household as the primary place and source of positive response to challenges posed by climate change and prioritize families, homes and households as fundamental units and critical agents in learning, education and shared concerns about climate change. They should inform life-long climate choices as a collective social unit rather than the current focus on individual attitudes.
- Take action to empower families as educators, consumers and advocates for climate change.
- Invest in public awareness campaigns on the risks of climate change and the importance of climate action and the role of families in it.
- Trust homes to respond in ways which will make the most difference in their own context. Governments need to revisit their top-down instructional approach and work within regional/ community "real" boundaries and ecosystems for change rather than the current focus on political messaging and national targets that have limited meaning on the family and community level.
- Build contexts in which homes can function at their best for the good of all. Governments need to force a radical approach towards a holistic approach to housing within a relational model of lived neighbourhoods where natural

and social interests are integrated and complementary within a meaningful, connected, and sustainable living.

- Recognize and actively involve youth and families and their organisations as key agents in shaping a sustainable future through meaningful engagement and participation in decision-making processes.
- Embrace the dual role of families as both consumers and producers to foster a more sustainable and inclusive society for present and future generations.
- Ensure targeted support for families, particularly those in vulnerable situations, to address the financial challenges posed by climate change impacts.
- Expand tax incentives for green technologies, products, and services to incentivize their adoption and promote sustainable consumption practices among households.
- Develop and effectively implement policies, standards and incentives to ensure that families, at the household level, adopt consumption behaviours that support and contribute to environmental sustainability.
- Advocate for policies that promote product longevity and sustainability, such as implementing longer warranties and the right to repair for items like computers, cars, and household appliances, encouraging durability and reducing waste.
- Strengthen families and highlight the important role they can play in creating better conditions for the climate and the importance of family unity in building resilience in society.
- Design policies that enable families and individuals to make the right consumption choices through various incentives such as reduced taxes on essential and ecological basic goods and increased prices for goods with a negative environmental impact.
- Place the highest demands on those responsible for the majority of the emissions and require all emissions to be reported without exception for any activity, such as the armed forces and military industry. The investment in

peace must accelerate as conflicts have a strong negative impact on climate change.

- Develop a clear and comprehensible narrative about how the climate transition is to be implemented. GDP should be replaced with better measuring instruments based on sustainability principles for both the earth and humanity's needs rather than based on constant economic growth.
- Prioritize corporate responsibility laws to help stem factors associated with climate change.

Interlinkages between climate change and other megatrends

Demographic Trends

- Develop or increase coverage of family-oriented social protection mechanisms to ensure food security at all times world regions vulnerable to climate change effects.
- Use an inclusive, intergenerational response to climate change through engaging youth to draw from their creativity, innovation and relatively advanced technology skills to pursue the climate action agenda not only internationally but also at regional, national, local and community levels. Similarly, engage with older persons and ensure that they are informed about current and emergent climate crises, their consequences, and mitigation and adaptation strategies also uphold their rights, agency and dignity.
- Invest in more effective policies focusing on promoting family values, countering information overload, and fostering a commitment to building a future through family life. Promote measures, such as policies with economic incentives, equal job opportunities, and recognizing motherhood as a full-time job, which can boost youth confidence in investing in a family.
- Prioritize awareness campaigns for genuine sustainable living instead of endorsing unnecessary production.
- Develop plans at all levels, fostering critical thinking, reframing narratives, addressing negative psychological impacts, creating supportive

environments for parents, and providing economic compensations for families reducing their consumption.

- Address declining birth rates with a nuanced understanding of various factors, including climate change anxiety and shifts towards individualism in society.
- Recognize that there's no one-size-fits-all solution, and potential secondary effects of simplistic approaches must be considered. As economic challenges and climate anxiety undermine the family's role in social development, restoring confidence in ourselves and our roots is crucial to overcoming fear and approaching the future with realism and courage.

Migration and Urbanization

- Recognize changes in migration patterns due to environmental changes or crisis. Visa options and the category of “environmental refugee” need to be created if adaptation and return to countries of origin is not possible. The development of structured pathways for regular migration, as well as mitigation and adaptation strategies need to be instituted.
- Reduce the policy barriers for return migration.
- Increase investments in irrigation, infrastructures, training for new skill sets to help local populations stay in place despite changes to agricultural lands are needed.
- Invest in early warning systems and preparedness to ensure the safety of local populations in the event of environmental crises.
- Strengthen social security programs and community-level supports and interventions to minimize the reproduction of vulnerabilities within households related to migration.
- Take into consideration gender issues and programs as they are often forgotten in policy decisions on migration (for instance, designating separate shelters with protected toilets and bath areas for women and girls so that they are safe).

- Offer training and skill building programmes for migrants towards job needs in higher-income countries.
- Prioritize childcare needs for migrant parents so they can learn new skills.
- Disaggregate data needs to be prioritized to help inform cooperation and scaled-up climate action.
- Support programmes and policies that take the varying population in urban areas into account.
- Incorporate green spaces in urban design.
- Adopt a family system approach in addressing the needs and circumstances of migrants in concentrated areas as well as environmental migrants. Without limiting the capacity of the host communities, interventions in this regard need to be culturally sensitive and context-specific and, for the most part, should aim to build social cohesion through, *inter alia*, availing basic services and facilities (appropriate family housing, safe water, sanitation, primary and mental health services); economic equality and inclusion, parenting and interfamily support; and recreational and arts facilities for migrant families members across the life-course.
- Enable access to smart phones during migration and resettlement to help family members connect with one another and with local services and housing.
- Invest in sustainable city design stemming from the breakdown of large cities and metropolis into smaller sustainable and self-sufficient neighbourhoods relying on technology as support infrastructure for families.

Technological Change

- Ensure that technological innovation to address climate change is part of collaborative and continuous global solutions.

- Implement policies integrating technology in climate action that keep abreast of future tech, especially the value of artificial intelligence (AI).
- Include women's contributions to technological innovation and promote collaboration with Indigenous areas and those regions vulnerable to the greatest impacts of rising temperatures.
- Invest in education on climate change, including critical thought to identify and dispel misinformation. A component of this education is about the power and potential of information and communications technology (ICT) which is often used to transmit information from person to person, spread misinformation and thus create polarization on climate issues.
- Hold accountable technology/social media platform companies to do more to combat the spread of misinformation about climate issues.

Indigenous perspectives and family farming

- Identify local regenerative family farms and Indigenous communities focused on ecosystem health and engage them when writing developing policy to ensure that subsidies, insurance policies, grant opportunities, and sales channels are supporting a regenerative local food system. (for Government agencies)
- Identify opportunities to educate and engage families in their local communities to be active participants in ecological land management. Local farms interested in engaging the public can host the families for educational workdays or engagement opportunities can be organized on public lands. (for Government agencies)
- At the local, regional, and national level - include youth and families of color as they can be important climate advocates at the leadership table. (for leaders and land managers)

- Invite youth of color and their families who are Indigenous and of mestizo background and those who have indigenous farming heritage to learn about their farming ancestry and to have a voice.
- Invest in biodiversity as a key to climate resilience, whether in agricultural fields or in communities.

Family stability

- Develop and implement family support programs, such as those promoting healthy communication skills, conflict resolution, and relationship management within families which in turn could contribute to reducing divorce rates and strengthening family stability, that may, in turn, contribute to environmental sustainability.
- Address the social determinants of family stability as policies aimed at tackling issues like poverty, unemployment, and access to affordable housing can create a more supportive environment for families, potentially reducing divorce rates.
- Integrate family stability considerations into environmental policy. Environmental policy discussions and interventions should consider the potential social impacts on families. For example, policies promoting sustainable housing options could consider affordability and family needs.
- Invest in further research: More research is needed to explore the relationship between family stability and environmental sustainability across diverse contexts. This research could inform the development of more effective policies for both social and environmental pathways.

Unpaid work, work-family balance, children*

- Value unpaid care and domestic work to strengthen families and recognize the time and invaluable work that mainly women do throughout the world.
- Invest in remote and flexible working arrangements as they break gender barriers, empowering women and minorities and ensure equal access to this opportunity, expanding it to minority groups.

- Enable parents to balance professional responsibilities with caregiving duties more effectively to foster stronger family bonds and facilitate greater involvement in children’s lives.
- Recognize the role of men in caregiving by granting paternity leave and facilitating parental leave for both parents after the initial maternity leave while offering flexible working arrangements as needed.
- Implement policies that allow employees to balance their work responsibilities with family demands: provide flexibility in scheduling, breaks, and vacations; offer annual leave, short emergency leaves, part-time options with flexible hours and accrued hours, telecommuting, reduced working hours, and limits on overtime.
- Provide benefits that make family responsibilities and work more compatible: establish or subsidize quality, affordable childcare facilities and other family services and facilities to assist workers in meeting both work and family obligations, extending support beyond childcare to include eldercare.
- Promote a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities between men and women: create networking opportunities for both fathers and mothers, offer training courses for them, etc.
- Offer support to mothers and fathers returning to work after a period of family-related leave. Examples such as maternity mentoring and employee resource groups for parents can facilitate this process.
- Ensure that workers with family responsibilities have equal opportunities and treatment in terms of job access, promotions, and job security compared to other workers. Work on showcasing successful internal cases to debunk biases or biases related to family and career integration.
- Strengthen social dialogue and coordination among companies, trade unions, civil society, and governments to ensure coherent policies and measures that promote a greater understanding, recognition, and distribution of family responsibilities between men and women.
- Implement Universal Child Benefits (UCBs), what UNICEF and the ILO now call the “foundational policy for development.” Sufficiently sized, UCBs could eradicate extreme child poverty around the globe. If resources are scarce, countries could consider beginning with the youngest children who on average receive the smallest share of government expenditures on children—in direct contradiction to the wealth of evidence of the importance of investments in the earliest years. Once in place UCBs allow governments to know where their children are. In emergencies, benefits can piggyback on

this knowledge. With the increasing frequency of climate shocks, families will need both consistent and emergency assistance.

- Count children fully in all rebates, dividends, and other cash payments. Direct payments - with varied purposes and names including economic impact payments, stimulus payments, dividends, and rebates - arise regularly in family policy as well as in family policy proposals. Often an afterthought, children are seldom considered in such policies. When families grow, it is almost always through the addition of an infant. As such, family policies that are per household or cap benefits on certain family sizes, disproportionately impact the youngest members of society. Using *per capita* rebates instead of *per household* rebates is also consistent with policies designed to encourage less use of energy in the face of the climate crisis. When people move in together, they use less energy on average.
- Ensure that the needs of infants and other children under school age are met, move towards spending parity for young children in allocations dedicated to children.

* Recommendations in this section have not been discussed in detail during the meeting