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Child-first Advocacy

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H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Office of the Secretary-General
S-3800, United Nations Secretariat Bldg
New York, NY 10017

April 10, 2018

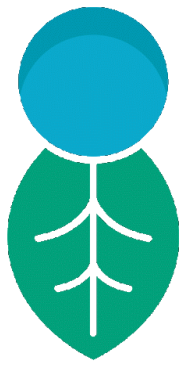
Re: Open Letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres regarding the urgent need for a new statement on family planning

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

This week, the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (“the Commission”) will hold their fifty-first session. The Commission meets at a critical juncture, when [small changes in average fertility rates will have massive impacts on population growth](#), when those impacts will be felt well beyond the borders of particular countries due to globalization, and when - under current policies - world population will continue to skyrocket to well over ten billion people in this century alone.

Former Secretaries-General have issued influential statements on family planning, and the meeting of the Commission creates an opportunity for you to do so. Prior statements have focused on parents; we urge you to consider instead focussing on the needs of future children, and how those needs (like those laid out in the Children’s’ Rights Convention (“the Convention”)) must shape [truly human rights-based family planning models](#). Circumstances have changed since many of the prior statements were made; a new statement is urgently needed.

- Several studies confirm that [smaller families](#) are the best way to confront climate change, as well as other and related environmental crises. If we take climate change seriously, we must laud the benefits of a global family planning ethic that promotes smaller families.



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- The science of early childhood development [shows the disproportionate impact the beginning of our lives](#) has on the rest of our lives. This holds true, among other things, for [economic inequality](#). Thus any attempt to ensure children's rights, like those in the Convention, must begin with family planning. Other interventions are simply too late. A statement from your office on child-centered family planning will emphasize its necessity.
- Better family planning is now understood to be an [effective way](#) to prevent the conditions that give rise to terrorism and other conflict-based threats to human rights and democracy. In today's world, a new statement on this role for family planning is required.

Your statement on the current science and the need for a new ethic and a truly human rights-based approach to family planning is vital to recognizing family planning as the most effective long-term solution to many of today's problems. We need a family planning norm centered on maximizing the planning for and care of children. We urge you to consider issuing a statement on family planning, one that accounts for the updated science, focuses on the needs of the child, and recognizes the unique role family planning plays in shaping the future of the world.

Sincerely,

Anne Green

Anne Green, PhD
Executive Director
Having Kids

[Having Kids](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to reforming family planning by replacing parent-centered family planning models with the human rights-based and child-first Fair Start model.