

HAVING KIDS™

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

September 27, 2018

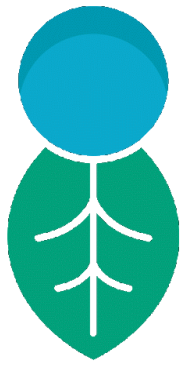
Re: Open Letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres regarding the urgent need for a new statement on family planning

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We write to follow up on our [letter of April 10, 2018](#) suggesting that you make an informal statement on the need for a new ethic, and a truly human rights-based approach, to family planning. We need a family planning model that explicitly promotes smaller, equitable and sustainable families. As you know, [small changes in average fertility rates have massive impacts on population growth](#), and [smaller families](#) are the best way to confront climate change, as well as other and related environmental crises.

Since our last letter, several new studies have confirmed the dire threat posed by climate change, including its impact on the increasing threat of [pestilence and crop losses](#), the severity of [hurricanes and other weather threats](#), and the [degradation of all ecosystems on earth](#).

Simply stated, the [current family planning model](#) used by the United Nations was developed before we learned what we know today about climate change, the disproportionate impact of early childhood development on human wellbeing, the way birth conditions and early childhood can exacerbate inequality, etc. The current family planning model makes our future less secure, healthy and equitable than it should be.



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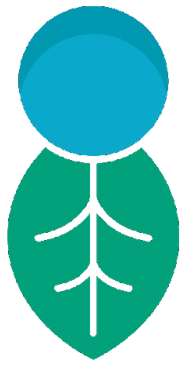
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Former Secretaries-General have issued influential statements on family planning, and the meeting of the Commission creates an opportunity for you to do so. Prior statements have focused on parents; we urge you to consider instead focussing on the 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.
- 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. In fact, a child-first model based on giving all kids a fair start would advance all 17 of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals.



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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](http://HavingKids.org) 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.