Greater involvement by men in childcare improves mental health and reduces harmful behaviors, a senior Rwandan gender official told lawmakers Thursday, as the government continues efforts to promote more balanced household responsibilities.

Silas Ngayaboshya, Director General for Gender Promotion and Women's Empowerment at the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), made the remarks while addressing members of both chambers of Parliament on integrating gender considerations into national planning.

He cited research showing that fathers who actively participate in raising children often experience reduced alcohol consumption, improved mental well-being, and a lower likelihood of using corporal punishment.



Silas Ngayaboshya, Director General for Gender Promotion and Women's Empowerment at the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)

"Research shows that a man who takes care of children reduces alcohol consumption, and the levels go down significantly. He also enjoys better mental health," he said. "Sharing household responsibilities is not a burden; it becomes a burden when it is not shared."

Ngayaboshya called for a fairer distribution of unpaid domestic work, which is often carried out by women, saying tasks such as cooking, cleaning, childcare and caring for elderly relatives should be shared within families.

"For family life to function well, it is important to have a fair distribution of household tasks," he said.

He added that unpaid domestic labor plays a central role in family stability and national development, despite often being undervalued.

"This work builds the family first, and the family becomes the foundation for building the nation," he said.

Ngayaboshya also cautioned against assigning household roles based on traditional gender expectations, urging families to consider time availability and cooperation instead.

Recalling a training session, he said a participant described enjoying cooking but was later told by a spouse never to enter the kitchen after marriage.

He warned that unequal sharing of domestic responsibilities can strain families and, in some cases, contribute to household breakdowns and wider social challenges.