Members of Parliament on Tuesday called for stronger and more stable families, warning that unresolved household conflicts and weak parental guidance are increasingly affecting young people and undermining social cohesion.

The call was made during a national dialogue on family welfare and youth behavior, which brought together members of Parliament, senators, government officials and civil society organizations working on social development.

Uwineza Beline, the Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies in charge of Parliamentary Affairs said safe and harmonious families are essential to national progress, describing the family unit as the foundation of society.

“The family is the backbone of the nation,” Uwineza said. “When families are free from conflict, they create citizens who are secure, responsible and able to contribute to the country’s development.”

She said family conflicts in Rwanda are often driven by disputes over property management, poor communication between spouses, alcoholism, infidelity and misunderstandings around gender equality. Such challenges, she said, tend to affect children most and can shape negative behavior later in life.

The dialogue focused on identifying practical measures to prevent family breakdown and reinforce positive values among young people, who leaders say will shape Rwanda’s future.

Uwineza emphasized the role of parenting, saying children need consistent guidance to grow into responsible adults. She urged parents and institutions to invest more time and resources in upbringing, noting that today’s youth are tomorrow’s parents and leaders.

Member of Parliament Gihana Donatha said findings from a community assessment conducted in March 2025 by the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians showed that many households continue to struggle with domestic violence, poverty and substance abuse.

The assessment also found cases of neglect of family responsibilities, misuse of household property and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, she said.

Representing the youth, François Nyamaswa said young people face mounting pressures, including unemployment, limited trust from older generations and the growing influence of technology and social media. He added that many youths lack adequate guidance at home and have limited understanding of cultural values.

University lecturer Chaste Uwihoreye said building strong families does not require complex solutions. He said open communication, mutual respect, trust and shared responsibilities are key to preventing conflict.

He warned that persistent disputes, silence between family members, abandonment of duties and rising mental health challenges are signs of families in distress. However, Uwihoreye said families can recover through dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring responsibility.