

STATEMENTS BY NATIONAL DELEGATIONS FINAL SESSION, 25 MARCH 2015

Your Excellency the Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Dear colleagues in Parliaments

distinguished guests

- It has been a great honour for Italy to be part of this dynamic WIP event in Addis Ababa and I want to warmly thank the organizers for the excellent management of the meeting and the very interesting debates. The award that Italy received yesterday for the progress in assuring a more gender-balanced composition of our Government is a source of true satisfaction, the testimony that our efforts are acknowledged and can be an inspiring example to other countries.
- Twenty years have gone by since the Beijing Conference and we feel that Italy has now entered “a new era” as far as the presence of women in public life is concerned:
 - the percentage of Women in Parliament has raised from 11% to 31% at the Chamber of Deputies and from 8% to 30% at the Senate;
 - the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies is now a woman, Laura Boldrini, while another colleague, Valeria Fedeli, is deputy president of the Senate. The top officers in both the Chambers are women;
 - in 1995 only 20% of our Ministers were women, whereas now they are 40%, responsible for “heavy” portfolios like defence, institutional reforms, economic development;
 - some of the women who achieved top priority posts in Italian politics have been supported to take up new responsibilities at the international level. It is the case of Federica Mogherini, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and now EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
- We could get to this point after long battles and some setbacks. We are therefore very much aware of how important it is to build on this positions and make good use of the power we finally conquered, in order to multiply the benefits for women and assure that they are consolidated.
Let me mention only a few things that we have managed to do in one year in the present Parliament: we passed a law to ratify the Istanbul Convention to fight violence against women; we then passed a resolution on the same topic and later on a law against the killing of women.
Other important steps were taken in recent years in Italy, like specific electoral laws to guarantee a gender balanced presence in institutions at

local, regional and European level, or the law that establishes gender quotas for boards of directors in companies rated in the stock exchange or with a public participation.

- Is the glass ceiling definitely broken in Italy? Can we feel satisfied other than proud?

Unfortunately not. Beyond numbers, the way to go is still very long in terms of gender policies, quality of female presence and cultural change. Moreover, backtracking is a serious risk to be monitored carefully.

We need to remain focused on results, keep mobilizing resources, attract more enlightened men in our campaign for the female cause. But above all, we need to reinforce solidarity among ourselves and to strengthen our national and international networks, in order to have powerful tools to support more and more women in the competition for top-ranking positions.

- Let me conclude by thanking the African Union Commission and its President for hosting us during these three intensive days. Since her appointment, Madame Zuma has worked hard to put female issues on top of the African agenda and the theme chosen for this year, "women empowerment", is a good proof of it. Women's priorities in Europe or in Africa may be sometimes different, but our cause is global and our ultimate goal is the same.

By taking part in this WIP event, Italy wants to renew its commitment to strongly contribute at the international level to shape better international decisions and policies for women of all continents.

Thank you very much.