

## **SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN**

Council Meeting United Nations, New York, 08 and 09 July 2015

### **SIW's Vision for Beijing+20 – Gender Equality, Democracy and Political Participation in a Global World**

#### Opening Speech

Dear Ouafa, president of SIW

Dear councillor Cupellini, of the Italian Mission at United Nations

Dear sisters and comrades,

let me express my gratitude to the Italian foreign affair minister and the Italian mission at UN for “hosting” our Council, the council of Socialist International Women gathered to discuss our vision for Beijing + 20.

In particular I want to thank councillor Cupellini who made it possible for us to be here, at Un premises, to discuss issues dear to our heart and commitment in such an important place, full of symbolic and not only symbolic meaning. She dedicated her time to make our meeting possible and for this I thank her warmly.

In a way we can say that Italy is the hostess of the meeting and it is our customs to present the hosting country as far as women’ condition is concerned.

I am proud to say that good news can be announced and I will start speaking of the award that Italy received in march, in Addis Ababa at the Global Summit of WIP (Women in Parliament) for the progress in assuring a more gender-balanced composition of our Government. The award 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; our top officer at UN is a woman;
- 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 these 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 a couple of years 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 (femicidio).

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 Italian Mission and Councillor Cupellini once more. By hosting the SIW meeting and making this event possible, Italy shows to renew its commitment to strongly contribute to shape better international decisions and policies for women of all continents.

Thank you very much.