



# ITALY

**55<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**STATEMENT BY**

**HON. MARIA ROSARIA CARFAGNA  
MINISTER FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

Last year the celebration of the anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and its related platform gave us the opportunity to reiterate forcefully our wish to further progress towards the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women, wherever they may be, in the interest of all humankind.

This is why in my statement last year I had the pleasure to announce the imminent adoption in Italy of two important plans of action. Today, one year later, these plans have become a reality and they constitute a valuable aid that highlight the role of women in the economic and social life of my country. I am referring to the plan, "Italia 2020. Action Program for the inclusion of women in the labor market" (adopted in December 2009) and the related Memorandum of Understanding, regarding the criteria for allocating 40 million euros in financial resources to projects that assure a balance between the work and social dimensions of life. Both achievements encourage the presence of women in the labor market by introducing concrete new measures, namely: the creation of child-care services; economic support for those who work from home through tele-working; and tax breaks for Southern Italian women. This extensive program has been followed by many smaller projects that establish the principles of equal opportunity and gender mainstreaming, improve the quality of life and promote female entrepreneurship, especially in the regions of Southern Italy, where women experience particular hardships.

As regards this year's theme, I wish to underline that in Italy the number of women who take up a career in the Sciences has seen a remarkable increase in the past twenty years. However, only a minimal share of the leadership positions in the world of research are occupied by women. According to the 2009 Report of the European Commission, "She-Figures: Statistics and Indicators of Gender Equality in the Sciences" 33% of Italian researchers are women (higher than the European average of 30%), but only 20% of them attain leadership positions. The Sciences therefore suffer from many of the same phenomena of exclusion that affect women in other areas of political, economic, and social life.

In Italy we have achieved full literacy for girls, so there is no longer cause for concern over this issue today. The focus of government institutions is rather on the access to and the participation of women, especially middle-aged women, in science and technology training courses, in view of today's knowledge-based global economy. Gender disparities continue to exist in these fields and have a debilitating effect on research and the labor market.

To address this failing, I am pleased to briefly illustrate what has been done recently to assure the implementation of equal opportunity policies at every level in the fields of science, technology, and scientific research. I would like to draw your attention to two important programs coordinated by my Ministry. The first project, named “Practicing Gender Equality in Science” indicates good practices in the field of scientific research. It concluded in 2009 with the publication of “Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in the Sciences”. The second project entitled “Women’s Careers Hitting the Target” monitors, directs, and analyzes gender diversity in university public research and will conclude its findings in the near future.

In September 2010, together with my colleague the Minister of Education, Universities and Research, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at achieving gender equality in the Sciences, and the advancement of women’s careers, particularly in the decision-making positions.

My Ministry has also introduced in the Italian state schools “the week against violence.” Now in its third edition, students, parents and teachers come together to reflect on and debate issues concerning the dangers to society caused by gender stereotyping.

Italy’s commitment to the fight against gender-based violence has been constant. I am pleased to announce that for the first time, Italy has adopted a National Plan to fight violence against women and stalking. This plan draws on the experience of anti-violence centers spread throughout Italy. Another important achievement has been the recent adoption of a National Action Plan on the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security”, that will strengthen our action in this field.

In closing, I wish to briefly mention Italy’s long standing commitment to the eradication of the practice of female genital mutilations: by virtue of this commitment, on February 24th, on the margins of this session of the CSW, we are hosting, together with a series of distinguished personalities an event that will discuss the measures already adopted and the new strategies proposed to fight against this phenomenon. I hope this event will further progress toward our common goal.

Thank you for your attention.