

Side Event
Positive Parenting and Social Inclusion: Vulnerability of Families with Children
Thursday, April 4th, 2019 - United Nations Headquarters (New York)

Welcoming Remarks

Simona De Martino

First Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here and represent the Italian Government at this event on the vulnerability of families with children, which is a top priority of our Government's agenda.

I would first like to thank the IFFD for the invitation to co-sponsor the event and all the speakers who will follow me for their contribution.

This gives me the opportunity to illustrate briefly some of the measures that the Italian Government is currently implementing to support all families, and especially families in vulnerable situations.

We have set up a dedicated Family Policies Fund to which significant financial resources have been allocated to address the most urgent needs of families in situations of vulnerability.

The Fund finances measures supporting the family, family planning, maternity and paternity, and elderly people within the family. The Fund also promotes the role of Family Centres, and programs to prevent all forms of child sexual abuse, paedophilia and child pornography and will be used to provide financial and other forms of support to children orphaned by domestic crimes or who have witnessed domestic violence.

For families living in conditions of poverty, particularly worthy of mention is the Family Card, whose beneficiaries are households with at least three children under 26 years of age. The Card allows these families to receive incentives and discounts for the purchase of goods and services, with a focus on food and social services.

With a view to increasing its birth rate, Italy also provides for a monthly benefit granted to poor families for each newborn or adopted child up to their first year of age. A total amount of 444 million euros for 2019 has been allocated for this measure.

The Budget Law also entitles parents to apply for an additional benefit amounting to a maximum of 1500 euros for each child born starting from 1 January 2016 for the payment of both public and private nursery fees, as well as of forms of domestic care services for children under 3 years and suffering from serious chronic diseases.

Dear Colleagues,

Indeed, reconciliation between work and family life is an essential aspect concerning not only the private lives of women and men, but also their public, political and social spheres and has a clear

impact on the equal sharing of the domestic burden within the family, with a particular focus on the care of children.

With the 2019 Budget Law, the Italian Government has earmarked further resources of about 104 million euros under the Family Policies Fund to implement policies and actions for the promotion of the work-life balance - considered essential to supporting parenthood.

The Law now enables working mothers to enjoy more flexibility in the use of their maternity leave, while compulsory paternity leave has been increased to 5 days.

Italy has introduced, in both the public and private sectors, smart working (teleworking) and flexible working arrangements that contribute to meeting the organizational needs of companies and public administrations, while ensuring the individual wellbeing of working women and men with limited management costs – thus resulting in improved services for families.

Additionally, an Institutional Committee on the work-life balance of the Department for Family Policies of the Prime Minister's Office was established to facilitate the exchange of good practices and experience on this topic among the 60 member companies.

The Italian Government is also particularly attentive to the wellbeing of children, especially those children living in disadvantaged and vulnerable conditions.

In this regard, I am proud to mention that Italy's Law 119 of 2013 - what is known as the Law on Femicide - introduced in the Italian Criminal Code a new aggravating factor, namely witnessing violence, a phenomenon that is already alarming in its scope, touching a growing number of children every year, who in some cases suddenly become orphans because of domestic crimes committed within their family.

In order to help these children and support them in their growth, the 2019 Budget Law has provided for the allocation of about 5 million euros for children orphaned by domestic crimes and for their foster families.

Dear Colleagues,

Italy is doing a great deal to support vulnerable families and their children through the implementation of these measures, which are meant to be structural and able to ensure the sustainability of results over time. These measures aim at creating a comprehensive system for the proper identification and concrete satisfaction of family needs.

This is now our common challenge: to ensure a better future for our families, our children and all people living in situations of vulnerability and fighting every day for a decent life.

Thank you.