



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità

Intervento della Ministra per la Famiglia, la Natalità e le Pari Opportunità,
On. Eugenia Roccella

in occasione del side event
“Building Momentum Towards a Moratorium on Surrogacy”

22 June 2026 (2.00pm-3.00pm)

Geneva, Palais des Nations
Room XI

Thank you, Ambassador.
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to join you today at this important gathering.

I would like to begin by thanking the Governments of Chile and Cameroon, as well as the Holy See, for their partnership in convening this event. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to the representative of Argentina who sent a video message and whose participation today further enriches this discussion and reflects the growing international engagement on this issue.

My sincere appreciation also goes to all representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society, and academia who have joined us for this important conversation.

Allow me to express a special word of gratitude to Ms. Reem Alsalem, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls. Through her independence and unwavering commitment, she has made an essential contribution to advancing international understanding of the challenges posed by surrogacy and its impact on women and children.

Our presence here today reflects a growing awareness that surrogacy is no longer a matter confined to domestic legislation or individual choices. It has become a global phenomenon, increasingly shaped by international markets, cross-border arrangements, and profound inequalities between and within societies.

As policymakers, we have a responsibility to ask a fundamental question: do we still recognize every human being as a person to be respected, or are we willing to accept situations in which human beings become a means to satisfy the interests and desires of others?

Indeed, the discussion before us is ultimately about persons.

It is about women whose bodies and reproductive capacities may become the object of contractual arrangements.

It is about children whose earliest moments of life are defined by a pre-arranged separation from the woman who carried and gave birth to them, namely the mother.

And it is about the values that guide our societies and our international institutions.

The report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls has made an important contribution to this debate. It has placed surrogacy in the context of violence against women and highlighted how surrogacy arrangements may create conditions that expose women and children to exploitation, coercion, trafficking, and other serious human rights concerns.

When such conditions exist, the international community cannot simply look away.

Over the years, Italy has translated these concerns into concrete public policy.

Our legal system has long maintained that surrogacy is incompatible with the protection of human dignity and with the rights of women and children. More than two decades ago, Italy prohibited the practice and established criminal sanctions against those who organize, facilitate, or profit from surrogacy arrangements.

More recently, our Parliament strengthened this framework by extending the reach of Italian law to surrogacy carried out abroad by Italian citizens, reflecting a

simple conviction: fundamental human dignity cannot depend on geographical boundaries.

This approach is rooted in a principle that lies at the heart of our constitutional system. Human dignity is not a commodity to be negotiated, nor a value that can be waived by contract.

At the same time, Italy remains firmly committed to safeguarding the rights and well-being of children already born through surrogacy arrangements. Whatever our assessment of the practice itself, children must never bear the consequences of decisions made by adults. Their rights, their legal protection, and their best interests must remain fully guaranteed.

Yet we are equally convinced that no country can effectively address these challenges alone.

The increasingly transnational nature of surrogacy requires a broader conversation and a coordinated international response. This is precisely why today's event is so important.

We recognize that States hold different legal systems and different perspectives. Yet we also believe that there is common ground from which meaningful progress can emerge.

That common ground begins with the conviction that women should never be reduced to instruments of reproduction, and that children should never be treated as the subject of a transaction.

It is precisely in this spirit that a Joint Political Declaration will be presented today.

The Declaration reaffirms principles already embedded in the core instruments of international human rights law: the inherent dignity of every human being, the rights of women to live free from exploitation and coercion, and the rights of children to identity, protection, family life, and the full recognition of their human worth.

Most importantly, the Declaration establishes a shared political commitment.

A commitment to support the adoption of an international moratorium on surrogacy arrangements.

And a commitment to begin the progressive development of an international legal framework to abolish surrogacy worldwide.

This Declaration is not the conclusion of a process. It is the beginning of one.

It represents an invitation to governments, international organizations, experts, and civil society to engage in a serious and constructive dialogue on how best to address the challenges posed by surrogacy while fully protecting the rights of all those affected.

Excellencies,

Throughout history, the international community has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to confront practices that were once considered widely accepted but were ultimately recognized as incompatible with human dignity.

Every significant advance in human rights began with the willingness to ask difficult questions and the courage to place human beings above economic interests.

Today, we are called to exercise that same responsibility.

Let us work together to ensure that women are protected from exploitation, that children are protected from commodification, and that human dignity remains at the center of every policy we pursue.

Because human dignity is not negotiable.

Because women are never instruments.

Because children are never commodities.

And because the measure of our commitment to human rights will always be found in our willingness to protect those who are most vulnerable.

Thank you.