

25 November - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

To celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Italy reaffirms its strong commitment to promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women, which is among its priorities also in view of its three-year term on the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) from 1 January 2019.

As is the case each year, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will join once again the awareness-raising campaign launched by UN Women entitled “Orange the World”, ‘hashtag’ #HearMeToo, with a view to attracting the attention on the voice of activists and the stories of survivors in order to prevent all forms of violence against women.

As in previous editions, the orange colour will be the leitmotif of the campaign’s activities and events. For the very first time, also the Farnesina Building will be flooded with orange light on the evening of Sunday, 25 November.

The Italian diplomatic and consular network will join the “Orange the World” initiative promoting it on its websites and social networks from 25 November to 10 December – International Human Rights Day –.

Italy is actively engaged in promoting gender equality and women’s rights, both at diplomatic level and through development cooperation. In the last few days, also thanks to Italy’s active contribution, the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (human rights and social and humanitarian affairs) adopted important Resolutions on the rights of women and especially on the fight against gender-based violence.

The promotion of gender equality and of the empowerment of women continues to be a cross-cutting priority in all development cooperation projects, in addition to the specific initiatives dedicated to women, girls and minors, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 of the 2030 Agenda and with the renewed priority given to this area in the multilateral debate on development. At global level, this year Italy has increased its cooperation with the United Nations Agencies that deal with gender-linked issues, primarily with UN Women and UNFPA.

Within the “National strategic plan on men’s violence against women 2017-2020”, approved last November by the Italian Government pursuant to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the so-called “Istanbul Convention”), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has committed to develop programmes promoting the empowerment of women, as well as programmes to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, with a special focus on harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

Italy also supports international initiatives to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and emergency situations, including the “Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies”. Our Country has long been committed to promoting a “zero-tolerance” policy on sexual abuse and exploitation committed by military and civilian personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping missions. The promotion of the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation is also fundamental: Italy has always been in the

forefront in this area, especially through the Mediterranean Women Mediator Network. Italy is also among the Countries most involved in preventing and combating sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the field of humanitarian aid, as indicated in the Whistler Declaration of the G7 Development Ministers for the UN Secretary-General's "Circle of Leadership" and undertaking the commitments announced at the "Safeguarding Summit" held in London on 18 October.