



CSW70 HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT

“Protecting Women and Children: Combating Violence and Exploitation in Surrogacy”

12 March, 1.15pm – 2.30pm

Conference Room 8

United Nations Headquarters in New York

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

The Government of Italy and the Holy See, in collaboration with the Governments of Turkey and Paraguay and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, are pleased to host a high-level side event on “Protecting Women and Children: Combating Violence and Exploitation in Surrogacy” on the margins of the 70th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women”.

Surrogacy, particularly in its commercial and cross-border forms, has expanded rapidly at the global level, raising serious human rights concerns. Evidence shows that surrogacy practices increasingly expose women and children to violence, coercion, exploitation and other forms of harm, driven by structural inequalities, poverty, unequal bargaining power, legal fragmentation and the involvement of intermediaries. These dynamics risk undermining human dignity, bodily integrity and the best interests of the child, while reinforcing global inequalities.

The recent report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls has identified numerous manifestations of violence against women and girls in the context of surrogacy and highlighted the urgent need for States and the international community to prevent and address them and strengthen the protection of women’s and children’s rights.

This side event aims to provide a forum for reflection, dialogue and awareness-raising on the risks of violence and exploitation in the context of surrogacy, particularly for women in vulnerable situations, and children, while promoting a shared understanding of States' obligations to prevent violence, coercion and exploitation in all contexts.

The event will also facilitate exchange among policymakers, experts, international organizations and civil society on legal, policy and institutional responses, and contribute to strengthened international cooperation and more coordinated approaches to the protection of human dignity and the rights of women and children.

FORMAT AND PARTICIPANTS

The event will take place on 12 March from 1.15pm to 2.30pm in CR 8 at the United Nations Headquarters, will be opened by a video message from the Italian Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities and the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, and will feature a panel of experts, including high-level representatives from Member States.

AGENDA

- Welcome Remarks: H.E. Ambassador Giorgio Marrapodi, Permanent Representative - Italy
- H.E. Ms. Eugenia Roccella, Minister for the Family, Birth Rate and Equal Opportunities– Italy (video message)
- H.E. Ms. Alicia Pomata, Minister of Women – Paraguay
- Ms. Süreyya Erkan, Director General on the Status of Women- Türkiye
- H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Permanent Observer - Holy See
- Ms. Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls
- Interventions from the floor
- Closing remarks: Mr. Stefano Pizzicannella – Director General, Department for Equal Opportunities – Prime Minister Office - Italy

Moderator: Valeria Robecco - ANSA Correspondent and President of the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA)