



International Network
of Women Leaders

PRESS RELEASE

Rome, 1-2 October 2026

Gender Equality and the Workplace: International Experts Gather in Rome to Discuss the Future of Work and Women's Leadership

Rome, 8 September 2026 – How can genuine equality between women and men be advanced in the workplace? What organizational, cultural, and social frameworks can enable women's full participation in leadership and decision-making roles? These are among the central questions that will be explored at the International Expert Meeting "**Gender Equality and the Workplace**," organized by the **Institute of Women's Studies (Istituto di Studi Superiori sulla Donna)** of the **Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum**, in collaboration with the **International Network of Women Leaders**. The event will take place in Rome on **1-2 October 2026** and is open to invited participants only.

Rooted in the framework of **Goal 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women, the Meeting represents the first milestone in a broader international process. The initiative will continue with subsequent gatherings in **Mexico City in 2027** and **Washington, D.C. in 2028**, with the objective of presenting the outcomes of this ongoing research and dialogue effort at a United Nations venue in **2030**.

The Meeting seeks to provide a space for **interdisciplinary** and **intercultural dialogue** on the relationship between gender equality, work, and sustainable development. Through the contributions of academics, institutional representatives, professionals, managers, and experts from different continents, the event will address topics such as women's access to the labor market, career advancement opportunities, inclusive leadership, work-life balance, parenthood, digital transformation, and the new skills required in today's workplace.

Particular attention will be devoted to the need to **move beyond polarized perspectives** on **gender equality**, promoting reflection grounded in dialogue, rigorous data analysis, and recognition of the dignity of the human person, the value of relationships, and the distinctive contribution of women to society and organizations.

The event will feature **distinguished international speakers** from United Nations bodies, international financial institutions, universities, research centers, and major corporations. Participants include experts from the UN CEDAW Committee, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, the Inter-American

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Development Bank, Harvard Kennedy School, Microsoft Italy, and numerous universities and international organizations.

Among the confirmed speakers are **Brenda Akia**, member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); **María Caridad Araujo Moreno**, economist at the Inter-American Development Bank; **Vincenzo Bassi**, President of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe; **Iris Bohnet Zürcher**, Professor at Harvard Kennedy School; **María Cruz Díaz de Terán**, Professor at the University of Navarra; **Andrea García Beltrán**, expert in digital innovation and cybersecurity; **Catherine Hadechini**, international manager at Foundever; **Ulrike Haider-Quercia**, Professor of Comparative Public Law; **Astrid Lobo Gajwala**, Indian physician and bioethicist; **Marcella Mallen**, President of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS); **Agnieszka Piasna**, researcher at the European Trade Union Institute; **Emanuela Pozzan**, expert at the International Labour Organization; **Nora Ramos**, Argentine economist; **Begoña Rodríguez Díaz**, Professor at Universidad Francisco de Vitoria; **Luz María Sierra**, Director of the Colombian newspaper *El Colombiano*; **Tea Trumbić**, Manager of the World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law* report; **Albertine Tshibilondi Ngoyi**, Congolese philosopher and sociologist; **Natalia Valenti**, manager at Microsoft Italy; **Joan C. Williams**, Founder of the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California; **Vera Zamagni**, economist and economic historian; and **Riccarda Zezza**, social entrepreneur and founder of Lifeed.

Structured around seven thematic panels, the Meeting will be coordinated by an international team of moderators engaged in research, education, and the promotion of women's leadership, with the goal of identifying best practices and concrete proposals for building more inclusive, sustainable, and future-oriented workplaces.

In a global context marked by profound economic, technological, and social transformations, "**Gender Equality and the Workplace**" aims to serve as a privileged forum for dialogue on the contribution that women and men can make together toward building development models that combine economic growth, social justice, and human dignity.

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About the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum (APRA)

The **Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum (APRA)** is an ecclesiastical university institution canonically established by the Congregation for Catholic Education and administered by the religious congregation of the Legionaries of Christ. It is part of the **Network of Universities of the Legion of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement (RIU)**.

As an **international academic community**, fully aligned with the Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Church, APRA is committed to fostering Catholic thought and culture capable of bringing the **Christian spirit into contemporary society**, offering a unique educational experience aimed at the **evangelization of culture**.

For more than **30 years**, APRA has been educating **apostles and Christian leaders, both clergy and laity, in service to the Church and society**. Through an approach to **integral formation**, characterized by interdisciplinary and intercultural research, innovative academic programs, and the development of transferable skills, the Athenaeum promotes co-responsibility, human flourishing, and a solid and diversified institutional framework that supports innovation.

Through its **three Faculties** (Theology, Philosophy, and Bioethics) and **five Institutes** (Higher Institute of Religious Sciences, Science and Faith Institute, Sacerdos Institute, Institute of Bioethics and Human Rights, and Institute of Women's Studies), APRA provides advanced academic education and specialized training in a range of interdisciplinary fields.

About the Istituto di Studi Superiori sulla Donna (ISSD)

The **Institute of Women's Studies (ISSD)** is an academic center of the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum dedicated to research, education, and the promotion of women's dignity and leadership. Through academic, cultural, and project-based initiatives, the Institute highlights the distinctive contribution of women across society, culture, the economy, and ecclesial life, while fostering authentic and fruitful collaboration between women and men for the common good.

About the International Network of Women Leaders

The **International Network of Women Leaders** is a global network of women leaders committed to promoting thought, dialogue, and collective leadership. By bringing together professionals, academics, and representatives of civil society from different countries, the network advances the recognition of women's contributions to decision-making processes, social development, and the pursuit of the common good.