



*Al Presidente  
del Consiglio dei Ministri*

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri  
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Dear all,

Over the least two years, the “G20 Empower” has become an important forum not only for discussing gender inequalities, but also for dismantling them. It is encouraging to see so many political and business leaders come together today to find ways to ensure we do not lose out on some of our best talent. As this year’s Presidency of the G20, Italy fully endorses your very important work.

Gender inequalities at the top of our societies remain significant. Women serve as heads of state or government in just 22 countries. Only 21.9 per cent of all government ministers in the world are female. A mere 6.5 per cent of Fortune 500 companies are led by a woman CEO.

The lack of female leaders contributes to the existing earnings gap between men and women. It reminds us that we are still far from reaching real gender equality, both in the private and in the public sector. And it entrenches a distorted cultural model, by depriving young girls of role models.

Governments and businesses must work together to overcome these disparities. We have to find better ways to support working mothers, who too often have to choose between their job and their family. As governments, we need to strengthen childcare services and improve paid parental leave schemes, making them more balanced in order to encourage fathers to take more time off work. Businesses must find ways to adapt their workplaces to the needs of working mothers. This means, for example, encouraging flexible working schemes that can help them to reconcile professional commitments with parental duties.

We must also demand greater disclosure from companies regarding the gender wage gap and the gender balance across their workforce. Not only does greater transparency put pressure on companies to improve their record on gender equality, but it also helps to measure the effectiveness of government policies. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are useful in this regard: they promote accountability by helping to evaluate progress made by businesses in reaching the targets they have set themselves.



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Businesses and governments must also do more to foster female talent and help to accelerate their career advancement. Mentorship and sponsorship programs can help to overcome biases that can hold women back from a young age. Companies should consider revising their own recruitment policies and ensure that enough qualified female candidates are short-listed, in particular for senior positions.

For their part, governments can do more to increase the number of women in science and in fast-growing related sectors. Women account for roughly one quarter of ICT and engineering students in higher education worldwide. To close this gap, schools should run programs that encourage girls to study sciences and governments should fund more scholarships and training schemes for women in STEM fields.

Our decisions today determine how our society will evolve in the future. It is up to us to empower a new generation of women.

  
Mario Draghi