

Friends,

Welcome to the conference Women in the Mediterranean.

Two different yet not necessarily separate themes: women and the Mediterranean.

Two themes close to the heart of the late Pope Francis

Pope Francis considered the Mediterranean as a place of exchanges, and sometimes even of conflicts.

This also means listening to the history and experience of the people who inhabit the Mediterranean region to be able to decipher the events that connect the past to the present and to be able to understand the wounds, along with the potential that exists.

Women can be the strongest antidote to our individualistic and egotistic tendencies, to our lack of openness and our indifference. A society which does not respect the greatness of women would not only be a cold society, but a society that has lost its heart, lost the “feel of home”. A society without respecting the dignity of women would be a merciless society, one that has room only for calculation and speculation.

With us here today, we are joined by around 20 young people from around the Mediterranean. Young people are the protagonists of this journey across the Mediterranean, not merely as travellers but as pilgrims of hope, and agents of change.

We are not here to reinvent the wheel but rather to create “renewed and shared narratives which—based on listening to the past and to the present—speak to the hearts of people, narratives in which it is possible to see oneself in a constructive, peaceful and hope-generating way.”

Fr Jean Claude Attard