



*Embassy of Italy in Afghanistan*



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE CONTINUOUS ITALIAN SUPPORT TO THE AFGHAN JUSTICE SECTOR: THE REPORT 'WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION IN AFGHANISTAN'S JUSTICE SECTOR: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES'**

**Kabul, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.** Today, at the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) the report 'Women's Professional Participation in Afghanistan's Justice Sector: Challenges and Opportunities' has been presented. The report, fully financed by the Italian Government through the General Directorate of the Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, has been realized by IDLO, the International Development Law Organization.

At the launch, the Italian Ambassador in Afghanistan, H.E. Luciano Pezzotti underlined the endless support of Italy to the Justice sector in Afghanistan in the past decade, and specifically the close link between women and justice: "Gender equality is one of the priority areas for Italian support to Afghanistan. Italy has always considered the empowerment of women and the Rule of Law as an absolute value that should never be compromised and a benchmark to measure the development of a society."

The report is divided in four sections: "The Challenge of Empowering Women to Participate in Afghanistan's Justice Sector", "Women in the Legal Profession: Progress, but still Work to do", "What are the Key Barriers facing Women Legal Professionals?" and "Addressing the Obstacles: What can be done to Support Women's Participation in the Justice Sector?".

It is the first national study on this subject, and is of paramount importance because it gives a clear picture of the current situation of women in terms of access to justice professions and the challenges that need to be addressed in order to promote gender equality and women's rights in Afghanistan. The report found that in 2013 women constituted only 8.4% of judges, 6% of prosecutors and 19.3% of lawyers. More women in the justice sector will also encourage women to approach the formal justice system.

The report strongly reaffirms the Italian commitment towards a long-term, multi-sectoral approach that would improve the overall accessibility of the Afghan Justice system for women.

**For further information:**

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