



By [Elise Harris](#)

Vatican City, May 22, 2015 / 09:45 am ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- Ahead of a conference discussing the presence of women in the 2015 development agenda, organizers said goals fall short of addressing issues such as attacks on motherhood and surrogacy.

"Today we live, at least in western society, in an abortive society. It doesn't welcome life. If a second child comes they ask you 'but do you want it?' So maternity is not welcomed...today whoever has more children is penalized," Olimpia Tarzia told CNA May 21.

She said that to marginalize motherhood in such a way is "the greatest damage a society can do to itself, because it doesn't invest in the future."

Tarzia is an Italian politician and president of the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family. The organization is partnering with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in in organizing a May 22-24 conference at the Vatican

discussing women in the post-2015 development agenda.

The conference is titled "Women and the post-2015 Development Agenda: the Challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More than 100 delegates from across the globe will take part in the discussions.

On the table for discussion are various issues related to women, including modernity, the so-called gender theory, surrogate motherhood, education, interreligious dialogue, both old and new forms of slavery, poverty, violence and "femicide."

In her speech for the May 21 presentation of the conference, Tarzia made specific reference to the fifth SDG, which is to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

"How can you think of 'empowering women' without making some reference to the social protection of maternity, the harmonization between work and family time, to the right to be free to welcome life?" she asked.

And "how can you achieve true equality without taking into account that most women are often simultaneously working, mothers and, due to the elongation of age, also daughters, and at any latitude, the duties of care are mostly entrusted to her?" she continued.

Tarzia also referred to the very first SDG, which commits to "end poverty in all its forms." This goal, she said, is inseparable from "the brutal practice of a new heinous slavery, the uterus for rent, better known as surrogate motherhood."

Surrogacy not only takes advantage of situations of poverty, but also reduces women to "a mere incubator and tramples on them" as well as the children they carry, she said.

The current of a society indoctrinated by individualism, moral relativism and a utilitarian logic tied exclusively to profit have all contributed to "commercializing even the human being."

If the eradication of poverty is ever to be expedited, then a strong fight must be made against "the uterus for rent, of maternal surrogacy. Because it's a new form of slavery," she observed.

In her comments to CNA, Tarzia said that the topic of surrogacy is an issue of women's equality since "there is no doubt" it is linked to both civil unions and

artificial fertilization. These, she said, are all issues which “manipulate life.”

She revealed that another goal of the conference is to counteract gender theory, which she said “destroys the family founded on a man and a woman, and so doing also destroys society.”

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, was also present at the May 21 presentation of the conference.

In response to journalists’ questions, he explained that the basis of gender theory comes from the belief that rather than having an inherent nature, a person’s sexuality is determined by society.

Under this theory the concept of male and female are “untied from the nature of the person. So sexuality and gender don’t have anything to do the body,” he said.

“The body can come with all of its signs, but this, according to them, is not an indication of the gender of a person,” the cardinal continued, saying that a person is considered either male or female not because their bodies are, but “because society has programmed them like this...this is why it’s called ‘theory.’”

Tarzia also stressed the importance of re-exploring the “new feminism” called for by St. John Paul II in his 1995 encyclical “*Evangelium Vitae*” in handling women’s issues.

She noted how her organization, founded in 2007, was formed with the goal of defending women and life, which the encyclical “prophetically” called for.

To fight for an end to the problematic phenomena surrounding women and society that will be addressed, Tarzia said, is an answer to St. John Paul II’s call.