

# Abu Dhabi hosted the Women Parliamentary Summit, from Gulf to Mediterranean

ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, February 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Under the leadership of Hon. Giulio Centemero, Member of the Italian Parliament, Group Leader of the Finance Committee, Head of the Italian Parliamentary Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), and since 2025 President of the Organization.

The Second Session of the Women Parliamentary Forum (WPF) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) took place on 27–28 January 2026 in Abu Dhabi, under the Presidency of Hon. Maryam bin Theneya and kindly hosted by the UAE Federal National Council.

The Forum focused on the theme “Empowering Women for Cohesive and Inclusive Societies: From the Gulf to the Mediterranean” and addressed four strategic thematic areas:

- 1) Women’s empowerment in the economic and political spheres
- 2) Women’s and girls’ access to health, education, and environmental justice
- 3) The role of women in counter-terrorism policies and practices
- 4) Sexual and gender-based violence linked to terrorism

DAY 1 – 27 January 2026

Overview of Sessions I and II

Thirty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, significant structural barriers continue to hinder the full realization of women’s rights worldwide. Across the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions, women’s political and socio-economic empowerment remains influenced by cultural, legal, and economic constraints. According to the United Nations Development Programme, half of the world’s population still believes men make better political



H.E. Mr. Saqr Ghobash,  
Speaker of the Federal  
National Council

leaders than women.

As of January 2025, women hold 27.2% of seats in national parliaments globally. Political empowerment remains the most critical gap in the MENA region, where only 11.7% parity has been achieved, according to the World Economic Forum.

Women's representation varies significantly across PAM Member States. The United Arab Emirates stands as the only country in the region to have achieved full gender parity in parliament. While progress has been achieved in education, persistent disparities remain in employment, leadership representation, and access to quality healthcare services.

Although women increasingly outperform men in higher education and STEM graduation, Female Labour Force Participation across the MENA region remains low (around 21%), and unemployment among educated women remains disproportionately high.

In Europe, gender equality continues to progress, though unevenly across countries. Educational parity is nearly complete, political parity has reached 36%, yet gaps in economic participation and leadership representation remain.

Access to education, healthcare, employment, and political participation constitutes a fundamental foundation for women's autonomy and for their contribution to social innovation, inclusive growth, and institutional resilience.

Expected Outcomes – Sessions I & II

- Identification of key barriers limiting women's access to economic opportunities and political participation



Hon. Giulio Centemero, H.E. Maryam Bin Theneya (UAE), President of the PAM Women Parliamentary Forum (WPF), Amb. Sergio Piazzi



Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal), Sen. Suhair Al-Ali (Jordan), Ms. Nusrat Ghani, Ms. Iva Hamel

- Strengthening regional coordination on legal protections, work-life balance, and inclusive policies
- Promotion of best practices in education, healthcare, and environmental justice
- Development of policy recommendations addressing vulnerabilities in rural and marginalized communities

DAY 2 – 28 January 2026

Overview of Sessions III and IV

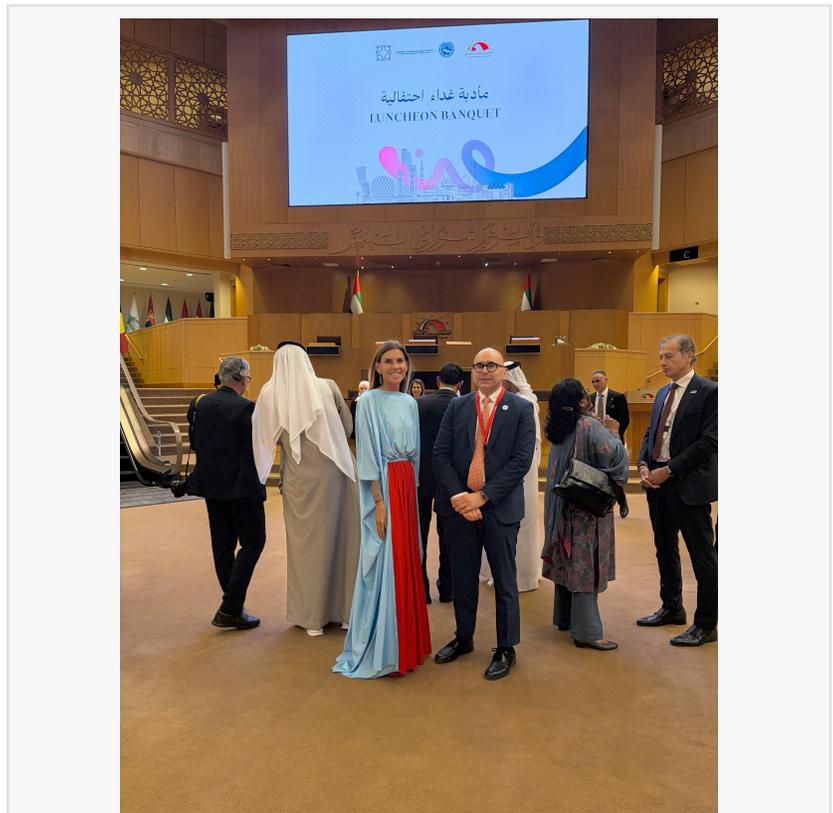
Organized within the framework of PAM's Presidency of the United Nations Coordination Mechanism of Parliamentary Assemblies on Counter-Terrorism.

Women's inclusion strengthens social cohesion and resilience, reducing vulnerability to radicalization and violent extremism. Women play a central role in conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding, and community stability.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions recognize the essential contribution of women to peace and security. Yet women remain significantly underrepresented in peace processes: in 2023, they accounted for only 9.6% of negotiators worldwide.

Across the Euro-Mediterranean, Gulf, and surrounding regions, conflicts have disproportionately impacted women and girls, with widespread evidence of sexual and gender-based violence used as a tactic of war. These crises have generated large-scale displacement, with women comprising nearly half of the world's migrants and refugees.

Despite heightened vulnerability, women remain central to community resilience, cohesion, and



Patrizia Marin, Hon. Giulio Centemero



Group photo

recovery in crisis contexts.

#### Expected Outcomes – Sessions III & IV

- Strengthened integration of women into counter-terrorism and PCVE frameworks
- Development of actionable policy recommendations for institutional inclusion
- Reinforcement of cooperation among parliamentarians, international organizations, and civil society
- Promotion of protective frameworks addressing gender-based violence in crisis contexts
- Launch of coordinated advocacy efforts to prioritize the protection of women and girls in humanitarian action

#### Institutional Profile of Hon. Giulio Centemero

On 21 February 2025, during the 19th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Rome, Hon. Giulio Centemero was elected President of the Organization.

At the Economic Forum held in May 2025 in Marrakech, in his capacity as PAM President and member of the World Bank Parliamentary Network, he called for enhanced strategic focus on the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions and proposed the creation of a Mediterranean Bank, conceived as a multilateral financial instrument dedicated to economic development, regional integration, and strategic investment. Within this framework, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will serve as key partners for the next edition of the Forum, scheduled for March in Marrakech.

During the 80th Session of the United Nations, he held high-level meetings with Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and with Natalia Gherman, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, focusing on regional stabilization efforts and Italy's role therein. On that occasion, the United Nations requested his support in maintaining structured dialogue with parliaments across the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Cyprus, during the 8th Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism of Parliamentary Assemblies on Counter-Terrorism, PAM was confirmed as the lead organization of the Mechanism.

In Monaco, he met with H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco and presented the "Champion of Peace and Humanitarian Assistance" Award in recognition of the Prince's sustained humanitarian engagement and the Monegasque Government's support for international solidarity initiatives.

In November 2025, speaking at the FAO Pre-Summit Meeting in preparation for the Third Global Parliamentary Summit Against Hunger and Malnutrition, he reaffirmed PAM's commitment to addressing water scarcity, desertification, and food security across the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions.

He strengthened the strategic role of the Centre for Global Studies (CGS), PAM's research center based in San Marino, which advises the UN Security Council and conducts advanced analysis on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, producing periodic analytical bulletins.

He launched PAM's campaign against disinformation, hate speech, and racial and religious discrimination, supported by the publication of policy-oriented reports addressed to parliaments and media institutions on emerging risks related to digital manipulation and the misuse of artificial intelligence.

He is currently advancing the PAM Youth Initiative, a project designed to bring together youth organizations from all PAM Member States, fostering intergenerational dialogue and focusing on identifying future-oriented skills and professions to guide educational and training policies.

Hon. Giulio Centemero is also the founder and promoter of The Sandwich Club, an international think tank dedicated to addressing global socio-economic challenges.

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