Madam Minister, representing the Minister of State,

Mr President and members of the National Council,

Mr Secretary of Justice,

Mr Head of H.S.H. the Sovereign Prince’s Cabinet,

Ministers,

Mr Mayor and members of the Council of the Commune,

Madam High Commissioner,

Presidents of associations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you here today for the unveiling of a work of photography created to mark International Women’s Day on 8 March.

As you will be aware, the Government has been keen to make protecting women’s rights a priority of its public policy.

This is clear from the establishment of the Women’s Rights Committee, which will allow us to enhance the value of the actions we take at a national level and those which flow from our international commitments.

I agreed to be Chief Officer for Women’s Rights because I am firmly persuaded that it is possible to go much further still.

International Women’s Day should remind us of the long battles which have been fought to achieve equality under the law: the right to live without violence, the right to education, the right to participate in decision-making, the right to receive equal pay for equal work.

It has been necessary to smash many glass ceilings. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome, and this is why I hope that the Committee’s work will enable us to take this debate into all areas of society.

I want to assure you that this initiative will be neither vindictive nor combative. It will simply aim to secure more equality and social justice.

Since taking up post, I have met many stakeholders who dedicate themselves, each within their own field, to protecting the status of women in the Principality.

As a result of these meetings, I have been able to draw up an initial overview of the situation, which I will set out in detail at the Committee meeting tomorrow.

I hope you will allow me to note that while we can be proud of what we already have in Monaco, nothing should stop us from aiming higher.

I would also like to speak directly to all of those women who doubt themselves and who erect their own psychological barriers. I want to tell them that they are free to seize the initiative, take action, and make choices. They simply need to believe in themselves.

And to paraphrase René Char, I would like to say to them: *Impose your luck, embrace your happiness and go towards your risks. By looking at you, they’ll get used to it.*

You can count on my commitment and on the commitment of the Government to ensuring that the empowerment of Monegasque women will be a public policy priority.

On this issue, 2019 has already brought a significant step forward with female civil servants now able to take advantage of “head of household” status, although this provision has not yet been extended to women in the private sector.

Finally, I would like to turn to international events. As you know, an unprecedented movement sprang up two years ago. It became possible to say things that couldn’t be said before. More than that, we are now listening to them a bit more.

I’m talking, of course, about the MeToo movement, which has shown us the scale and seriousness of the violence perpetrated against women.

The Principality is not isolated from the rest of the world and, sadly, also has experience of this painful reality.

Rest assured that I am determined to work tirelessly to combat the scourge of violence against women, and so is the Government.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your involvement in the #8MarsMonaco campaign. I was very keen to shine a light on the women and men of the Committee, and also on those I’ve met who have supported us since the Committee was established.

Ladies and gentlemen, through your involvement, you have committed to supporting a gender-balanced world, one of the themes for International Women’s Day.

I would also like to thank Anthony Alberti for his creativity, his willingness to give up his time, and his kindness.

And since this has been a team effort, I’m also grateful to my colleagues in the administrative services who have helped to make it possible, and particularly to the General Secretariat, whose support on a daily basis is invaluable, especially in times of doubt.

Because, as I just mentioned, like many women, I experience doubts. I think that the men in the audience also doubt themselves, but my feeling is that it is less noticeable!

My thanks also go to the representatives from Monegasque institutions who are here this morning and who volunteered to be a part of this campaign.

Finally, we have been enormously privileged to have benefited from the involvement of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, proof if ever there was such of the great importance He attaches to the status of women in Monaco.

We are now going to take a group photograph, and then I invite you all to enjoy a pleasant few moments together.