



PRESS RELEASE
Lagos, 7th May 2017

Hon Laura Boldrini, Italian President of the Chamber of Deputies, visits Loving Gaze in Lagos.

On Sunday 7th May 2017, Loving Gaze welcomed the Italian President of the Chamber of Deputies, Hon. Laura Boldrini, on an official visit to Nigeria, to St Kizito Clinic & SS Peter & Paul Nursery & Primary School in Lekki, Lagos.

The event was broadcasted live on Facebook and the video are available online on www.facebook.com/lovinggaze.

Hon Laura Boldrini is the President of the Italian Lower Chamber since 2013. Before that, from 1993 until 1998, she worked at the World Food Programme (WFP) as the Italian spokesperson. From 1998 to 2012 she was spokesperson of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for whom she also coordinated public information campaigns in Southern Europe. In recent years she has specifically dealt with the influx of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean. She has taken part in numerous missions to crisis spots, including the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Caucasus, Angola and Rwanda.

Loving Gaze is an independent not-for-profit organization with 25 years of experience in Nigeria. We serve the unprivileged and most vulnerable communities in Lagos and in Taraba State. Ms Barbara Pepoli Loving Gaze General Manager arrived in Lagos over ten years ago. Welcoming Hon Boldrini, she said *"In 2016 we touched the lives of 60,000 people in Nigeria. We helped men and women to get the health care they need, young children to continue their primary education, we helped communities groups save pennies a day that added up to real, lasting change. But all this has been built through the hard work of our local staff and the generous donators in Nigeria and beyond who supported us from the beginning, when we arrived in Lagos twenty-five years ago. AVSI Foundation, an Italian NGO active in more than 30 countries, arrived in Lagos in 1988 and, with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation aid program, started the development of two St Kizito clinics in Lagos, one in Lekki and another one in Idi-Araba. Our first school was actually a "bamboo school" on the lagoon's shores, in 2003, thanks to the European Development Funds (EDF), we established the SS Peter & Paul Nursery & Primary School, which now welcomes 450 students. In 2007 we completed the construction of the St John School in Ikorodu, Lagos. Till today Italian AVSI donors are supporting 300 students in St John School and a most of our students in SS Peter & Paul School. In the last few years Loving Gaze went beyond health care and primary education, initiating women vocational trainings (soap making, tailoring, food making), community engagement and education activities with the generous support of the USAID program, and social agricultural projects in Lagos, with egg production and in Taraba State with a cooperative agricultural initiative with local farmers."*

Hon. Boldrini praised the Italian community effort in supporting the most vulnerable communities in Lagos, she expressed her gratitude for the long-term and sustainable projects. She was moved meeting a woman breast-feeding her newborn in St Kizito Clinic maternal unit, and particularly impressed by St Kizito Clinics' effort in providing access to the children's vaccination program to protect them since they are born.

Kizito Care and Support Initiative RC No. 62015
St Kizito Clinic, Jakande Housing Estate, Ilasan off Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos, Nigeria
+234 01 774 1440 info@lovinggaze.org www.lovinggaze.org



Dr Alda Gemmani, St Kizito Clinic Medical Director, arrived in Lagos in 2009 with the Italian Development Cooperation aid program. She introduced the guests to St Kizito Clinic activities, walking them through the ambulatory, the laboratory, the pharmacy, the dentist, gynecologist and ophthalmic clinics. She underlined the efforts made to fight against HIV and Tuberculosis, the educational effort towards sanitization and malaria prevention, the two nutrition centers which cater for over 120 malnourished children every year, the 24/7 maternity clinic opened last year which welcomed over 400 new born already. She said *"Every patient who walks in St Kizito Clinic is first of all a person and all our staff attends to their needs with love and care, with profound respect for their history, human dignity and suffering, beyond religious or languages boundaries. We are proud of our team, their holistic approach allows us to follow and support our patients all through their journey."*

Hon. Boldrini closed her visit with a keynote speech focused on of the fundamental European values, namely, cooperation, respect for human rights and dignity. She expressed her gratitude for the efforts made to support the local communities upholding and the education of the youth, in front of an audience which included the Ambassador of Italy in Abuja, H.E. Dr Fulvio Rustico, the Consul General of Italy in Lagos, H.E. Andrea Pompermaier, Loving Gaze founders Ms Barbara Pepoli , Loving Gaze General Manager and Doctor Alda Gemmani, St Kizito Clinic Medical Director, the Nigerian medical staff, SS Peter & Paul Nursery and Primary School students and teachers.

Barbara Pepoli, thanking the visiting delegation concluded *"Your visit is an important event for our community. Our purpose is to serve with care, joy and professionalism people in need, to ignite hope and seeds for growth. But we could not bring change in people's life without the continuous support of the Nigerian and Italian authorities, the local and international private and corporate donors and the International Cooperation Agencies and NGOs who trust our work and sustain our efforts. We often glimpse that change in a single moment when and a patient, a woman, a child, feels welcomed with care, recognized for his own uniqueness. We thank you for listening to their stories today."*

ABOUT LOVING GAZE

Loving Gaze is an independent not-for-profit organization, with 25 years of experience in Nigeria. We serve the unprivileged community in Lagos and Taraba State, through educational activities, basic health care service, women empowerment and vocational training. Run by a multi-cultural team of 150 Nigerian professionals, Italian expatriates and international volunteers. We recognize and respect each individual life and dignity without gender, religious or ethnic boundaries. We believe there is a desire for joy, hope and positive change in each of us. Our purpose is to serve with care, joy and professionalism people in need, to ignite hope and seeds for growth. For more info, visit our website: www.lovinggaze.org.

PRESS CONTACT

Barbara Pepoli, Loving Gaze General Manager, mob +234 0806 251 8907, e-mail Barbara.pepoli@lovinggaze.org