

Statement by Min. Plen. Leonardo Bencini  
Head of the Italian Delegation to the  
18<sup>th</sup> Session of UNIDO General Conference  
Abu Dhabi, 3 - 7 November 2019

Thank you, Madam President,

I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking the United Arab Emirates for hosting the current session of the General Conference.

The statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of the European Union fully reflects the views of Italy on the items under consideration. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President,

at the outset, let me confirm that Italy remains committed to support UNIDO, as the United Nations Agency mandated to promote sustainable industrial development.

My country has a longstanding partnership with UNIDO, in light of its qualified experience in the fight against poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation through sustainable patterns of industrial development, investment promotion and trade capacity building, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Italy is the first bilateral donor to UNIDO and the third largest donor overall. Our financial and technical support to UNIDO cooperation activities is highly significant. In terms of voluntary contributions, since 2006 we have been the largest governmental donor to UNIDO's activities, contributing an overall amount of almost 130 million US dollars.

I am pleased to remark that our commitment continues to be significant: in the last 3 years, Italy has allocated more than 27 million US dollars to fund UNIDO's activities in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and South East Asia.

Madam President,

allow me to mention just some of the most successful recent experiences of the Italian cooperation with UNIDO. The public-private partnership with "Illycaffé" company and the "Ernesto Illy" foundation, within the project carried out by UNIDO in the coffee sector in Ethiopia, has been recently extended to Mozambique. Such partnership-based approach proved to be effective in increasing the quality, traceability and international recognition of Ethiopian coffee with the ultimate goal to raise coffee export revenues and the incomes of smallholder farmers. We do believe that we can replicate the positive results achieved so far.

Italy remains committed to the implementation of the 3 major components of the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) in Ethiopia through the establishment of agro-industrial parks and the development of the leather and textile sectors. I am pleased to mention that the leather key holders contained in the gift box that

delegates of this Conference have received were produced within the framework of a technical assistance project for upgrading the Ethiopian leather industry.

More generally, we fully support the PCP approach aimed at increasing the ownership of beneficiary Countries and establishing partnerships with other International Organizations, including all relevant UN bodies and International Financial Institutions, and the private sector. We look forward to continuing the dialogue with the Secretariat and all Member States on the current and future PCPs. More success stories of the cooperation between Italy and UNIDO are displayed in the Exhibition Hubs including the photo exhibition by the UNIDO Goodwill Ambassador, Elisabetta Illy, on the initiative to support women empowerment in Pakistan.

Madam President,

I am particularly pleased to recall that Italy sponsored today's side event on circular economy. The side event offered a significant opportunity to discuss ways to leverage private investment flows into the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, we had the chance to learn how the Italian banking Group Intesa Sanpaolo has taken the lead in accelerating the transition to a circular economy in Italy and beyond, by financing and supporting innovative businesses.

Circular economy is indeed a topical issue, to which my Country attaches great importance. We fully recognize the potential offered by the circular economy model to manage one of the major challenges of our times, namely to respond adequately and effectively to complex environmental, economic and social dynamics, while maintaining the competitiveness of the production system. Public and private investments in research and innovation, as well as international cooperation and exchange of best practices, will be decisive factors for boosting the transition from a linear to a circular economy.

Madam President,

the United Nations development system reform is a unique opportunity for UNIDO to reaffirm its role and to further promote its clear comparative advantage on other Organizations within the UN System. Italy is confident that UNIDO will strengthen its ability to adapt to the evolving development context and will contribute to and reap the benefits of the reform at all levels.

In particular, the empowerment of UNIDO's field network will allow to evolve from individual project implementation into a coherent programmatic approach and the full application of PCP principles. It will also allow to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System and revitalized UNDAFs. We therefore look forward to receiving the Report of the Independent Evaluation on UNIDO's field network.

Madam President,

as a founding member of this Organization, Italy has always actively participated in the work of its policy-making organs and it has presented its candidature to the Industrial Development Board and the Program and Budget Committee of UNIDO for the next terms.

We are particularly pleased that the last session of the Industrial Development Board was able to take a consensual decision on the Programme and Budget for the biennium 2020 - 2021.

We also appreciate the proposed Integrated Results and Performance Framework which is in line with the Medium-Term Programme Framework 2018 - 2021 and its objectives to scale up and integrate the Organization's core functions and strategic priorities. In this regard, we are confident that the Organization will further enhance its impact-oriented activity and will further strengthen the implementation of all key-management systems, such as results-based management, accountability framework and internal control.

Thank you, Madam President.