

**ITALY**

Statement delivered by H.E. Matteo Renzi,  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy,  
at the IIIrd UN Conference on Financing for Development

(Addis Ababa, 13th July 2015)

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

2015 will be, in the words of the UN Secretary General, a “seminal year” for development. I fully agree with him. This Conference is the first of a series of events that should change our vision of development. It should fortify our willingness to build a better world.

Much was accomplished with the MDGs Agenda and now we are elaborating a new framework for a truly Sustainable Development. But, as we praise the progress achieved by the international community in the past decade, we are still confronted with a series of crises of economic, social, political, environmental nature. We are not there yet.

And as we look forward to a paradigm shift towards a new universal, transformative, integrated path of sustained and sustainable development, we need to ask ourselves who is lagging behind and whether the MDGs Agenda is truly fulfilled.

Mr. Chairman,

The reason why I came here is because the Addis Ababa Conference is the first step towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals and shifting to a more ambitious paradigm of development.

It's the first step, but no less important than the others that will follow. It's the basis of a new Global Partnership. A “new international deal” where we put in common all of our resources, all of our experiences and all of our cultures in order to respond to, and win, the important challenges we all face.

The reason why I came here is because Addis Ababa is in Africa, is the seat of the African Union and hosts the UN-Economic Commission for Africa. The African continent symbolizes the global development struggle. But it offers also a vision of the potentialities of this struggle. It's here where we have to commit to solve problems, to overcome difficulties, to find better ways to make the potentialities turn into realities.

Another reason why I came here it's because my country, Italy, knows what solidarity is about. It is confirming it every day, saving thousands of lives of migrants coming from the northern shores of Africa. Ensuring first care. Assisting them. Giving them hope.

People “without a land”, as Pope Francis called them. People escaping from a condition of poverty, of need, of conflict, of persecution. People looking for the better future we are building here, while we speak to each other, we widen our ties and we strengthen our cooperation. But we need to do more, we have to address the root causes that force migrants to leave their families.

The country I represent is aware of its moral responsibility and is willing to play its part and provide its fair share.

Italy is only now exiting from a prolonged crisis, the toughest and longest since World War II, that has hit hard on our people, on our economy. But in the last two years we have inverted the previously decreasing trend of our Official Development Assistance. We are determined to continue to do so. Italy will stand up to its international responsibility in facing the big challenges to human rights, security, prosperity and the environment, especially in the Mediterranean and in Africa. The Italian government is committed to increasing its Official Development Assistance and to strengthening its international development cooperation. The Budget Law for the next triennium, which is to be submitted to the Parliament in September, will contain specific provisions to that effect.

Furthermore, the Italian Government is devoting a specific attention to special categories of developing countries. We hosted, last month, at the EXPO in Milan, a Ministerial Conference of African Least Developed Countries which adopted the “Milan Charter”. In October, once again at the EXPO, we will organize, in collaboration with the UN, a Ministerial Conference of all the Small Islands Developing States, with a view to assessing the progress made since the Samoa Conference last year as well as a high-level event on the role of finance and innovation in stimulating investment and production in the agriculture and agri-food sectors with the overarching goal of achieving food security and inclusive growth.

We have committed to new, ambitious initiatives of the G8. And we have joined the European Union willingness to confirm the commitment to the target of the 0,7 of Official Development Assistance in terms of Gross National Income.

We will spare no efforts to do our part in reverting the negative trend of the past. We will keep on doing it. And we call on others, all who can, to join our effort, to the best of their possibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

I came to Addis Ababa also because we are facing an evolving and varied development context. In a rapidly changing world, the challenge of financing development takes on new dimensions. Many countries have experienced extraordinary economic performances in the past fifteen years. They no longer need international public finance to build schools, hospitals or other social infrastructures. What they need is to avoid repeating our mistakes. They need our experience, our advice. The technical guidance we can provide them to leapfrog years of costly learning by doing. In the tax collection, in the planning of public spending, in industrial policies, in social policies, in organizing health systems, in education, in creating the conditions for granting access to food and water for all.

An important area we can and are willing to provide our experience is the stimulus to the private sector investment and growth. We have a lot to offer. The Italian economic model and social structure are based on Small and Medium Enterprises and Co-operatives, including an extensive system of credit institutions locally based and closely interconnected with the SMEs and the specificity of the territories. These enterprises are seeking benefits for members and their communities and not only a return for their shareholders. They are particularly suited to promote sustainable development. Furthermore, we will promote our bigger companies' engagement. It can be of great help in responding to the infrastructure needs. I am thinking of the energy sector. But not only.

We have to use ODA in new ways. Today's context calls for a more comprehensive view of financing for development. We have to fully take

into account the crucial role and potential synergies between public and private finance. Promoting ODA as a catalyst to bring private investment in to support and engage in sustainable development.

In this light, one of the innovations we are building up is the establishment of an Italian Development Bank. Something we thought of in order to contribute to social and economic development in partners countries by supporting and financing projects and investments, by ensuring these have a lasting impact on economic growth and progress in living conditions, acting against both poverty and climate change. Fostering local direct investments by establishing new joint ventures resulting in inclusive and decent employment, and urging for the emergence of responsible corporate governance practices.

Working together, Italian and developing countries enterprises, especially SMEs, transferring entrepreneurial know-how and productive technology. Investigating and promoting new sources of “smart capital”: risk-sharing instruments, credit enhancement and other forms of leverage of public concessional finance to attract private investors and contribute to the strengthening of the local private sector.

We will present the new Institution, created within Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, the Italian National Promotional Bank, here, in a side-event, tomorrow morning. All are invited.

Developing countries need also to access science, technology and innovation. We can already provide some of the best international practices. The experience of the international research centers we host in Trieste is a reality that deserves to be better known and, possibly, replicated.

Mr. Chairman,

I came here also to draw the attention on those who are lagging behind and still need a more concrete international assistance. I am referring to the Least Developed Countries, which deserve increased support to create the basic conditions for the taking off of their own development process. I am thinking of the Small Islands Developing States, which risk their very existence. I am thinking of the countries in conflict-situations, which need

international care if they want to succeed in eradicating extremism and intolerance, in re-founding peaceful and stable societies.

I am thinking also of the need for reflecting upon humanitarian relief. It deserves our attention. We must immediately deploy emergency interventions when these are urgently needed. We have to provide more stable and predictable funding. We should have devoted more attention to this crucial sector of international cooperation. I hope we will invest more, next year, in the run up to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

I came here also to recall the enhanced role other development actors can and are playing: Parliaments, Civil Society, NGOs, Universities, Philanthropic Foundations and other stakeholders, each one with its own specificity and relevance. The new Italian Law on Development Cooperation fully recognizes the diversity and the role of this broad range of development actors. We also need to invest in other sectors: fair trade, micro-credit can greatly help us in walking the path for sustainable development. Time has come to recognize that international cooperation is not exclusively an inter-governmental business and is not only made of bigger initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

Going back to the Secretary General definition of the 2015 as a seminal year, I came to Addis also because we have to look at the future seeding hope. This is also the message that comes from the Universal Exhibition taking place right now in Milan. The vast majority of the countries here represented are participating. The Expo 2015 motto was chosen more than 8 years ago. Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life: what a visionary message!

The Expo 2015 is raising awareness at the citizen level on the need for fostering sustainable agriculture, for granting access to food to all, for changing unsustainable consumption patterns, for avoiding food waste, for caring about our planet. It is this message of hope we are delivering here and the same message Italy will bring at the Summit on the post-2015 Agenda, in New York, next September.

I thank you.