



ITALY

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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PRIORITY THEME
“PROMOTING FULL EMPLOYMENT AND
DECENT WORK FOR ALL”

STATEMENT BY

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CHARGE' D'AFFAIRES A. I. OF ITALY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Commission for Social Development in this session. I wish to ensure you the full cooperation of my delegation during the works of the Commission.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to a few additional remarks focused on our national experience in this sector.

Italy considers the global development agenda and the commitment to “promoting full employment and decent work for all” a genuine priority, not only from a social point of view but also in a larger more comprehensive framework. We are fully committed to implementing the Lisbon employment strategy, recognizing the main priorities of creating more and better jobs with social security, equal opportunities, and social dialogue.

In Italy there has been a significant quantitative increase in jobs in recent years: employment trends in the ten-year period 1997-2006 were satisfactory, especially given the slow growth of the Italian economy in the same timeframe.

At the same time, what we need is not simply more jobs, but also better jobs. It is therefore time to focus our attention on improving work and living conditions. The Italian society suffers from difficulties and disparities in work conditions. The **segmentation** of the labour market has a strong impact on the first stages of work life, on the unskilled, and on the Southern regions. Discontinuity in labour paths, insufficient career prospects and unsteady income make it difficult for many people to plan and build their lives. The Italian labour market requires a more extended, efficient support and equal access to lifelong learning activities in order to allow “flexible” workers to adapt and make successful transitions from job to job without losing their social security.

The 2007 budget law lowered the cost of work by containing benefits and cutting taxes, making it more convenient for employers to create full-time positions and transform temporary jobs into permanent jobs.

Effective public employment services are needed, especially for the disadvantaged. Better quality services are essential to increasing participation in the workplace, coping with demographic change, and supporting technological progress.

In July 2007 social partners agreed on a reform that provides for a more adequate job-oriented social security and for active labour market and lifelong learning policies focusing in particular on the most vulnerable (young people, women, elderly workers, and the unskilled). This protocol is Italy's articulation of the European Union's common principles on *flexicurity*. It is based on the awaited reform of the social safety network, the enhancement of employment services in line with a **welfare to work approach**, a reform of economic incentives systems, welfare reform, and pro-flexibility innovations that help business fighting improper job placement patterns.

Good jobs also mean exercising greater vigilance over safety of the workplace. In the "safety package" and later in the 2007 budget law, the Government took important decisions to improve health and safety conditions in the workplace, particularly in areas with the highest risk of accidents.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Italian Government is firmly committed to promoting fundamental principles and rights in the workplace, in accordance with the decent work agenda and with the need to foster full employment, in Europe and internationally, so as to strengthen and broaden an effective social dimension of globalization.

Italy has repeatedly stressed the importance of observing and implementing these principles in its statements to the relevant international fora, such as the United Nations, the G8, the ILO, and the European Union.

One year ago Italy launched the declaration on "Enhancing Social Europe", a document signed thus far by twelve EU member States. The Declaration advocates a stronger European Union role in shaping a more equitable and balanced globalization. The measures it recommends include making it a general practice to insert **social standards clauses** in trade agreements with third countries, encouraging respect for fundamental principles and rights in the workplace as defined by the ILO, and supporting the decent work agenda. We believe that commitments along these lines will help set up the external dimension of the Lisbon Strategy, through which the EU can play an enhanced role in governing globalization processes.