



I T A L Y

72st GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

THE HONORABLE PAOLO GENTILONI

(NEW YORK, 20 SEPTEMBER 2017)

Mr. President, Secretary-General, my fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

- The opening of the 72nd session of the General Assembly is taking place in a **complex and constantly-moving global context**. The socio-economic effects of globalization, which can create hardship and inequalities, also compound the persistence of major instability in the international geopolitical framework, which is at the root of multiple crisis situations.
- The provocations of North Korea—which Italy condemns in no uncertain terms—threaten regional and international security and pose a real challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the United Nations system.
- The uncertainties and fears of our citizens are heightened, moreover, by the plague of terrorism, which is being fought with growing effectiveness but has certainly not been defeated, and climate change, which risks jeopardizing the future of our planet and the fate of future generations.
- The desperation of migrants and refugees, victims of ruthless criminal trafficking, continues to unfold before our eyes.
- These are enormous challenges from which no Country is immune and against which there is an inevitable temptation to seek refuge in **isolationism, racism and intolerance**.
- But it is precisely in the face of extraordinary challenges that the international community must find a way to overcome the most arduous obstacles, and **look to the future with confidence**.
- There is hope to be found in the signs of optimism that accompany the recovery of our economies. At the global level the number of people who live in absolute poverty has greatly declined and

technological innovation, often accused of abetting economic crises, has on the contrary paved the way to new opportunities.

- It is up to us to guide this road to development with responsibility and courage. We must do so first through better governance of global processes, to assure robust and inclusive economic growth aimed primarily at reducing inequalities.
- Italy is convinced that **building democratic, pluralistic, and inclusive societies open to diversity** is not only an ethical imperative but also a guarantee of peace and stability and, as such, a fundamental piece of a broader commitment to promoting and guaranteeing effective protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of each individual.
- This framework is also the basis of every legitimate aspiration for sustainable economic and social development, whose dividends will be available to all. These goals should be pursued first at the national level, at home. It is in this sense that Italy is deeply committed to safeguarding the legacy of democracy, pluralism, freedom and respect for human rights that is its birthright, and to promote their affirmation at the international level.
- The theme chosen by the President of this General Assembly for the works of the 72nd Session emphasizes the need to focus our actions on people's expectations of the future, correcting the distortions and mistakes produced by globalization.
- **Peace, a Decent Life, and a Sustainable Planet** are significantly the same challenges that were at the core of the Italian Presidency of the G7 and that those of us who are here today, the representatives of the peoples of the world, are called on to address.

- We must join forces in continuing on a historic path that, despite setbacks, leads ultimately to peace, prosperity and inclusiveness.
- *“The pooling of our social, cultural and administrative experience,”* as Alcide De Gaspaeri stated during the first phase of the European integration project, *“doubles the strength of our national potentialities, and preserves them from all danger of decline, by giving them fresh impetus toward the creation of a still more advanced and still nobler civilization.”*¹
- The shared journey of hopes and gains undertaken by the European Union—which for Italy represents the first, natural dimension of multilateralism—teaches us that in the face of the challenges of our day, we must have the courage to react.
- In the past two years the European Union has been forced to abandon its “climate-controlled” environment to tackle some of the **greatest challenges to have emerged since the post-war period.**
- It has not been easy. Nor has it been the beginning of the end, which many had feared, but rather an opportunity for a powerful **collective reminder** of the need to remain united within the European project.
- Today I affirm with profound conviction that a new European impetus exists which Italy not only shares but actively promotes. The will to proceed, as one, to bring the European project closer to the needs of citizens, the challenges of economic growth, security, and migration. A project that strengthens the global role of the Union in the world, inspired by multilateralism, free exchange, and respect for rule of law.

¹ Speech by Alcide De Gasperi to the Assembly of the Council of Europe regarding the project for a European Defense Community (Strasbourg, 10 December 1951).

- What Italy wishes to rebuild with its partners is a Union that can **once again give the whole world an example of solidarity, progress, prosperity and effectiveness.**
- For Italy the development of social, economic and political inclusiveness, extended also to the labor market, and fighting poverty and marginalization, also means contributing to a more **effective management of the challenge of migration.** We must respond with **compassion, intelligence and vision** to the reality of the vast human movements of our days.
- For years Italy has been engaged in operations to rescue and receive migrants. We have saved and continue to save hundreds of thousands of persons who risked drowning in the Mediterranean, true to our ethical and moral imperatives and to the international obligations we have freely undersigned. Italy is and shall remain a welcoming Country, mindful of the inescapable link between the principles of solidarity and security.
- To consolidate our action, however, we need a global response to the migratory phenomenon that starts in the European Union and extends to the international community as a whole. Together we must find long-term solutions to a challenge that affects not only us but also every Country as well as future generations.
- To continue to affirm and embody the principle of shared and proportionate responsibility, Italy is participating actively in the negotiations that will lead to the adoption of global compacts in the United Nations framework. Our proposal to jointly address the migration phenomenon on a global level is based on three main pillars: investing, protecting and valuing. *Investing* in support of Countries of origin and transit. *Protecting* the most vulnerable refugees and migrants, and *valuing* the many positive aspects and opportunities created by migration.

- Italy is already the promoter of a true partnership with the African Countries. As I have already had occasion to express and I repeat today with conviction, **the future of Europe is in Africa**. It is by investing in Africa that we can address the deep causes of migration, *first and foremost* economic and demographic inequalities.
- The integrated, structural approach in which Italy believes is already yielding its first positive results, thanks to the fruitful cooperation initiated with the African Countries of transit and the actions of the main international organizations. We are working with the International Organization for Migration and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to provide assistance to migrants with human rights, assure the protection of refugees fleeing from wars and persecutions, and offer favorable conditions and incentives for their voluntary repatriation and reinsertion in their Countries of origin.
- To provide an immediate response to those who need protection, a true solution for the most vulnerable migrants: this is our commitment and our appeal today. It is our duty to intensify efforts to prevent and counter an atrocious, heinous crime such as trafficking in persons, which constitutes a crime against humanity in every respect. We are ready to promote this vision within the United Nations as we are already doing in the European Union.
- Protecting the weak and defenseless means **investing in our values**. Saving the lives of children is also action to save our societies and our future.

Fellow delegates,

- For Italy, by virtue of our geography and history, our emphasis on responsible and solidary management of the movements of persons is coupled with an emphasis on the **security, stability, sustainable**

development and growth of the Mediterranean and of the African continent as a whole.

- All of this in the perspective of the **fight against terrorism** and violent extremism, in the shared interests of all our Countries and peoples.
- Terrorism has sadly continued to claim innocent victims in many Countries in the world in 2017. To address and finally defeat this scourge requires time, courage and unity of intent.
- The increasingly apparent loss of ground for Daesh in Iraq and Syria has demonstrated that together we can do it. It is a step that will enable us to dismantle the ideological and logistical cells of the attacks that have struck Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- But victory on the ground is not enough. The fanaticism and ideology of Daesh continue to claim victims and sow terror in our cities.
- Italy is an active partner in the **Global Coalition against Daesh**, engaged on the ground in various activities: rehabilitating a fundamental infrastructure such as the Mosul Dike; and training thousands of members of the Iraqi special forces and Kurdish units, as well as federal and local police forces, who represent one of the keys to the future stabilization of liberated zones and to the safe reentry of thousands of IDPs to their homelands. We need to restore the future for the Iraqi people.
- But the fight against terrorism requires a multidimensional force, with recourse to every possible instrument of international cooperation. I am thinking, for example, of initiatives to counter the use of the Internet and social media by terrorists (just this morning I co-chaired an important event on this issue with my

colleagues Macron and May), or the financing of terrorist groups, who do not hesitate to loot and destroy cultural heritage.

- No one, I repeat, can go it alone. It is an absolute prerequisite to have collaboration between state and regional stakeholders, in particular, the European Union and its Member States; the States on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, the Sahel and SubSaharan Africa, and the African Union.
- Italy has dedicated great energy in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the G7 Presidency, to upgrading our capacities to respond to the ever-evolving new threats posed by terrorist groups.
- **Libya** is the key to restoring to the Central Mediterranean its historic role as a driver of civilization, peace and security. Its stabilization is a priority objective that we must achieve through an inclusive dialogue in the framework of the Political Agreement, rejecting unrealistic hypotheses of a military solution.
- Italy is a leader in this commitment and in supporting the United Nations' action to strengthen its presence in Libya, which is being pursued with determination by Secretary-General Guterres and Special Representative Salamé. There will be no stability in Libya until the value of a truly inclusive path to reconciliation has been embraced, a path that we as the international community must support with a single voice.
- It is the people of Libya themselves who are asking for a stable, solid and secure Libya. This is why we stand alongside President Serraj and the institutions provided for by the Political Agreement. We are convinced that it is only through more authoritative Libyan institutions that we shall also be able to address the tragedy of human trafficking.

- We believe it is essential to support Libya also because of its strategic role in the migratory route across the Central Mediterranean. To this end, we must help local communities to foster their development, also through economic investments that create alternate livelihoods to illegal trafficking. We must work with the UNHCR and IOM to foster reception and repatriation.
- **Syria** continues to be a source of concern and suffering. After six years of unspeakable violence, millions of refugees and hundreds of thousands of deaths, we welcome the recent efforts to promote local truces and de-escalation zones.
- But there are still too many innocent children, women and men who have a limited or no access to humanitarian aid. This is the greatest challenge we must face today.
- The only road to a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict is a realistic and credible political process. There can be no stability, peace and reconstruction, nor a lasting victory over terrorism, or the conditions for voluntary return of refugees in complete security, without an inclusive political transition that brings together the various components of Syrian society.
- This is why I wish to reaffirm today **Italy's full support for the UN and for Special Envoy de Mistura**, and at the same time urge crucial support from the main regional and international stakeholders for the roadmap outlined by resolution 2254. It is only through a cohesive commitment of the international community that we can arrive at a true political solution that preserves the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Syria.
- Ultimately, there can be no true peace without **justice**. This means ascertaining the responsibilities of those who have committed atrocity crimes in these years, starting with the use of chemical weapons.

- Dialogue and reconciliation are indispensable instruments for a lasting peace also on the **African continent**.
- Italy has intensified and systematized its actions for the **Sahel region**, particularly for Niger, Chad, and Mali, who are working with immense difficulty to fight terrorist and criminal organizations and the illegal trafficking linked to them, starting with the heinous trafficking in persons.
- The strategy supported by the EU and its main Member States combines initiatives in support of the governments of the region and the fight against terrorism; an immediate action to combat traffickers in human beings and welcome persons who have the right to international protection; and mid-to-long term actions to support the economic development of African Countries. The results are starting to be felt, thanks especially to the work of the governments of the Sahel Countries, whom I wish to thank for being an active part of this positive alliance.
- In this context we are convinced that the **G5 Sahel initiative** is essential to effective control of these phenomena, and we welcomed the decision of the G5 Sahel Countries to launch a common force, with the support of the African Union.
- Italy continues to assure the maximum support for the **Horn of Africa**, the key to stability for the entire region and prey to a long and complex state of crisis, aggravated, sadly, by a devastating drought produced by climate change.
- The strategic goal, once again, is to create the conditions for lasting security and development, which together constitute the only way to defeat the grave transnational threats of violent extremism, terrorism, illegal trafficking and piracy.

In this sense, the positive developments in **Somalia** are moving in the right direction. Italy will continue to support the new Somalian leadership in the important tasks of completing electoral processes, good governance, especially of the territories taken from al-Shabab, strengthening their security capacities, and prosecuting the fight against terrorism in the Country.

- I would be remiss if I did not express our deep concern over the very serious **situation in Venezuela**. Italy reiterates its appeal for immediate and good-faith dialogue, which cannot disregard the four conditions set [by the Holy See]: authorization to send international assistance, a clearly-established electoral calendar, restoration to the Parliament of its prerogatives, and the release of all political prisoners.
- The unprecedented situation that has been created requires a firm and cohesive response from the international community. We are engaged along these lines in the European framework, but we believe it is fundamental for the whole international community to be mobilized, including the traditional allies of Venezuela, for the sake of the Country and its stability, to enable the start of a political path based on dialogue.
- We are extremely concerned by the situation on the **Korean peninsula**. In the face of repeated violations of the pertinent Security Council resolutions by North Korea, it is fundamental for the international community to remain unified and determined in its response, and it is in this spirit that we promoted, as President of the G7, a firm Group Declaration.
- Full implementation of the pertinent Security Council resolutions—including the most recent one on September 11, in which the Council unanimously adopted strict new sanctions on Pyongyang—is crucial. Italy contributed to this strong message to

North Korea, which must immediately end its missile and nuclear proliferation and all provocative actions.

- We are ready to cooperate with our partners in continuing to exercise diplomatic and economic pressure on the North Korean regime, always mindful that sanctions must be an instrument of a broader strategy, aiming for a final peaceful solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula and in the whole region.
- With reference to the **Iranian nuclear file**, we believe that the international community should assure that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) remains a success story in the framework of global efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, we are convinced of the importance of a full and comprehensive application of Security Council resolution 2231.
- In this regard, we note with satisfaction that the IAEA has confirmed Iran's continued fulfillment of its commitments under the JCPoA. We are committed to continuing our support for the IAEA in the conduct of its work of reliable verification.

Fellow Delegates,

- Autocratic regimes, terrorism, and international crises are a grave threat to world peace.
- But we, we who are the United Nations, cannot and will not give up. The Secretary-General has made prevention one of his highest priorities and Italy is with him in this.
- We need to prevent conflicts, and the natural disasters and humanitarian and migratory crises that follow, which in turn are the cause of further instability.

- Prevention does not mean building barriers: It means achieving inclusive and sustainable development.
- **Agenda 2030** outlines a common pathway with clear-sighted ambition. Together we have written the prescription. Now we have to follow through on it.
- Italy is committed to doing its part with policies that strengthen cohesiveness, reduce inequalities, and safeguard the environment. Through our Cooperation, we support other Countries, in particular the African Countries, on this path.
- In keeping fully with Agenda 2030, the G7 leaders in Taormina also committed to stepping up their collective support for food security in sub-Saharan Africa. And, for the first time, the outreach session of the G7 Summit was dedicated to Africa.
- The same strong commitment is required from us in the fight against climate change. The Secretary-General reminded us of this a few days ago: *“If we don’t deal with climate change now, we are going to ruin many of [our grandchildren’s] opportunities to have a positive life.”*
- We are fully aware of the challenge posed by climate change. It is a systemic emergency whose social consequences are already tragically evident. Just think of the more than two-hundred million displaced persons between 2008 and 2015 who were forced to leave their homes because of the devastating effects of climate phenomena.
- This is why we will continue to address our development cooperation policies more and more to the issues of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. We will do this through bilateral channels but also through the United Nations system, whose role

we consider indispensable and irreplaceable to meeting the great challenges to our planet and its inhabitants.

- **The crises and challenges of our day can be overcome, and those of the future can be prevented.**
- We therefore support, with conviction, the instrument of peacekeeping and the principles of “Sustaining Peace” and the “Peace Continuum,” mindful that a lasting peace can be pursued only through a multidimensional approach during every phase of the peace cycle: from prevention to crisis management (when needed), to post-conflict stabilization up to inclusive pathways of national reconciliation and sustainable development processes.
- Italy is strongly committed to each of these phases and will continue to be with conviction and concrete action. On the ground we will continue in particular our engagement with UNIFIL and alongside the Lebanese government, as well as in all the theaters in which Italy is present in defense and stability.

Fellow delegates,

- We need a United Nations that is more effective and efficient in enacting the principles that inspired it and that continue to be valid and relevant these many years later.
- We are thus counting on the **Secretary-General’s leadership and we fully support his reform plans**, including his commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and the achievement of gender equality, also as a tool to strengthen the efficiency of the Organization.
- This renewal framework clearly includes the **reform of the United Nations Security Council**, which is conferred, “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and

security.” This, too, is one of our priorities, and we will continue to promote a comprehensive and inclusive reform.

- A reform that allows us to make the Security Council more democratic, effective, and representative of the entire membership which has evolved and amplified since the establishment of the United Nations, while the Security Council, its principal organ, has remained essentially unchanged.

Fellow delegates,

- The current global scenario calls upon us to respond to many challenges which demonstrate that history did not end a quarter of a century ago, as some had believed.
- We are called upon to constantly renew our endorsement of the values of peace, human rights and democracy.
- In other periods of our history, much more difficult than the one in which we are living, we have seen these values recede. But we know that, also in the most difficult moments, democracy can revive and grow.
- We know this because, as the American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated in 1941, “*Democracy alone has constructed an unlimited civilization capable of infinite progress in the improvement of human life.*”²
- Thank you.

² Third Inaugural Address of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 20 January 1941.