

**Speech of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs,**

**Hon. Franco Frattini,**

**at the XII Africa Partnership Forum**

**Rome, June the 10<sup>th</sup> 2009**

Italy is working for a **more appropriate inclusion of Africa and its instances in the G8**. If the ambition is to make the continent a strategic partner, outgrowing the no longer acceptable "donor-recipient" approach, we must promote political relations with Africa and with all its institutions in support of a new multilateralism, which entails that collective commitments are taken by an increasingly large number of stakeholders.

We encourage the inclusion of the African Institutions in a framework of **shared responsibility, inclusiveness, collaboration and mutual commitment** to improve the growth of African countries. This accounts for the particular relevance of the role played by the African Union and NePAD and, more generally, by the other African continental and sub-regional Organizations, all extremely useful in their field of action.

As Chairman of the G8, **Italy is following a twin-track approach**: on the one hand we are strengthening the political dialogue between the G8 countries and Africa; on the other hand we are working for an increasing involvement of the emerging economies, the so called "Outreach 5" (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa and for the first time Egypt) with the ultimate goal of sharing more responsibilities for the improvement of global governance.

**The activities of the Africa Partnership Forum fit perfectly within this framework**. The Partnership is characterized by the paramount attention attributed to the above mentioned principles. We also commend the efforts undertaken by the APF in the field of internal reforms; the Partnership's action is enriched by information-sharing and a peer review of effectiveness, contributing in shaping a common road-map for growth which mixes crucial aspects such as Rule of Law, Good Governance, Peace and Security and the fight against Climate Change.

Precisely because **one of the main tasks of the APF is to make recommendations to leaders** and international decision-makers, Italy looks forward to the outcome of today's meeting. The Twelfth APF's conclusions will be presented at the meeting of **G8 Development Ministers** which will take place tomorrow; moreover, such conclusions will also contribute to the discussions, in particular at the Africa outreach session, of the **G8 Summit of L'Aquila next month (8-10 July)**.

Taking into consideration the issues on your agenda, allow me to **make four brief points**.

1. Concerning **the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on Africa**, we are concerned about the vulnerability of African economies and about the possible political instability consequential to that. Furthermore, the effects of the crisis could affect progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, it is important to point out that Africa

today is still resistant to external shocks, thanks to the diversification of its trading partners, such as some emerging economies.

In this context, **what can Africa do for Africa?** We believe that Africa should take advantage of its maximum potential by promoting investment in both domestic markets, in order to stimulate internal demand, and regional markets, by strengthening the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in this direction.

2. Coming to the **Challenge posed by Climate Change**, we do appreciate the importance of the commitments undertaken by several African governments to preserve and protect the Congo Basin ecosystem, the second largest tropical forest area of the entire world, the sustainable management of which is to be strongly supported by the international community.

3. Let me also underline the **role and weight that E-Government can play in development**, together with the relevance of being able to make use of reliable data for better governance, specifically by way of population records data management systems.

4. Last but not least – and I know you will discuss this under the topic devoted to Peace and Security - allow me to stress **the magnitude of the ever growing international dimension of organized crime in Africa**. I understand you will have an in depth discussion focussing specifically on illicit trafficking in and through West Africa and you will also debate piracy and terrorism in the Great Horn of Africa, which are delicate problems that we have to tackle jointly.

You are well aware of the growing concern we share regarding the threat posed to West Africa by illicit trafficking (drugs, people, arms and illegally exploited natural resources), **which risks turning the region into a drug "hub" from South America to Europe**. In this respect I would like to commend the efforts undertaken by ECOWAS, enshrined in the Abuja Declaration of last December, when a Regional Action Plan against drug trafficking and organized crime was adopted. Hence, the strengthening of both the Regional Economic Communities, such as IGAD for the Horn of Africa and of the African Union is pivotal, in order to cope with the insecurity that some countries of these two regions are dramatically facing.

At the same time we deem **the full implementation of the already existing multilateral conventions both in the UN and the African Union framework essential**, as their provisions effectively contribute to the fight against all forms of transnational organized crime.

I wish you a fruitful session and look forward to the outcome of your meeting.