

Opening remarks by H.E. Renato Brunetta  
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*Effective Governments delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth*

It is a great pleasure to be here in Marrakech today. So first of all, let me thank the Government of Morocco and the OECD for organizing this important event and for their hospitality.

The global financial and economic crisis we are recovering from has demonstrated the unavoidable need for coordinated actions and shared strategies.

In order to face this crisis, we decided - maybe for the first time in history - to embrace an unprecedented vision that challenges the very foundations of world governance – intended as the set of rules, procedures and practices recognized at global level.

The Rome and London G8 Summits, as well as the G20 in Pittsburg, have highlighted that mistakes in financial politics and market distortions cannot be faced with mere remedial measures.

Only with an overhaul of the global strategy can we really change a globalization stance that, while it has led to some benefits for the industrialized countries, has nonetheless left behind the poorest areas of the planet. This, in turn, has widened disparities and worsened social injustice.

We believe that a radical rethinking of a truly sustainable development strategy requires us to put social dimension and citizen basic needs at the centre of any Government action.

"People first" has been the *leitmotiv* of the various summits up until Pittsburg and is likely to become the tenet of the present meeting too, where

we will be discussing shared strategies and concrete proposals to spur our countries and regions' development.

A global governance which really has people at its core not only requires all those policies aimed at checking job losses while stimulating business; also, we have to reinforce Government action in terms of citizen and business services.

In fact, it is precisely such an aspect that we must carefully consider in these times of crisis. For it is within our Public Administrations – our visible and invisible assets – that we can significantly boost productivity and thus produce wealth.

For every country seriously committed to meeting citizen needs and measuring their satisfaction, Public Administrations' efficiency and efficacy is more and more becoming a "fixed course".

The automation and integration of PA information services, therefore, constitute modernization demands which are not an end in themselves: in fact, they contribute to the basic objective of providing all citizens – in particular those ones with disabilities - with basic services in a more rapid and cost-effective way.

Within such a strategic vision, "transparency" is another benchmark. In fact, it will greatly contribute to ensure an ethical behaviour and to prevent corruption, against a backdrop of a more intense and less bureaucratic relationship between public and private sectors.



In Italy, one year and a half after the swearing in of the new Government, the reform of Public Administration has already gained enormous attention.

The reason for this is that such a reform has radically changed Public Administration's parameters in a more meaningful way for the general public. The new watchwords are now: meritocracy, performance, assessment, managerial capacity, productivity, transparency, fight against absenteeism and corruption, and better services for citizens and business.

By way of an example, let me quote two initiatives aimed at supporting relations between Public Administrations and citizens: "Reti Amiche" (Friendly Nets) and "Linea Amica" (Friendly Line), which have already delivered great results only one year after their launch.

With "Reti Amiche", we have increased points of contact for the delivery of public services to citizens through private entities' computer networks: shopping centers, post offices, tobacconists' and companies. Today, we have more than 50 000 additional delivery points thanks to private networks.

With "Linea Amica", we have provided citizens with direct and tailored assistance, so as to help them to solve problems encountered *vis-à-vis* Public Administrations. Thanks to a network connecting all central and local administrations, "Linea Amica" answers to all calls immediately or within 24 hours, after having submitted citizens' requests to the relevant PA experts. Today, the "Linea Amica" network allows us to manage more than 200 000 requests every day.



The reflection on the importance of a radical change in Italian PA's *modus operandi*, coupled with the positive support of 70-80% of the Italian people, has strengthened our awareness of the need to widen the horizon beyond our borders.

Today, more than ever, we are convinced that no reform, no innovation, no sustainable growth can be thoroughly fulfilled without a proper exchange of knowledge, integration and supernational inclusion.

It is with such a persuasion in mind that we participate in this important meeting: in this respect, we want to embark on a new phase of cooperation with the MENA and OECD countries, so as to enhance the ability of our Public Administrations to face the new development challenges.

Conscious that human capital is a crucial factor for any reform process to succeed, we have initially proposed to launch an international distance learning program, to disseminate best practices in the fields of good governance and e-Government, including applicative solutions.

This initiative aims at setting up a cooperation process in some priority areas with the aim to set out together - taking into account everyone's needs and experiences - e-learning programs which will ultimately lead to an improvement and harmonization of public servants' skills and abilities.

This is a project that we deem crucial, in particular in view of a renewed partnership between Europe and Mediterranean and Middle East countries.

We have had the opportunity to discuss this initiative with many MENA countries during the past weeks, including at the Rome meeting of November 12, reaching a wide consensus and gaining useful feedback. Together, we have also proposed to set up a Steering Committee to get the project off the ground.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the OECD for its support in the launch of the initiative and for being an active part in it, and all those countries which have already backed our proposal. I also invite more countries to join us, and really hope that from tomorrow, with the support of all, we will rapidly kick-start the organizational phase of the program.

On our side, we are ready to deploy some of our best Universities and research institutions, our Higher School of Public Administration and other public bodies, such as FORMEZ, CNIPA, SOGEI, CONSIP and the Italian Customs Agency, whose outstanding expertise is internationally renowned.

However, we need to involve other countries' institutions, so as to concretely identify together priority areas of action and prepare a "Catalogue" of best practices, tailored to the special needs of our respective administrations.

Against this backdrop, I do believe this program will have to lead to a process of continuing interaction, to a "permanent forum", a catalyst of energies, ideas and human and financial resources.

Such a forum should be able to create a network and to enable interaction among public administrations, experts, academic institutions, international organizations and international training centres, while stimulating the ability to carry out the best initiatives to enhance the way we respond to

our citizens' needs.

Such a forum should also be able to identify new ideas. For we all know that possibilities to reform "public governance" are huge and that technological revolution, including through the Internet, offers nowadays enormous opportunities to innovate.

The exchange of best practices will be of the utmost importance to ensure the success of our international partnership. However – and I want once again to make this point clear before I conclude my brief speech – "citizen empowerment" will have to be, from now on, the absolute landmark of our common goal of reforming and modernizing public administration.

Thank you.