



PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Statement by the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs of Italy,
H.E. Mr. Vincenzo Amendola**

**UNDP 50th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting
Break-out session 3: "Preventing violent conflict, building peaceful societies"**

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Mr. Chair,

Italy has traditionally held the view that an integrated, inclusive and participatory long-term approach to development, through partnerships with partner countries, is key in addressing the root causes of underdevelopment and the latter's linkage with extremism or radicalization.

In this context, we believe that the nexus of migration and development is an area of untapped potential, and therefore it has been a priority of the Italian Government for a long time. Our efforts, together with our European Partners, have led to the creation within the EU of the "Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa" of 1,8 billion euros.

But more has to be done: diaspora should be seen as an agent of change and a partner in development. Migrants networks can be fundamental partners in stemming extremism and radicalization, by spreading a message of tolerance. Through remittances, in particular, diaspora can also contribute financially to development.

We are glad to see that many partner countries are beginning to realize the potential of this channel of development: we should capitalize on this and try to promote more initiatives emphasizing the core values of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

However, eradication of extremism, promotion of tolerance and general economic development cannot be successful if we leave half of the world's population aside. Women are often among the most competent, yet marginalized and underutilized actors in efforts to rebuild war-torn societies. Economic empowerment and income-generating possibilities for women are in fact key not only to revive local economies after the conflict, but also to promote further economic development. As mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, if we are to re-create a sustainable future in post-conflict situations, we should indeed commit to harmonizing the human rights approach with the acknowledgment that women are central players of resilient and inclusive growth. This means that we should move away from a framework focusing on 'protection' of women to one that is centered on human rights of women as well as their capabilities.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed the landmark resolution 1325 on women and peace and security, the first ever to address the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. In 2008 the Security Council also approved Resolution 1820, which focused specifically on the issue of sexual

violence in situations of armed conflict. Much remains to be done, however, in the area of protection and promotion of women's human rights in conflict situations, in post-conflict societies and in societies in transition.

We should definitely continue to focus on the implementation of those Security Council resolutions: Italy has already adopted its second National Action Plan for implementing resolution 1325. Generally speaking, the mainstreaming of a 'gender perspective' and the support to women's economic, social and political empowerment are pivotal axis of the Italian humanitarian initiatives. At the field level, my country has paid particular attention to development initiatives aimed at empowering women in various countries in conflict situations, also targeting gender based violence. For example, our support to the Palestinian strategy to counter violence against women is ongoing in all cities of the West Bank and Gaza. Our efforts are also concentrating on sustaining women and children victims of the Syrian conflict.

Talking about conflicts, they certainly take a toll on youth. The current youth population (people between 10 and 24) is the largest ever and most of it is living in developing countries. In the past decade extremist ideologies have increased their appeal to youth, through specific communication campaigns. It is both a moral obligation and a strategic investment for us to turn the tide: by countering the appeal of violent and extremist groups among young people, we will deny these groups access to their most valuable resource.

We should be asking how young people themselves can be the heart of the solution, identifying areas that we should target with renewed vigor. Three possible examples:

- i. Education. Culture and education are the worst enemy of violent and extremist groups and they are our best allies to promote tolerance, inclusiveness and open-mindedness.

- ii. Empowerment. Empowerment of youth and youth-oriented organizations is essential in promoting positive role models, responding to violence, and delegitimizing extremist messages. A special priority should be placed on empowering the world's 600 million young women.

- iii. Socio-economic development, in particular promoting employment and equality. The lack of this dimension has the potential to drive idle and dissatisfied young people down the pathway to radical, violent ideologies.

Concerning this last point, together with the United Nations and UNDP in particular, we should build in partner countries the right conditions for new enterprises to be established and thrive, leading to increased job opportunities. Italy is already contributing to several projects, sponsored by different UN organizations, funds and programs, aiming at creating new job opportunities. In particular, we are supporting youth and women entrepreneurship in key economic activities like sustainable agriculture and the agribusiness sector (where the Italian experience, especially through our model of small and medium sized enterprises and the model of cooperatives, can have an important impact).