

President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni, in her recent address at the United Nations General Assembly, stressed Italy's strategic vision, emphasizing our nation's commitment to the African continent. Africa will be at the forefront of Italy's G7 Presidency in 2024, with a singular goal in mind – the establishment of equitable partnerships and firm support for Africa's growth.

We highlight the importance of establishing fair access to international financial assistance and credit for African nations. This step is vital not only to mitigate humanitarian crises but also to catalyze sustainable transformations in agri-food systems, stimulate domestic production, and reduce import dependency.

The next Italy Africa Summit will be an unparalleled opportunity for Italy to engage in a profound dialogue with African nations on a wide range of critical issues. It is a platform where we can collectively chart a course for joint planning and implementation of initiatives, starting with strategic sectors such as energy and infrastructure.

Africa's journey toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be a solitary endeavor. It requires the support and collaboration of the whole international community. Italy will work to rally global support for a comprehensive global economic recovery program tailored to Africa's unique challenges and opportunities.

The Sustainable Development Goals serve as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. They embody a shared vision of a better, more sustainable future for people and the planet, leaving no one behind.

To localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development requires a holistic approach that involves governments, local communities, civil society, and the private sector working hand in hand to tailor SDGs implementation to the unique needs and challenges of each African nation.

Italy is a highly decentralized country composed of Municipalities, Provinces, Metropolitan Cities and Regions, autonomous entities with their own statutes, powers and functions, and strongly supports the localization of the SDGs at national and international level.

In the context of the 2022 High Level Political Forum for sustainable development, Italy presented its second Voluntary National Review of its achievement of the Agenda 2030, integrated by 12 Voluntary Local Reviews, showing the commitment and the key role played by local communities.

Almost 70% of local strategies for sustainable development are presently into force covering regions, provinces and metropolitan areas. All regions, PAs and metropolitan cities have established Pacts or Forums for Sustainable Development creating an important multilevel network of dialogue and exchange with non-state actors.

We gained good knowledge in this process. Our intention is not only to share it the but also to contribute to the capacity of partner countries to do the same. I would like to highlight three main lines of actions which distinguish our support to the localization of the SDGs in the context of the Agenda 2030: our role in the G20, our involvement in the Local2030 Coalition and last but not least our support to UN DESA for capacity building.

In 2021, during the Italian presidency of the G20, we decided to make SDG-localisation as one of our priorities and to focus in particular on intermediary cities. Intermediary cities are often overlooked in national strategies and international cooperation programmes and face enormous constraints to realise their development potential, in terms of data, financing, policy and capacity.

To support their development potential, promoting peer dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building on effective approaches to SDG localisation, we developed G20 High-Level Principles on City-to-City SDG partnerships and launched - in collaboration with OECD and UN-Habitat - a

G20 Platform on SDG Localization and Intermediary Cities. The Platform was endorsed by G20 Leaders when they met in Rome for the G20 Summit in October 2021. It is an inclusive mechanism open to all relevant stakeholders including representatives from non G20 countries, international organisations, as well as national, regional, local government representatives and their networks. Now, the G20 Platform is preparing its Annual High-Level Meeting, at the end of this month, where participants will have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on relevant aspects for a sustainable urban future for all.

To this extent, we took an active part in the second UN Habitat Assembly, last June, by sponsoring jointly with other countries a specific resolution on SDGs localization. It emphasizes the need to strengthen the work on Voluntary Local Reviews by also connecting these with national SDG review processes. We are also proud that we were one of the co-sponsors of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, a mechanism that brings local governments' constituency's voice within the main international and United Nations-led fora.

More recently, at the SDG Summit during the United Nations General Assembly, last month, Italy actively engaged in the Local 2030 Coalition and the Local Regional Government Forum. Italy organized the event "Localizing the 2030 Agenda: transformative coalition" together with

the governments of Poland and Zimbabwe, UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments.

We support the Local 2030Coalition with a “Knowledge Hub” to foster knowledge on SDG localization and in translating knowledge into concrete policies for SDG localization in different countries.

Last but not least, we strongly support UN DESA to contribute to the capacity building of government officials at the national and subregional levels for effective SDGs implementation.

In 2021, we supported the participation of partner countries conducting their Voluntary National Reviews in DESA second global workshop held in Botswana. Our cooperation with UN-DESA include a project to improve local and national government capacities for localizing the SDGs progress through Voluntary Locals Reviews. Through this project, we aim to support the development of the Voluntary Locals Reviews and their linkages to Voluntary National Reviews in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique as well as in the cross-border Chaco region of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Thanks to this project, we are also able to support the organization of today’s workshop here in Zimbabwe and I thank you all for your work of these 3 days workshop, sure that it was very successful.

We believe in an inclusive, collaborative approach to address global challenges and create a brighter future for Africa and the world.

Thank you.