

Excellencies, dear ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

let me first of all thank you for the opportunity to intervene in this distinguished panel, focused on issues that are at this time prominent in the international agenda.

Indeed, this Committee session comes at the right time to discuss about those issues.

The negotiations in Paris in the framework of the *Twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* just ended few days ago.

The outcome of the Conference will be strategic, because the international agreement adopted against climate change, which aims to **regulate the emissions of greenhouse gases** (GHG), identified as the **major causes of the increase in global temperature**, will greatly affect all government policies in every sector. In order to keep the **global temperature rise below 1.5 °C**, all countries, especially the major emitters, must commit to **implement policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gases emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change**. This should be done through the establishment, at national level, of 4 priority principles concerning: Mitigation, Adaptation, Finance for the climate and Transfer of technology and capacity building.

This **year 2015** has the **potential to become a turning point** in our efforts to develop appropriate responses to the **challenge of bringing our societies in line with the principles of sustainable development** and to tackle the multiple challenges of climate change. We have adopted in September, in New York, a set of Sustainable Development Goals to be attained by 2030, including climate change, thus **explicitly recognizing the interdependence between climate action, economic growth and sustainable development**.

In this perspective, the Paris Agreement has pursued transformative pathways towards low carbon, climate resilient economies and societies. To this end, I believe that is urgent to reduce greenhouse gases emissions so as **to send a clear and strong signal to stakeholders, markets and the public as well as to provide predictability and clarity to businesses and investors of our common long term “direction of travel”**.

It is therefore essential that the summit in Paris will not remain **an isolated moment, but represents the start of a process**, where the countries will follow up to their commitments and will think about more ambitious targets in the long term. Countries around the world should recognize the **scale and urgency of the change that is needed**. The transition to a model of growth with low carbon content is possible and tempting, but as of now **requires substantial investment and crucial decisions especially for cities**.

Having said that, taking into account the outcomes of the Paris Conference and the 2030 Agenda, I believe that also this Committee should find the way to **contribute to the implementation of these commitments in an effective and coordinated manner**.

In particular, this Committee has a great opportunity to give a contribution concerning **housing, urban planning, energy systems, carbon footprint and green urban infrastructures** through the implementation of the "**Charter of the United Nations on sustainable housing**" that was adopted last year.

I would like to highlight that, in this regard, Italy already has produced a significant effort during the Charter negotiation process, facilitating **the inclusion of specific environmental issues that were not taken enough into account during the initial negotiations of the draft document**.

Following the Charter's objectives, we can say that regarding, for example, the objective of *Improved environmental and energy performance and resilient urban settlements taking into account climate change*, **Italy shares the importance of cooperation, fostering both mitigation and adaptation to climate change**. As part of **our environmental cooperation programs**, especially with regard to those countries which appear to be most vulnerable to climate change consequences, we have matured **a quite interesting experience in that sector working in particular with countries in the UNECE region** (Central Asia, Balkan area, Eastern Europe) as well as with many other countries outside the region like: China, the Pacific Small Island States (SIDS) and Mediterranean Area.

Very important is also the **development of activities concerning the implementation of an Integrated Water Resources Management**, tackling issues like water scarcity, that has been combined with programs aimed to combat desertification and adaptation measures to climate change and with the reduction of urban waste through the promotion of specific country policies.

As far as the commitment of our country (and our Ministry) in the context of this Committee, I can say that the Ministry of Environment has since long been supportive to the Committee's activities, cooperating effectively with the Secretariat, and already in the period 2007-2009 has provided economic support on sustainable construction and energy efficiency, including also training and "capacity building". Recently, it has also provided an expert in the project team, for the preparation of the Country Profile for Uzbekistan, that will be presented later today.

Let me mention as well Italy's recent undertakings at the domestic level. In **July 2015, Italy approved the National Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change**, with the objective of providing a **national vision for an adaptation framework** able to face the inevitable consequences of climate change. We are as well working on a new legislative Act to design a low carbon and resource efficient economy. **Work on a new Sustainable Development Strategy, coherent with the 2030 Agenda, is already taking place.**

Regarding the objective of *Housing settlements with priority given to sustainable and integrated transport systems and the provision of green infrastructure* we have produced in 2013 a fundamental Report about "**Green infrastructure and ecosystem services in Italy as a tool for environmental policies and green economy: Potentials, critical and proposals**"

Regarding the Italian contribution to the **UN-Habitat Program**, the Ministry of Environment is actually working on two main documents:

- The first is an Italian Report, which describes the activities in the field of environment carried out since 1996 on urban areas, both at national and international level. The Ministry of Environment has launched activities related to the analysis of international cooperation projects and has established an "ad hoc" Working Group to elaborate the National Report Section, that will be delivered in March 2016.
- The second, is a document dealing with each of the six thematic areas for the UN Conference on *Housing and Sustainable Urban Development*. In particular we are directly involved, as reference country, in the participation of the *Policy Unit n. 8: Urban Ecology and Resilience*. We will contribute through the development of the first draft, which will be presented in Paris next January 2016, as part of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group, in view of the definition of the future Agenda Urban Post 2015.

Let me conclude reiterating once again the relevance of the work of this Committee in the current new international framework, and let me express my wish that the countries here represented will be able to catch this opportunity making the best use of the work of the Committee to bring positive results in their countries in achieving our common goals of a “sustainable housing and land management”.

I wish you a very productive discussion for the rest of the day and tomorrow.