



I T A L Y

STATEMENT BY

THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ITALY

THE HONORABLE FRANCO FRATTINI

AT THE UNITED NATIONS' HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ROUND TABLE II – EDUCATION AND HEALTH

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Distinguished co-Chairs,
Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to take part in this round table, and have listened with great interest to the earlier presentations.

There can be no economic development unless individuals have adequate healthcare, education and, of course, food.

Health and Education that we are discussing today, are absolute priorities for my Government and will be at the center of the G8 agenda next year, when Italy is President.

Already in the past, at the 2001 Genoa G8, Italy played an important role in creating the *Global Fund for the fight against AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis*, which it firmly supports. We are also at the forefront in elaborating innovative mechanisms for financing healthcare, such as the *Advance Market Commitment* mechanism to develop new vaccines.

The international community have allocated great resources, and my Country for its part contributed about half a billion euros in the last two years, to promote education and the fight against pandemics. It is particularly encouraging to see that, alongside traditional donors, important new players have emerged from the private sector, with the capacity to mobilize enormous financial resources for humanitarian purposes.

The results to date are encouraging, but much, very much, remains to be done.

We must, firstly, ensure that our strategies are sustainable and have a lasting impact. It is thus crucial that both public and private donors commit themselves to greater aid effectiveness.

This means, first and foremost, a better division of labor and clearer rules to ensure the proper flow of resources and their proper targeting to the priorities of the recipient countries. The recent Accra Conference on aid effectiveness offered a set of rules in that direction. Our job is to implement them.

Secondly, our action should take a more balanced approach. While funds to fight specific diseases are certainly positive, this should not preempt aid to strengthen healthcare systems.

The experience of many countries show that improving healthcare and education will need greater investments directed to basic infrastructures, such as water and sanitary facilities. In parallel, the role of local

administrations should be strengthened, with a view to decentralization and subsidiarity.

I firmly believe in the need to go beyond the traditional donor-beneficiary approach. We should instead move in the direction of a form of partnership involving every component of society and building local leadership in development.

Local Governments are crucial – I wish to underscore – in the distribution of public services. They are thus the rightful leaders to seek solutions to development issues. It has proven to be particularly effective in stimulating reconciliation and a spirit of dialogue among peoples in conflict

In our experience, and leaving aside the global aspects, the most effective approach in these fields is what we can call “bilateral/decentralised cooperation”.

Allow me some examples, among many others.

Putting together the central and local authorities of my Country, we built healthcare initiatives for **Palestinians**, particularly children. Not only did this strengthen the Palestinian system but it allowed through the contacts of the Italian Regions to treat the more serious cases in Israeli hospitals.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, our decentralized cooperation links with local institutions, especially those related to healthcare and education. Thus, as an added value, we bring citizens closer to their institutions and strengthen the mechanisms of dialogue and democracy.

The health and education sectors are particularly important in **conflict or post-conflict areas** since they help mend the social fabric needed for economic recovery and democratic stability. In these areas, interventions appear particularly effective:

- in **Liberia**, a country that still today has only slightly more than 100 physicians, we are working with Italian NGOs to rehabilitate the Medical School of the University of Monrovia;
- in **Sierra Leone**, we have launched an avant-garde initiative in orthopedic surgery and the rehabilitation of amputees to favor the reintegration of young former soldiers;
- in **Afghanistan** we have rehabilitated and reorganized general medicine hospitals in Herat and Kabul;
- in **Niger** we train, locally, future doctors at the Faculty of Medicine of Niamey.

In **Africa as a whole**, a few important bank foundations have started funding healthcare and education projects in Malawi, Uganda and Senegal as a result of the mobilization of the private sector.

Furthermore, still in Africa, we are planning to establish local health units which will provide, on call, instruments, medical and nursing assistance as well as, in time, professional evaluation at distance through informatic links with Italian hospitals. All this will be done in close cooperation with the Italian Regions, thus underlining the bond that must exist between local authorities of developed countries and of less favoured Regions.

In this spirit, yesterday, together with the City of Milan, host of the 2015 Expo, we organized an event dedicated to the role of local authorities in promoting development, new partnerships between administrations from the North and South and between public and private sectors, striving to find innovative solutions to the everyday problems of citizens. It is my hope that the event will mark the first step for new solutions towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

To win the fight against poverty we will need both courage and vision: at this point, notwithstanding the difficulties, I feel encouraged to continue along the path we have collectively taken.

Thank you