

Honorable Prime Minister and President of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Romano **PRODI**;

Honorable Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro **MATSUURA**;

Honorable Minister Dr. Giuseppe **FIORONI**;

Honorable President of the Regione, Mr. Riccardo **ILLY**;

Honorable Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union, Dr. Hamadoun **TOURE'**;

Honorable Secretary General of UNCTAD, Dr. Panitchpakdi **SUPACHAI**;

Honorable Permanent Representative of Kuwait at FAO, and the Chairperson of the Rome Chapter of G77, Dr. Lamya Ahmad **AL-SAQQAF**;

Distinguished scientists, distinguished members of the governments, academia, research institutions and industry;

Representatives of institutions from the city of Trieste and the region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia;

Colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this Forum. I wish to briefly say a few words about its genesis, expectations and organization.

The Forum arose principally from the two statements contained in the G8 document "Education for Innovative Societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," issued in St. Petersburg in 2006.

The first statement is this:

"As a follow-up to the St. Petersburg summit, we welcome Italy's offer to organize, in cooperation with UNESCO, a "World Forum on Education, Research and Innovation: New Partnership for Sustainable Development"."

The second statement is this:

"We reiterate our commitment to support Africa."

Mr. Prime Minister, this Forum is thus the initiative of your Government, and you personally. Mr. Director-General, this is your initiative as well, through the "Education for All" agenda that you set in 2005. It is made possible by the cooperation between your

two offices, that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, the international organizations and institutions in Trieste and elsewhere, regional, provincial and city governments; and local research and educational institutions. It has involved discussions with the G8 Sherpa, Italian embassies all over the world, Italian permanent mission at UNESCO; and numerous friends and supporters. It is being held under the high patronage of the President of Italy. I deeply appreciate the efforts, support and contributions of all concerned.

The Forum is neither a purely political event nor a purely academic event. It is a platform for understanding the best practices in education, research, health, environment and energy, and their connections to innovation and sustainable development. We wish to explore the interrelationships among the three legs of the so-called knowledge triangle--- Education, Research and Innovation. The Forum will also dwell on the cooperation among the countries in the North, and also on the North-South and South-South cooperation. These cooperative efforts will be highlighted in the Special Session on Africa, though this theme permeates throughout the Forum. The Forum will be mindful of the fact that, while, on the average, standards of living and comfort levels have steadily increased for the past 50 or so years, the disparities between segments of the world have also grown continually, leading to unprecedented suffering of millions.

At the Forum, we wish to explore the best ways by which the Trieste institutions in particular, Italy and the other G8 countries in general, can be engaged towards using our knowledge for solving the many problems that threaten global sustainability. We hope to arrive at specific projects and proposals instead of generic and vague considerations. The new ideas as may come up may be developed subsequently through the international institutions in Trieste and elsewhere.

As I already said, though my own institution, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, has taken the main responsibility for the organization of the Forum, it is really the effort of many people. We have assembled the best speakers we can, and have kept them informed about the purpose of the Forum, of their sessions in particular, including a general idea of the allotted times and expectations we have of them. We have tried to make coherent themes and found speakers with breadth. We look forward to their contributions with eagerness.

As the Forum progresses, you will no doubt find some shortcomings. There will be things that we have not thought through. I ask for your understanding but assure you that we will try to sort out all problems as best as possible.

The plan for this session is as follows: the Director-General of UNESCO will make the opening remarks. This will be followed by welcome remarks by five distinguished people on the stage. They have been extremely kind to restrict their remarks to between 3 and 5 minutes each. The session will be concluded with a speech by the Guest of Honor, Prime Minister Prodi.

Allow me now to introduce the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. **MATSUURA**.

Born in Tokyo, Mr. Matsuura was educated at the Law Faculty of the University of Tokyo, and at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, where he earned a B.A. in economics. He returned to his alma mater in 2006 to receive an honorary doctorate in law.

Mr. Matsuura began his diplomatic career in Ghana, covering ten West African countries, leading to a lifelong passion for the cultures and peoples of Africa. He worked in development cooperation throughout his career, and in political affairs with a focus on North America. In the 1970s he served as Counselor at the Embassy of Japan in Washington, DC, and later as Consul General in Hong Kong. As Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1992-1994, he was Japan's Sherpa for the G-7 Summit.

In 1999, while serving as Japan's Ambassador to France and chairing UNESCO's flagship World Heritage Committee, Mr. Matsuura was elected by Member States to his first term as Director-General of UNESCO. He undertook a sweeping reform while focusing on key programme priorities. He was re-elected to a second term in November 2005.

Mr. Matsuura has authored books in Japanese, English and French on UNESCO, international relations, the intersection between diplomacy and development cooperation, Japan-US relations, Japan-French relations, and a history of the G-7 Summit.

Mr. Director-General, I now request you to address this gathering and give your thoughts on the Forum.

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I now present Honorable Minister Dr. Giuseppe **FIORONI**.

Dr. Fioroni is a specialist in internal medicine and researcher at the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic of the Sacred Heart Catholic University. In 1989 he was elected Mayor of Viterbo (where he was born), and remained in office until 1995, the year in which he created an innovative foundation comprising the hospital and health authorities and the local municipalities, with the purpose of improving public health. In 1996 he was elected to the Italian Parliament, and was re-elected in 2001 and 2006. He is on the Executive Committee of the "*Margherita*" Party, and is currently the minister of education in the Italian Government.

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I now present Mr. Riccardo **ILLY**, the President of the Regione of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia:

Dr. Illy started work in the family's well-known coffee-making firm in 1977, of which he is now Vice President. He has held the positions of Vice President of the Association of Industrialists in Trieste and President of the Seminario Permanente Veronelli. He was twice the Mayor of Trieste. In 2001 he was elected Member of the Italian Parliament, and in 2003 the President of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region. He was also elected President of the Assembly of European Regions

(AER) in December 2004. Among the honors he has received is the "*Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana*" by the President of the Italian Republic.

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I now have the pleasure of introducing Honorable Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union Mr. Hamadoun **TOURE**'.

Dr Hamadoun Touré holds a PhD from the University of Electronics, Telecommunications and Informatics of Moscow. For many years since the beginning of his career, he has been involved in communications projects. For instance, he was Africa's Regional General Manager for ICO Global Communications, and served on many international bodies and spearheaded important projects in Africa and the Middle East. He was the Director of the Telecommunications Development Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union for some ten years before he was elected as its Secretary-General in 2007.

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I am now honored to present Honorable Dr. Panitchpakdi **SUPACHAI**. Dr. Supachai received his Ph.D. in Economic Planning and Development from the Netherlands, and was a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University. He has published a number of books on economics. He served his country as Deputy Minister of Finance, Minister of Commerce as well as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic policies, during which time he introduced important policy changes. He was also the Director General of the World Trade Organization. He has been the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, or UNCTAD, since 2005.

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I now have the distinct pleasure of presenting Honorable Dr. Lamya Ahmad **AL-SAQQAF**, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait at FAO and the Chairperson of the G77 Rome Chapter.

Dr. Lamya Al-Saqqaf obtained her Ph.D. in immunology from the University of London and was on the faculty at the University of Kuwait before becoming Director of Clinical Services at St. Martin's Hospitals, London. She has been the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to FAO, Rome, since 2003, prior to which she was a diplomat at the Kuwait Embassy in Rome for three years. Dr. Al-Saqqaf is member of the Independent External Evaluation Group of FAO and of the Executive Board for the World Food Programme; she was the vice-chair of the Rome chapter of G77 and is now its Chair.

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Finally, allow me now to introduce the Prime Minister of Italy, and the President of the Council of Ministers, Hon. Dr. Romano **PRODI**.

After graduating in law from Milan, Dr. Prodi pursued postgraduate work at the London School of Economics. He joined the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bologna, and became Full Professor there in 1971, a position which he held until 1999. He was a visiting professor at Harvard University and at the Stanford Research Institute.

Dr. Prodi combined his university teaching with research on Industrial Economics, focused on small and medium businesses, industrial districts and competition policy. He studied relations between the State and the Market, privatization policies, the European integration process and new models of capitalism. Dr. Prodi was the chairman of the *Il Mulino* publishing house; founded *NOMISMA*, one of Italy's leading economic research societies; and chaired its Scientific Committee until 1995. He has written editorials for Italy's leading dailies such as *Il Corriere della Sera* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. For years he was the editor of *L'Industria - Rivista di economia e politica industriale*. In late seventies, Mr. Prodi was the Minister of Industry. In May 1996, the President of the Republic asked him to form a new government, which remained in office until October 1998. In March 1999, the European Council elected him the President of the European Commission in Brussels.

Among the numerous honours and distinctions that have been conferred upon him are 22 honorary degrees from universities all over the world, the Schum-peter Prize, Honorary Member of the London School of Economics and Political Science, and of the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

Mr. Prime Minister, may I now request you to address the gathering and give us the benefit of your thoughts?