

ITALY



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

*Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights
Comitato Interministeriale per i Diritti Umani*

**Opening remarks by
H.E. Min. Plen. Fabrizio Petri,
President of the Inter-ministerial Committee for
Human Rights,
Head of the Italian Delegation before UN CERD
(110 Session, Geneva)**

Geneva, August 8th, 2023

Thank Madame/Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Experts,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are particularly pleased to be here and we are honored to foster an open and constructive dialogue with this notable Committee, whose work and contribution to the prevention and countering of racial discrimination is meaningful, now more than ever.

The principle of non-discrimination and the promotion of equality among all members of our communities is at the core of our constitutional system and has been progressively implemented also through relevant legislative reforms to combat traditional and new forms of social behaviors that fuel hatred attitudes and conducts among human beings. This regularly occurs now on social media and digital platforms where hate speech is widespread, concerning especially young generations and targeting specific categories of people due to their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin.

Our commitment was reaffirmed in the framework of the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, in which Italy not only accepted in 2019 the main recommendations concerning the fight against all forms of racial discrimination, but also updated in the mid-term report submitted in 2021 all measures adopted to this end.

Italian legislation, as I recalled, has fully implemented the CERD Convention and has progressively criminalized discriminatory conducts by introducing aggravating circumstance, specifically for hate crimes as defined in our Criminal code as: any conduct attributable to an individual who propagates ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, or who incites to commit or commits acts of discrimination on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds.

This solid legal basis has strengthened our investigative system, in order to frame the basics of discriminatory conducts and to introduce repressive measures against offenders.

On the one hand, it is crucial to address critical issues related to racist phenomena in terms of lack of knowledge, both in numbers and in identifying behaviours and actions having a discriminatory impact.

In our view, in the national report it was important to provide quantitative data, due to the key mandate of the National Institute of Statistics and competent statistical offices located in main Ministries.

Along this approach, but also in order to foresee and implement awareness and training programs and projects throughout Italy, we can count on two excellent bodies in our governance system: the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office and the Observatory for Security Against Discriminatory Acts at the Ministry of the Interior, each with a proper mandate and yet complementary and often partners for the prevention and countering of discrimination in all its forms.

In the context of the overall commitment to combat ethnic-racial discrimination, our country is currently engaged in the work of elaborating and adopting the "National Plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance". The Plan, in implementation of the EU Action Plan against Racism: "A Union of Equality: the EU Action Plan against Racism 2020-2025" and in response to requests from the main international monitoring organizations of respect for human rights, aims to support national policies on the prevention and fight against racism and xenophobia, with the aim of contributing to the full enhancement of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious, open, democratic and participatory society. The Plan, in line with the previous experience of the 2015-2017 National Plan against Racism, aims to be a dynamic and coordinated response of the institutions and civil society to the various manifestations of the racist phenomenon in our country.

The manifestations and conducts, in public and digital life, that are defined in our legislation as hate crimes require additional efforts today, which must rest on the cultural and educational dimensions: awareness of the impact produced by behaviours that instil racially based hatred, coupled with knowledge about sanctioning measures, is fundamental to promoting an effective preventive and countering twofold approach over the phenomenon.

This is even more important when such behaviours are addressed toward individuals who are perceived as diverse by the community, and who therefore suffer discrimination because of their national or ethnic origin.

We are working, in this regard, for the better implementation of the National Strategy dedicated to Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities, and our approach on migration issues is inspired to guarantee immediate assistance in emergency situations as well as to ensure careful and inclusive management for the social, cultural and labour integration of foreigners routinely and regularly placed in our country.

At the end of this brief introduction, which confirms our commitment in shaping and arranging for the implementation of a series of interventions at the legislative, strategic and organizational level in the Country, let me just emphasize that, in my role of President of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

as National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up indicated as such by the Human Rights Machinery of Geneva, the Italian delegation which will discuss the national report is composed by a wide range of representatives from the main Ministries responsible for the prevention and contrast of all forms of racial discrimination.

Thank you again, Chair, and we stand ready to receive observations and comments from our Rapporteur about the implementation of the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in Italy.