



Ministero della Salute

Minister of Health Beatrice Lorenzin

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Madam President, Director General, Colleagues, Italy wishes to align itself with Malta's speech on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

First of all I want to address my condolences to UK for the horrible attack of last night. We feel close to families and parents who lost their beloved.

Italy has one of the last **truly universalistic health systems** based on **one health**, capable to maintain high standards of care at a reasonable and sustainable cost.

Despite a long and cruel economic crisis, we stood resilient and inclusive to the point that we also managed to provide the **half a million migrants we rescued** from the sea with the same level of care of the resident Italians.

I think nowhere else in the world the concept of **universal right to health** has materialized better, as literally **no one has been left behind**, with a national health budget worth 6.5% of GDP, possibly the **lowest** in the OECD area.

Despite financial constraints, we have recently launched a **C hepatitis eradication campaign** fully financed by a **special public fund**. That fund includes a variety of **innovative medicines** that we procure at an affordable cost.

This will allow us to consolidate the recently achieved **decreasing trend in cancer mortality** paralleled by a major **improvement in survivorship**.

We have been capable to reform and adapt to a changing demography and epidemiology, meeting the challenges of the silent epidemic of **chronic diseases**, promoting **mental health**, and providing our **ageing population** with **precision medical strategies and treatments**.

At the same time, we have included lifecourse **gender medicine** and – in particular – **reproductive health** at the centre of our national agenda.

The persistent threat of **communicable diseases** has been addressed with the largest **free offer of vaccines** worldwide. Three days ago we passed a new decree that makes 12 vaccines compulsory to access school between zero and sixteen years.

We also accepted to chair **the Global Health Security Agenda**, promoting a careful **health and security** interaction to prevent and control outbreaks, while addressing the **safety and protection of our medical teams** working in difficult contexts.

We have invested extensively in prevention, addressing also **environmental degradation**, implementing local and national plans for **water and food safety**, mitigating **air pollution** and **neuro-endocrine disruptors' impact on early childhood development**, as indicated by the most recent epigenetic research.

Accordingly, the evident and worrying impact of **climate change** on health profiles is the core content of the **G7 Italian presidency** aiming at designing feasible and effective global strategies, in line with COP21.

Madam President, Director General, Colleagues, I have been the **longest serving** Minister of Health in my country and have always looked at **scientific evidence, based on independent research, as the guiding principle orienting my policy decisions.**

Equity, solidarity and inclusion are crucial to achieve this vision.

Therefore our key value has been the constant dialogue with **lay individuals, with families and with communities**, is the voice we have granted to those who live at the margins of our society, the **poor** and the otherwise excluded.

We are constantly trying to empower them in a joint fight against **misery, deprivation, lack of access** to basic rights, which we have addressed with the provision of an **extensive package of comprehensive benefits** for all, recently updated and expanded.

After 14 years, my Country will seat again in the WHO Executive Board and it is with a strong plea to you all that I want to conclude.

Let us work together to support a **fair reform of WHO**, providing with generosity the financial and technical support that the Agency needs to stay strong, free, independent, and lead us in the vital battle to the Sustainable Development Goals' full achievement.

Thank you.