

A Partnership with Africa




Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation of Italy

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Introduction

Africa today. A snapshot

Africa has long been a top priority in Italian foreign policy. Nowadays, the relationship with the countries of the Continent and its organizations is based on an equal partnership, oriented towards shared development to face together the multiple global challenges, thus surpassing the traditional vision of donor and beneficiary. Italy's attention to Africa aims to ensure both the balanced growth of the Continent and its own national interest, also within the European and international context.

On the African continent, the close interconnections between sustainability, peace, the fight against terrorism, crime and illicit trafficking, development, progress, migrant and refugee flows, and climate change are all evident. These issues are in addition to the highly topical one of the healthcare response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on African economies, in particular when it comes to debt sustainability.

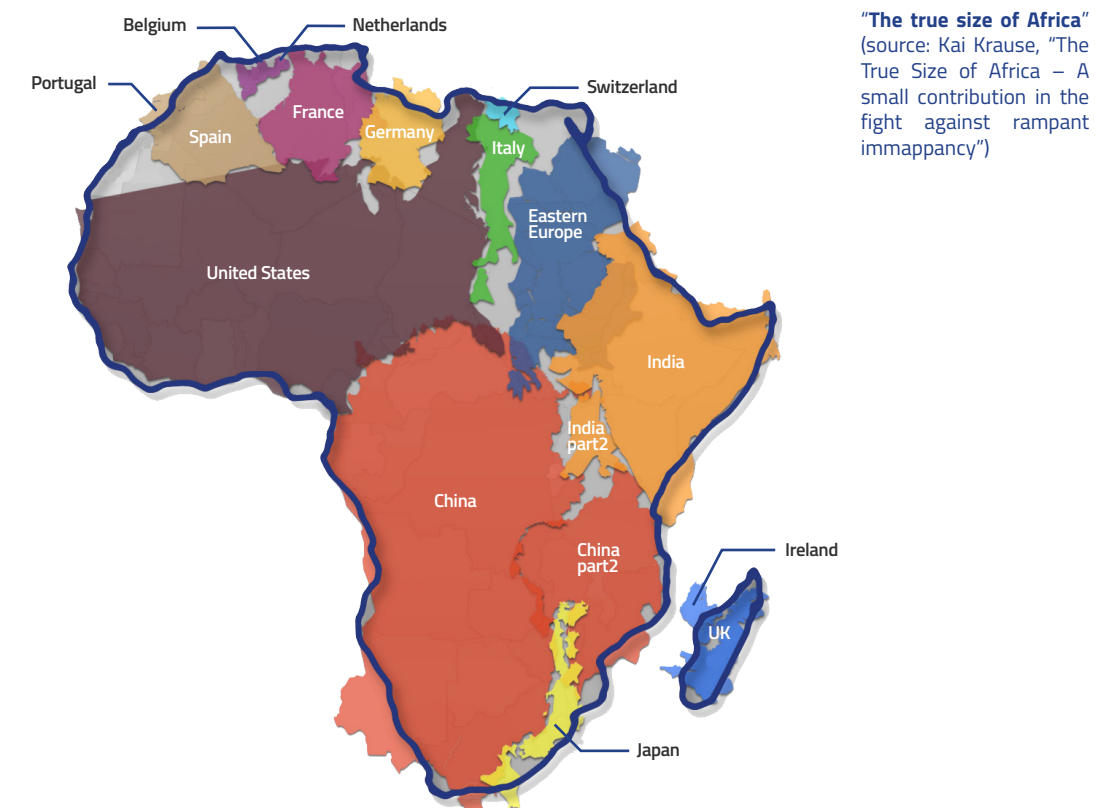
Italy's geopolitical position at the centre of the Mediterranean and traditional inclination to dialogue with Africa, also in light of the growing centrality that the Continent is assuming in the face of increasingly complex global phenomena, make coherent foreign policy action essential. Said action needs to be oriented to: peace and security; governance and human rights; migration and mobility; collaboration and investment; sustainable economic development; fight against climate change; cultural and scientific cooperation.

This action is in addition to the ancient and intense presence of Italy in Africa (which distinguishes us from other players on the Continent). It is oriented not only to calibrated political choices, but also to the many initiatives of the Italian Development Cooperation, the deep-rooted experience of our NGOs and volunteers, the role of religious and archaeological missions, and the numerous communities of compatriots, many of whom are entrepreneurs.

The dynamics of Africa have important repercussions on those of Europe and Italy. For this reason, together with a bilateral partnership with African countries, it is equally essential to operate within the various international fora, first and foremost the United Nations and the African Union, alongside the EU and its individual Member States. In Europe, and in all multilateral fora, Italy has always played an appreciated and recognized role in favour of Africa, making a decisive contribution to mobilizing greater resources towards the Continent through a series of initiatives and proposals.

Concrete actions: In 2021, the Italian Presidency of the G20, the co-Presidency of COP-26, and the organization of "Meetings with Africa" (a framework for bilateral dialogue with the countries and organizations of the Continent) will be privileged opportunities to focus the agenda on health and economic-financial issues to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, sustainability, development, and security.

These are initiatives to which the MAECI attributes particular value, and which are part of a broader approach that looks to relations with the Continent in the medium - to long-term.



With a population of around 1.2 billion inhabitants and significant demographic growth, a remarkable wealth of resources and economic potential, the persistence of unresolved conflicts and crises, it is clear that Africa deserves special priority on the Italian political agenda.

The heterogeneity and complexity of the African continent demand a multiplicity and variety of initiatives. If, in fact, where there is an Africa characterized by double-digit growth and overwhelming economic development – represented, among others, by countries such as Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Rwanda – there remains an Africa still characterized by widespread pockets of poverty and marginalization and where crime, irregular trafficking and terrorism are expanding, also due to a lack of available social alternatives; an Africa characterized by states which are unable to assert their authority over the territory and where changes of government are not always the result of authentically democratic choices. In many areas, the effect of climate change has a dramatic impact, extending desert regions and precluding development, promoting poverty and mass exoduses. Situations of this kind afflict the entire Sahelian belt, South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic (CAR) and large regions of eastern and southern Africa.

This is the scenario we face, and it requires global strategic vision.



The President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, at the second edition of the Italy - Africa Ministerial Conference; <https://www.quirinale.it/APIRed/api/media/static/thumbnail/17388/864>

To date, four major dynamics have characterized African development:

- **Political dynamics:** The consolidation of a new government in Sudan, thanks to an agreement between military and civilians, and in Mali, the growing importance of the African Union and other regional organizations, and the progressive creation of an African free trade area are positive examples of full African ownership. This is in the management of crises and continental issues, according to the consolidated principle “African solutions to African problems”.

More difficult situations remain, for example in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and in the whole Sahelian belt, where factors of institutional and economic growth alternate with elements of state fragility.

However, the more than 20 political elections held in 2018, 16 in 2019 and 10 planned or already held in 2020 – despite the Covid-19 pandemic – must be underlined; they are testimony to a continent which, despite considerable contradictions, is seeking its own democratic path and identity, and which must not be left without the support of Italy and Europe.

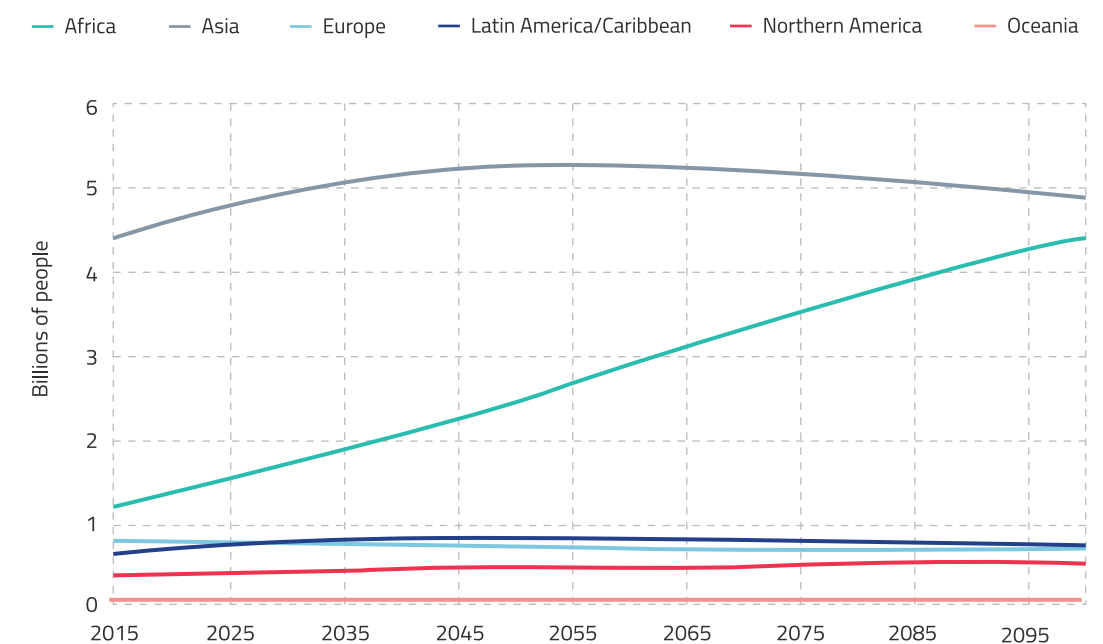
- **Heterogeneous economic growth:** In the first 15 years of the new millennium, much of the Continent grew at average rates of 5% per year, thanks to the “super-cycle” of raw materials. In 2015, various African countries, including Nigeria, South Africa and Angola, suffered the strong impact of the fall in costs of raw materials; other countries, such as Ivory Coast, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, and Rwanda, which have not focused solely on underground resources, have shown greater resistance. We are therefore witnessing, today in Africa, a scenario of “multi-speed growth”, which must be borne in mind. In this perspective, those countries which have already embarked on a more sustained development path will represent

a driving force for the economic and social progress of neighbouring ones, and should be favoured and encouraged in this direction as much as possible, also by the Italian action.

- **Demographic Trend:** Africa has the highest population growth rate among all the continents. The African population, currently around 1.2 billion individuals, of which 40% under the age of 30, is expected to double by 2050, reaching 2.5 billion, or a quarter of the world’s population estimated in the same year. According to the most authoritative statistics, in 2040 Africa will have a greater workforce than China (500 million people today; 1.1 billion expected in 2040). There is therefore the need to create at least between 10 and 15 million jobs a year, through an average economic growth of the Continent between 6% and 7%, which is exceedingly difficult to ensure. It is on the basis of these projections that Europe and Italy have launched concrete initiatives aimed at creating investments and jobs on the Continent, and reducing the pressure to irregular migration, or even crime.

However, the pandemic crisis has caused the loss of around 20 million jobs in just a few months, thereby generating significant uncertainties regarding the Continent’s economic prospects.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2015 - 2020



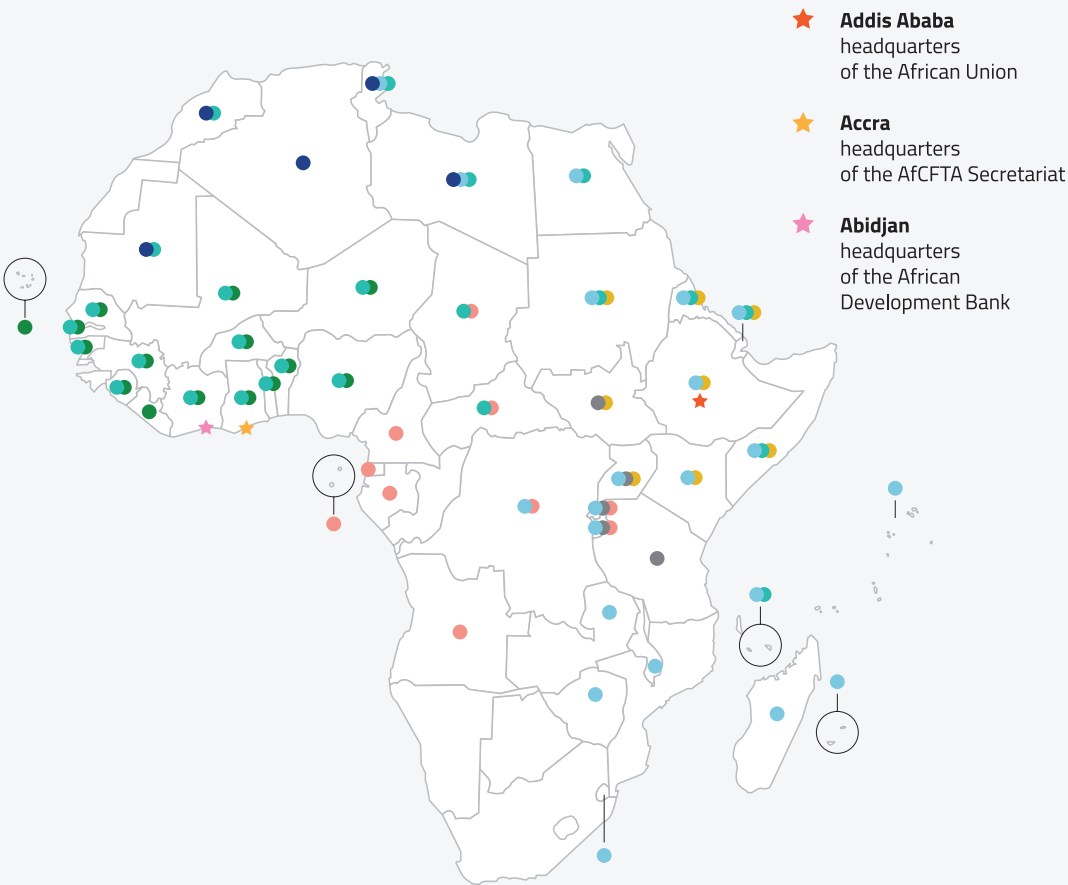
Population projections (source: UN report 2015, “World population prospects: the 2015 revision, key findings and advance tables”)

- **Continental Integration:** The African Union and African regional economic organizations (Regional Economic Communities, RECs) have assumed a pivotal role in recent years, as players capable of responding to the challenges of the Continent. Particularly important is the role of the AU, a Pan-African representative body made up of 55 Members. The AU is increasingly proposing itself as a protagonist in the management of African crises, while at the same time launching a process of economic integration. Said integration is expected to be fully realized through the establishment of an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched with a Continental Free Trade Agreement introduced at the Niamey Summit in

July 2019, a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and an ambitious Continental Infrastructure Program (PIDA). A large African free trade area, the creation of which will not be immediate in any case, will allow for an exponential growth of intra-African trade, compared to the current modest values (about 16% of the total trade of the countries of the Continent).

Concrete actions: Italy supports the action of African Regional Organizations and the integration processes started under their aegis. An effective manifestation of this support is favoured, at the

AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



- **Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)⁵**
Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco
- **Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**
Burundi, Comoros, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- **Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD)**
Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia
- **East African Community (EAC)**
Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda
- **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**
Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe
- **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo
- **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)**
Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda
- **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**
Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

⁵ UMA signed the Protocol on Relations between the RECs and the AU in 2018.

African Union, by the fact that Italy is the only EU country to have, since 2018, its own dedicated Permanent Representative, as an observer. Equally relevant is our cooperation with IGAD, a regional organization of the Horn of Africa, in which we have held the functions of co-president of the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), which brings together the donors of the organization, without interruption since 1997.

Impact Of The COVID-19 Pandemic

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Africa will have significant repercussions on the processes outlined above, ultimately again posing the problem of political, economic, and social stability on the Continent.

From a political point of view, the emergency has led to the postponement of some electoral deadlines foreseen in the Continent for 2020 and could generate further postponements over the next year.

Especially from an economic point of view, the health emergency is generating strong negative consequences. The increase in healthcare costs, combined with a contraction in the commodities market, foreign direct investments, remittances from abroad and tourism are the main factors of an unprecedented crisis, for a continent that before Covid-19 was called to generate between 10 and 15 million jobs a year in order to absorb the impulsive population growth. In addition, the pandemic has forced the start of gradual implementation of the AfCFTA to be postponed until 2021 and, consequently, also its potential positive effects on trade and economic growth.

This situation is even more difficult to cope with due to the high level of debt of most African countries. The impact of COVID-19 has therefore placed the issue of sustainability of African debt at the centre of the international agenda, which is going to play a crucial role in forthcoming international events.

Concrete actions: In the context of multilateral actions to contain the economic and financial effects of the pandemic, Italy was among the promoters of the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) in favour of the poorest countries. The participation of all official creditors is envisaged in the transaction and private creditors are desired on a voluntary basis. The accession of multilateral development banks is also promoted, in the wake of the moratorium measures already adopted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The moratorium includes payments of principal and interest on the debt owed by the beneficiary countries of the Initiative, originally from 1 May to 31 December.

Due to the severity of the effects of the pandemic, in October 2020, the members of the Paris Club and the G20 agreed to extend the DSSI initiative until 30 June 2021 for all eligible countries and

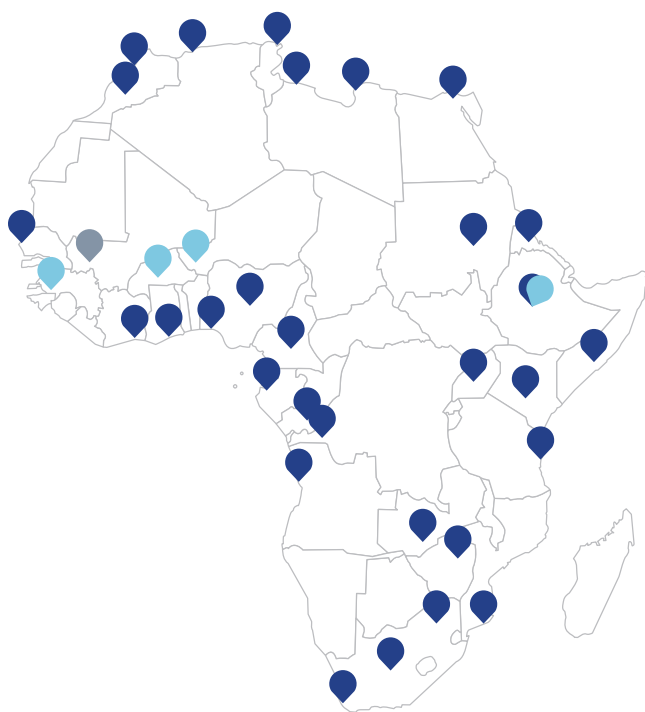
to evaluate, by the Spring Meetings 2021, extension thereof for a further six months. In addition, the G20 Finance recently approved a “Common Framework” proposed by the Paris Club, aimed at promoting a coordinated multilateral approach consistent with the principles of the Club also among non-member creditor countries, for more transparent and supportive management of the debt service in the period of the pandemic crisis.

So far, of the 39 countries that have benefited from the initiative, 26 are African, namely: Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo (Republic of the), Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Angola, Comoros, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Zambia. With Angola, Ethiopia and Djibouti, Italy is finalizing the bilateral agreements implementing the DSSI.

The G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative therefore represents a particularly relevant issue for Italy. It will be included in the agenda of the Italian G-20 Presidency for 2021, with a view to possible extension of the Initiative to middle-income countries, plus stronger collaboration between public institutions and private creditors

Africa tomorrow: a growing centrality

THE ITALIAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA



Diplomatic offices opened before 2016 in Africa

Embassies: Algiers, Tunis, Cairo, Tripoli, Rabat, Asmara, Addis Ababa, Kampala, Nairobi, Mogadishu, Khartoum, Dakar, Abidjan, Accra, Abuja, Yaoundé, Brazzaville, Libreville, Kinshasa, Luanda, Pretoria, Lusaka, Harare, Maputo, Dar es-Salaam

Consulates: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Casablanca, Lagos, Benghazi

Italian Cultural Institutes: Pretoria, Rabat, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Cairo, Addis Ababa, Nairobi

Italian Trade Agency (ITA) offices: Algiers, Casablanca, Tunis, Cairo, Accra, Addis Ababa, Maputo, Luanda, Brazzaville, Johannesburg

Diplomatic offices opened after 2016 in Africa

Embassies: Conakry, Niamey, Ouagadougou

Italian Cultural Institutes: Dakar

Italian Permanent Representation to the African Union, Addis Ababa

Diplomatic offices to be opened soon
Bamako

African issues in the multilateral context

The centrality of African dossiers in the multilateral context, particularly within the framework of the European Union and the United Nations, is undisputed and growing. It is therefore equally important on the Italian side to deepen the dialogue with the African Union and African Regional Organizations.

The European Union

At an EU level, in the wake of what has been achieved in past years, Italy, based on its traditional support for development in Africa and its geographical proximity to the Continent, is called upon to foster a better understanding of African needs and challenges to face together. This action

is grafted onto an organic and multilevel partnership framework between the European Union and the African continent, which is expressed in periodic Summits of EU/AU Heads of State and Government, most recently that of Abidjan in November 2017, at which the equal partnership for shared development was solemnly reaffirmed.

Concrete actions: Important initiatives have been adopted by the EU on the Continent, including the 2017 European External Investment Plan (EEIP) and the New Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs announced by the then President of the Juncker Commission in September 2018.

This was accompanied by a series of instruments to manage migratory flows. First, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (Trust Fund of Valletta, which has so far disbursed approximately 4.1 billion Euro for the benefit of programmes for the better management of flows), of which Italy is the second financing country, after Germany, with 112 million Euro. Second, the Rabat and Khartoum dialogue processes (of which Italy held the rotating presidency in 2018). Third, the technical-operational protocols on the subject of repatriation. Italy has significantly contributed to the creation of these instruments, or, in some cases, they have been established following an Italian proposal shared by the partners.

Also at EU level, after the political agreement of July 2020, the negotiation for the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework is being finalized with the European Parliament, which includes an extra-budgetary instrument dedicated to financing common expenses for operations and to assistance measures for partner countries (European Peace Facility). This instrument will have a global scope. However, together with other Member States, Italy has requested that adequate space be dedicated to African issues and will continue to be committed to this.

The European Peace Facility supports, in an integrated approach, the various missions of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which are concentrated for the most part on the African continent and are predictably growing there. In fact, between North Africa, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, the missions EUBAM Libya, EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUTM Somalia, EUCAP Somalia and, off the Somali coast, the anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta are currently active. Finally, in the Central African Republic, the EUTM RCA and EUAM RCA Missions are active (the latter launched in 2020). The EUCAP Missions carry out support activities for the development of autonomous capacities by partner countries, especially with regard to the maintenance of internal order, the control of the territory and borders. The training activities of the armed forces, on the other hand, are conducted by the EUTM Missions, among which EUTM Mali, which absorbs most of the common budget for military operations, stands out. Italy actively participates in all these Missions both by providing staff and by helping to define the individual mandates and general guidelines of the CSDP.

In terms of future prospects, the goal of achieving an ambitious “Partnership between equals” is driving the renewal, currently underway, of the EU-ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) Agreement signed in Cotonou in 2000. The future Agreement (post-Cotonou) envisages a new architecture, which Italy has supported, aimed at guaranteeing a more flexible and effective approach in EU-ACP relations, thanks to the provision of regional partnerships, one of which is dedicated exclusively to Africa.

Trade offers a powerful engine of growth, employment and sustainable development for the benefit of all participants thanks to economic European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the European Union and the Regional Organizations of sub-Saharan Africa, provided for in the framework of the EU-ACP Agreement in the name of a synergistic and integrated EU approach.

For some of these agreements we are witnessing a positive process of opening and expansion towards new commercial chapters (in addition to the agri-food sector, services, contracts, rules of origin, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures) following specific requests from the countries of some African areas.

In this context, the EU will be able to continue to contribute to the development of fair and deep trade relations with African areas.

In addition, the reform process of the World Trade Organization, which has become a priority for the European Commission, offers significant levers to modernize the Organization, which ensures a progressive inclusion in its membership of all the less advanced economies, with particular reference to African countries that are candidates for admission.

The United Nations

African issues have been a priority for the activities of the United Nations for years, as demonstrated by the high number of initiatives undertaken by the UN for and with Africa.

Africa is at the heart of the United Nations’ peacekeeping efforts. A good 31 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions (past and ongoing) took place in Africa. Currently, 7 of the 13 active Peacekeeping Operations are deployed on the African continent: UNISFA (between Sudan and South Sudan), UNAMID and UNITAMS (in Sudan), UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo), MINUSMA (Mali) and MINURSO (Western Sahara).

In Africa, moreover, the United Nations has various Special Political Missions: UNSMIL (Libya); UNSOM (Somalia); UNOWAS (West Africa and Sahel); UNOCA (Central Africa); UNIOGBIS (Guinea Bissau); UNITAMS (Sudan), the Office at the African Union (UNOAU), the Special Envoy Offices for the Great Lakes Region, for Burundi, and for the Horn of Africa, the Personal Envoys for Mozambique and Western Sahara.



Dakar. The Italian Cultural Institute was opened on January 30, 2020.

Concrete actions: Italy, the first provider of Blue Berets among Western countries and the seventh contributor to the peacekeeping budget (with a share of 3.307%), over the years has taken part in 29 UN missions, 13 of them in Africa.

Our country actively contributes to the debate in the UN sphere on how to improve peacekeeping, so as to favour a more effective and efficient implementation of mandates, especially for the protection of civilians and for the achievement of a sustainable peace.

In addition to making strategic assets and capabilities available to the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), Italy will continue to offer training courses for military and police personnel destined to serve in peace operations, as it has been doing for some time, especially in favour of African peacekeepers, both at the Centre of Excellence for the Stability Police Units (CoESPU) in Vicenza and at other training centres of our Armed Forces.

In line with our approach to crises and conflicts, Italy intends to further strengthen its support both for mediation and conflict prevention activities and for post-conflict stabilization initiatives carried out by the United Nations in Africa, with special attention to Libya, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The African Union And African Regional Economic Communities (Recs)

It will also be necessary to strengthen the relationship with the AU and the African regional organizations (Regional economic communities, so-called RECs).

Concrete actions: The importance we attribute to the dialogue with the Pan-African organization is evidenced not only by the aforementioned appointment of a Permanent Representative to the

What role can Italy play?

Union, but also by the financial support to the African Union, through the financial instrument of the Italian African Peace Facility (IAPF), an ad hoc fund created in 2007.

Commitment to regional fora will also be supported, since these constitute a further privileged platform for dialogue with African partners, especially in East Africa and the Sahel.

New players

The commitment of an increasing number of new players in the Continent (China, India, the Gulf countries, Turkey, Japan) represents an opportunity for the possible development of triangular cooperation, also considering that their investments in Africa ultimately favour greater employment, greater economic development in local contexts and a consequent reduction of migratory flows towards Europe. These triangulations can take place both in the field of traditional cooperation, where our long experience is considered an important reference, and in that of industrial initiatives.

Concrete actions: Some examples of successful triangular collaborations have already been launched in numerous African countries, mainly with China.

Starting positive collaborations does not constitute a renunciation of the values that characterize the dialogue between the European Union, the main donor to the Continent, and African countries. These values, shared also by Italy, are driven by the absence of hidden agendas and the adoption of transparent economic and commercial policies. They are accompanied by an action based on the promotion of democracy, good governance, human rights, and the fight against the spread of violent extremism.

Italy boasts an ancient, deeply-rooted history of cooperation with the Continent, that includes missionaries, volunteers, sector experts, doctors, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Few countries can boast such a strong tradition and such a widespread presence. Today, the Italian institutional presence includes 34 diplomatic and consular offices, 9 AICS offices, 11 ITA (Italian Trade Agency) offices and 9 Italian Cultural Institutes. A presence enriched, last but not least, with the recent opening of Embassies in Guinea, Niger, Burkina Faso, and our Permanent Representation to the African Union, and which we plan to further strengthen in the coming years, starting from Mali, where a new Representation will be opened.

The increasingly significant Italian commitment to Africa responds both to the need for sustainable and balanced growth in African countries, and to the protection of our national interests in the priority areas of Mediterranean Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

At the same time, as evidenced by the Eritrean–Ethiopian reconciliation process in the Horn of Africa, on the Continent there is a strong “demand for Italy”, a country considered credible, reliable and without hidden agendas by African partners.

This consideration is also based on the deep historical and cultural ties that Italy has developed in numerous African regions and especially through its commitment in the sector of development cooperation and the work of private players (foundations, NGOs, charities and religious entities) in “non-institutional” and spontaneous cooperation activities.

The profound African transformations also open up important opportunities from economic and commercial points of view, in light of the growing demand for investments, goods and services from the African continent.

Concrete actions: Italy is already among the main investors in Africa: consider ENI’s investments in Egypt and Mozambique, and the activities in Africa of companies such as WeBuild, CMC, CNH Industrial, IVECO, Calzedonia, Carvico, Italferr, ENEL, Saipem, to name only the major ones.

As mentioned, the countless initiatives of the Italian Development Cooperation are equally relevant.

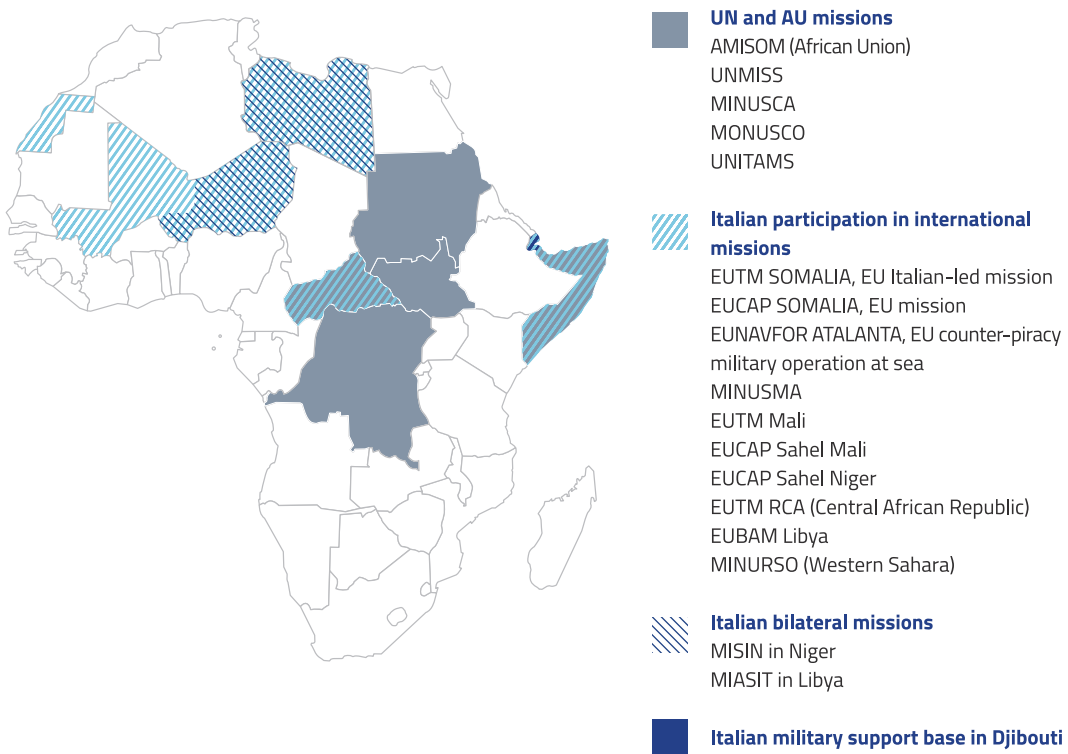
The special relationship with the Continent is also testified by the frequent political visits of Italian leaders to Africa, most recently by Prime Minister Conte, Minister of Foreign Affairs Di Maio and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Del Re. Even the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, has paid state visits to Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Angola.



Thematic Priorities in Africa

Peace and security

PEACE AND SECURITY: THE ITALIAN ROLE



Italy is the leading provider of Blue Berets among Western countries and the seventh contributor to the UN Peacekeeping budget (with a 3,307% share). Over the years, Italy has participated in 29 UN missions, 13 in Africa.

An action linked and coordinated with European partners and with regional and sub-regional organizations must be continued and strengthened in the Peace and Security sector, thereby safeguarding African ownership in crisis management. A fundamental role in such critical scenarios is played by the African Union, as well as by the main Regional Organizations such as IGAD, ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel, to which our country gives its political and financial support.

The evolution of the situation in the most worrying areas of instability, such as Mali and the entire Sahel region, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, will need to be closely monitored, both bilaterally and in multilateral contexts.

By reproducing a model that has offered an operational advantage for Italian foreign policy in Africa, it seems appropriate that our country also supports the mediation and solidarity activities of non-institutional players, such as those conducted by the Community of Sant'Egidio or by other organizations representing civil society.

Concrete actions: In consideration of the extreme importance that the Sahel has for our country, we need to continue to increase the contribution to the stabilization of the region, strengthening our collaboration with the G5 Sahel (the Association of the five Sahelian countries that brings together Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) and with its Joint Military Force (FC-G5S). Still within the framework of our support to the Sahel countries for strengthening institutional capacities, greater border control and improvement of capacity to fight organized crime and terrorism, in full respect of human rights and international humanitarian law, it is appropriate to encourage an expansion of the training mandate of the military training mission in Niger (MISIN) and to continue the training activity carried out by our country through the Carabinieri, the Finance Police and the State Police for the benefit of agents of the countries of the Sahelian belt. Training activities must also continue through the Italian participation in the various European Common Security and Defence Policy missions in the region (EUCAP, EUTM) and in the United Nations stabilization mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This contribution must be part of an integrated and multidimensional view to stability, based on the awareness of the link between security, good governance and economic and social development in the region. This vision will also represent the distinctive character of Italy's participation in the new International Coalition for the Sahel and in the main initiatives that have been structured over the years to strengthen coordination with G5 partners in the military, security, civil and development cooperation fields, such as Task Force Takuba, the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (P3S), and the Sahel Alliance, in which we have been participating since 2018.

In addition to the priorities in the Sahel, Italy will continue to support Somalia's institutional reconstruction process and the fight against Al Shabaab and Daesh. Precisely to protect and guarantee our national interests, the goal remains the stabilization of the entire region of the Horn of Africa. In this context, it will be appropriate to continue to devote particular attention to the regional integration process, through appropriate political, economic, financial, and cultural initiatives, with particular reference to Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Sudan.

Governance and Human Rights

Regarding the issue of governance, the dualism of democracy/stability - two concepts that in many cases have not travelled in parallel - remains unresolved in Africa. In initiatives to support governance processes, it will therefore be appropriate to bear these sensitivities in mind, also within the UN and the EU, in the wake of what has been achieved so far.

Concrete actions: In the matter of human rights, an understanding of the different cultural contexts is necessary for a dialogue free from prejudice with the Continent. In the various international and multilateral fora, we have therefore encouraged dialogue and an inclusive attitude, sought pragmatic and shared solutions, avoiding that inflexible agendas could be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of African countries. In this regard, consider our action for the abolition of the death penalty or for the elimination of the practice of female genital mutilation.

Furthermore, in the context of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, Italy promotes a collaborative approach, also among the other EU Member States, with reference to the resolutions presented by the African Group on issues of particular interest, such as the fight against racism, as well as with regard to technical cooperation and capacity building in the field of human rights towards some countries of the Continent.

Essential in our relations with the states of the Continent is our inclination to dialogue on particularly delicate matters as human rights and governance. These are crucial issues to create the conditions necessary for development and for real and lasting stability, the importance of which is clearly affirmed in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, a programme document that identifies the fundamental challenges for African growth over the next 50 years.

Among the most relevant examples of Italian initiatives in this area are capacity-building and training programmes for civilian and military personnel in various countries of the Continent.

In this regard, as part of the partnership with the G5 Sahel, Italy is a partner in the project for the adaptation of the G5 Joint Force to the compliance framework in the field of international humanitarian law, promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Italy has also recently launched an electoral capacity building programme (in collaboration with the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and ECES – European Centre for Electoral Support), aimed at strengthening the competence and improving the operation and effectiveness of policy/decision makers (for example, the National Electoral Commissions) in terms of elections, administrative presence in the area, access to vote, regulatory guarantees and broadening of the voting population.

Italy will continue to pay the utmost attention to these aspects, considering that the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, corruption and the fragility of state institutions are some of the main root causes of instability, the proliferation of illicit trafficking, and often, of terrorism.

Migrations and mobility

In recent years, the issue of irregular flows of migrants and refugees has become a priority. In the debate in Brussels between Member States of the European Union, our country stood out for its constant efforts to ensure better and more balanced management of flows and for an urgent request to European partners to share responsibility and to increase resources from the EU. Among the results achieved, we recall the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, mentioned above.

Faced with a complex and structural phenomenon such as migration, it is necessary to go beyond emergency management, seeking shared and lasting solutions, bearing in mind and enhancing the efforts of many African states in the work of welcoming millions of refugees, displaced and internally displaced persons from neighbouring countries (Ethiopia and Uganda welcome about 1 million refugees, displaced and internally displaced persons; Kenya and the DRC about 500,000; Chad and Cameroon around 400,000; Tanzania over 300,000).

Concrete actions: Italy has implemented a multilevel strategy to manage the migration phenomenon, aimed at strengthening the partnership with African countries of origin and transit, which makes use of the indispensable collaboration of the United Nations agencies operating on the ground (in particular IOM and UNHCR). This strategy was articulated on the basis of a series of interventions. They range from action on the root causes of migratory flows in the countries of origin to on-site assistance to migrants and refugees in transit countries; from capacity building activities in African countries, especially in the fight against human traffickers and criminal networks, to assisted voluntary repatriation and information campaigns on the risks associated with irregular migration. To financially support this ambitious action plan, from 2017 the so-called "Africa Fund" was an active part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's budget, and, in the three-year period 2017-19, 226 million Euro were earmarked for projects to be carried out in African countries of greatest importance in the area of migration (special priority was given to Libya, Niger and Tunisia). The 2020 Budget law has transformed the Africa Fund into the "Migration Fund", expanding its geographical scope to include also non-African countries. For the three-year period 2020-2022, the overall budget is 100 million Euro (30 for 2020, 30 for 2021 and 40 for 2022).

For effective management of the migratory phenomenon, of which the revision of the Dublin mechanism is a fundamental precondition, it is crucial to implement ever-closer coordination between the EU and its Member States.

The projects carried out by the EU and Italy have contributed in a fundamental way to improving conditions of the beneficiaries in Africa, whether refugees and migrants in transit or members of local communities. The results achieved show that the external dimension of migration policy works if it is adequately shared and financed. Attention should therefore be focused above all on

Commercial Partnerships and Investments

the countries of West Africa, the Sahelian belt, and the Horn of Africa, and of course the Maghreb, where there is a need for intense cooperation at every level with Italy and the other Member States of the European Union.

This effective strategy is complementary to the traditional development cooperation policy. Together, by leveraging both European and national sectoral financial resources, they can effectively contribute to reducing the extent of the root causes of migration flows, especially through the development of countries of origin and the improvement of employment opportunities for local communities.

To this end, it is also essential to mobilize private investments in order to generate long-term economic growth, with a view to complementing private resources to public ones. In this sense, the use of tools such as the European Union's External Investment Plan is crucial for the development of the Continent and for a stabilization of migratory flows.

A migration strategy could also look into opening circular mobility paths, in response to the need to enrich the training of the younger African generations, without however encouraging the economic and social impoverishment of the countries of origin, due to phenomena of permanent migration abroad.

At the same time, the proven model of humanitarian corridors could be further expanded, to lighten the burden on some African countries with relevant refugee communities, by adopting a planned path of insertion and integration into the Italian socio-economic fabric, already successfully tested over the last three years.

Italy and the European Union will continue along the road already undertaken, hinging on a strengthening of private, national and European financial resources and on the intensification of political dialogue, and making the "migration" dossier transversal with respect to all initiatives in Africa, with the aim of promoting sustainable development of the Continent.

Over the past few years, there has been much discussion regarding the possible launch of a "Marshall Plan for Africa", in order to foster growth and employment for the entire Continent. However, there are glaring differences between post-war Europe and present-day Africa. The success of the Marshall Plan was due to the fact that it relaunched economic production in countries with an existing network of companies of various sizes, a structured banking system, and a skilled labour force. In Africa, for the most part, we find ourselves in the presence of weak economies, with a low industrial presence, low levels of specialized labour, and insufficient infrastructure.

Concrete actions: For these reasons, the main objective of the Italian and European strategies is to direct cooperation resources and productive investments in Africa towards the priority sectors of instruction, education, and vocational training, in addition to establishing a local business network.

Furthermore, these are areas in which, in addition to the initiatives of the Italian Cooperation and other central and peripheral institutional bodies, also companies, private organizations, associations, charitable and banking foundations intervene, as proof of the potential that these sectors can express when accompanying a sustainable process of growth and development for the Continent as a whole. Consequently, alongside a more typically institutional dimension, there is also a "people-to-people" dimension, which contributes to nurturing that vision of across-the-board partnership based on a widespread Italian presence and a series of initiatives in more than one area.

Moreover, the role of the diaspora must never be underestimated, in view of the significant remittances that they send back to their respective home countries (it has been calculated that the sum of all remittances from migrants in the world is almost three times the amount of official international cooperation), nor the invaluable role of Italy's contact with the home countries, with consequent positive effects also in terms of investment opportunities for our companies.

To this can be added, as mentioned, our companies' investments, which, through productive partnerships, contribute further to development not only by exporting high-tech machinery, but also by transferring know-how for business activities.

Over the last few years, Italy has been among the top European investors in Africa (with Direct Investments of 24.5 billion Euro in 2018 alone), while the overall level of trade exchange in 2019 was around 38 billion Euro (Italy's exports to Africa amounted to 17 billion Euro, while imports from the Continent amounted to 21 billion Euro). In the face of these data and the remaining untapped potential, Italy will be promoting a multi-level strategy to increase economic-commercial positioning and the presence of our companies on the Continent, evolving a cooperation model with sub-Saharan Africa, increasingly geared to a business partnership. On the one hand, the following

Italy – Africa economic
and trade relations

ITALY – AFRICA TRADE EXCHANGE

(Values in million euros)

	2019	Jan–Jul 2019	Jan–Jul 2020
Total Exchange	38.765	22.759	16.257
Italian Exports	17.315	9.855	8.095
Italian Imports	21.450	12.904	8.162

MAIN ITALIAN PRODUCTS EXPORTED TO AFRICA

(Classification used: two-letter ATECO 2007)
January – June 2020

	Million euros	% on total export to Africa
Machinery and devices	1.562	9,0
Coke and refined petroleum products	872	5,0
Basic metals and metal products, except machinery and equipment	763	4,4
Chemical products	498	2,9
Electrical equipment	471	2,7
Transport systems	470	2,7
Textile, leather, dressing and accessories	431	2,5

MAIN AFRICAN PRODUCTS IMPORTED BY ITALY

(Classification used: two-letter ATECO 2007)
January – June 2020

	Million euros	% on total import from Africa
Products of mining industry	3.137	14,6
Basic metals and metal products, except machinery and equipment	1.094	5,1
Textile, leather, dressing and accessories	534	2,5
Food, beverages and tobacco	497	2,3
Coke and refined petroleum products	453	2,1
Products of agriculture, forestry and fisheries	376	1,8
Transport systems	272	1,3

THE ITALIAN ECONOMIC PRESENCE IN AFRICA (31/12/2017)

(Source: database Reprint)



1.740
companies



75.703
employees



with an overall revenue of
25.8 billion euros



in the energy, construction,
transport, logistics
and mechanical sectors

Source: ISTAT data processed by the MAECI Economic Observatory

are essential: systemic interventions passing through politically-led missions; intensification of bilateral ties; strengthening of the ad hoc financial instruments of the financial internationalization hub (CDP, SACE, SIMEST); greater knowledge of local markets. On the other, there is a need to integrate the services offered, not limiting them to individual supplies but combining products in the supply chain. In this regard, it will be possible, in particular, to leverage the recognized high quality of the products and services that Italian companies can offer in many investment sectors. All areas that have been included in the recent “Export Pact”, which represents a strong impulse to the internationalization of our companies, Africa included.

The “Export Pact”, in fact, will be a framework within which to intensify economic and industrial collaboration through the organization of events such as business forums, workshops, Country presentations, and incoming missions of African operators to the main international trade fairs in Italy.

In addition, promotional supply chain events may be organized, especially missions aimed at enhancing the Italian offering in all phases of those industrial supply chains where “Made in Italy” products rank at the very top globally.

The sectors which appear most promising for expansion of the Italian business system in Africa are:

- **Agri-food and agro-industries**

In this sector there is huge potential for development on the African continent, bearing in mind that in many African countries agriculture absorbs most of the available workforce.

Agriculture and agribusiness together account for almost half of African GDP. The World Bank has estimated that the agricultural sector in Africa could well be worth a trillion dollars by 2030. At the same time, however, productivity in the sector is still extremely low, partly due to the low technological content of the processing systems and shortcomings in the conservation and distribution of crops. Furthermore, in many countries, there is little diversification of crops. In this context, the issue of digitization constitutes one of the most important challenges to guarantee sustainable and inclusive growth for the Continent. Digitization and technology applied to agriculture and agro-business enrich the production chain, contribute to the development of the manufacturing sector and, lastly, encourage the growth of inter-African trade.

- **The energy sector, in particular alternative and renewable sources**

Population growth and recent urbanization are going to increase energy demand on the Continent (by 2030 half of all Africans will live in cities, while by 2100, 13 of the largest megalopolises will be located in Africa). Today, some 600 million Africans have no access to electricity. The energy transition required in Africa will need to include a high percentage of renewable energy

and general efficiency, both from the production and end-use point of view. Potential solutions may also mean off-grid systems such as third-generation mini-grids to contribute to universal access to energy. Hydrogen from renewables could equally be a keystone for the development of the Continent and for the creation of new energy and technological partnerships with Italy and Europe: in other words, it could be produced on the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea, by exploiting climatic diversity and seasonal cycles (in particular, thanks to the relative surpluses of solar energy in Africa and wind power in Europe), and then exchanged thanks to existing gas infrastructures, duly adapted at marginal cost. All areas in which Italian companies, civil society organizations and universities boast extensive experience. Other opportunities could arise from cutting the costs of renewable technologies and combining the digital revolution with the energy sector.

According to forecasts by the International Energy Agency (IEA), published in the recent “2019 Africa Energy Outlook”, electricity demand will have tripled in 2040 to reach 270GW (gigawatts), but still a far cry from the 600GW needed by the Continent to fulfil the objectives of Agenda 2063. According to the same document, in order to obtain the energy necessary for development, investments in energy infrastructure up to the year 2040 will be needed, to the tune of approximately 120 billion dollars a year. Expansion will only be possible thanks to a combination of renewables and natural gas. According to estimates by the IEA, the average annual growth of renewable energy will be quantified at around 8GW, while the solar photovoltaic installations to be built over the next few years should reach about 15GW, with hydroelectricity at around 90GW and wind at 10GW. In parallel, the development of modern transmission and distribution infrastructures will be crucial in achieving universal access to energy. Greater investments in the electricity sector will be indispensable: based on planned policies, an estimated \$45 billion per year up to 2040, still insufficient to achieve the Agenda 2063 objectives, which would require twice as much.

In general, Italy is a concrete energy bridge to Africa, by virtue of its presence in every sector (from traditional sources to the most innovative clean ones), for existing and budgeted connections for electricity and gas (re-adaptable to hydrogen and other renewable gases), thanks to the leadership of our private sector and to the recurrent presence in regional energy formats and initiatives.

Concrete actions: In this highly strategic sector, Italy boasts important private players. It can therefore give a strong impetus to the African continent, thanks also to experiences acquired in the energy field:

- Enel (which focuses on renewables and electrification, particularly thanks to Enel Green Power);
- Eni (for gas and oil, with a view to innovation towards energy transition, reduction in emissions and sustainability);
- Terna (for electricity transmission);
- Snam (for gas networks and the development of hydrogen);
- Saipem (for infrastructures relating to new sustainable energy models).

Furthermore, collaborations between the Res4Africa Foundation, individual countries and the African Union for training in the field of renewable energy, and with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in similar activities, as well as bilateral projects, are all important.

Many years of significant experience in the energy sector are also provided by civil society organizations (e.g. CEFA, AVSI, ACRA) which have installed and managed off-grid systems capable of creating both development and jobs, and by the academic world (such as in the case of the Polytechnic Universities of Milan and Turin for the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa - ICA during the Italian Presidency of the G7 in 2017).

Italy can also play an important role in the multilateral context, for example within the International Energy Agency (among other things, Italy was amongst the strongest advocates of Morocco and South Africa joining the Agency as well as of the development of activities with the AU Commission, based on a specific Memorandum of Understanding) and within the International Agency for Renewable Energy (whose new Director General is Italian and has placed Africa at the centre of his agenda).

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the financial contribution of the Italian Cooperation to IRENA to support the Agency's work in the "Desert to Power" initiative (solar electrification of the Sahel region), in bolstering innovative energy activities, in the modernization of energy governance and in the strengthening of technical skills and abilities at local levels.

▪ **The infrastructure sector**

The development of infrastructure in Africa, currently mainly located in coastal areas and close to natural resources, is crucial to allow the Continent to foster endogenous development and accelerate intra-African trade.

According to Oxford Economics, this sector will see a growth of 5.9% per year in Africa up until 2030, for a total of 4.8 trillion USD, ranking the area in first place worldwide for aggregate spending. This expenditure will be determined by 4 main drivers: demographic growth, growing urbanization, the unsatisfactory level of existing infrastructure, and the need to stimulate the growth of the Continent's economy. The primary infrastructure needs estimated by the African

Development Bank are worth between 130 and 170 billion USD per year. The most pressing needs are in the road sector (the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have, according to the European Innovation Council (EIC), a density of asphalted roads equal to just 31km per 100km², about 1/4 of those of other emerging countries), in telecommunications, access to water resources and electricity, as well as the social infrastructure sector and, above all, healthcare, as the Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically underlined.

The presence of Italian companies in the infrastructure and construction sector in Africa is significant and in line with that of other western players. Currently, according to ANCE (the Italian Association of Private Construction Contractors), about 1/4 of the work in progress of Italian companies abroad in the construction sector is in Africa. The main Italian contractors working in Africa are: We Build, Piccini, FS, Rizzani de Eccher, Ansaldo Energia, Pizzarotti, Bonifica, CMC, Trevi, Itinera, Seas, ICM, alongside a series of smaller companies.

Concrete actions: The recent strategy followed by our country to increase the participation of Italian companies in infrastructure projects in Africa is divided into the following 5 priority lines of action:

1. Aiming mainly at medium-sized projects instead of large infrastructural works, more in line with the average size of Italian companies and with the Continent's real needs;
2. Diversifying the presence of companies from traditional sectors of priority interest (i.e. roads and dams) to other segments which seem equally promising, such as the construction of power stations that use renewables, and the management of water resources and waste;
3. Increasingly resorting to Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to favour the creation of Italian-African consortia which can follow all the phases of "turnkey" projects: from design to construction and the delicate asset management phase, since African demand increasingly requires complete "packages" which combine investments with financial support.
4. Not limiting to the traditional role of participation in tenders, but also contributing part of the capital, especially through the use of renewed impetus by the investment bank Cassa Depositi e Prestiti and the export credit agency SACE (SACE's operations have seen a substantial increase in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years: from 675 million in exposure in 2011 to 4.3 billion in 2018).
5. Ensuring the participation of institutions and the business world in major economic events organized on the Continent by multilateral development banks (for example the "Africa Investment Forum" promoted by the African Development Bank) where priority projects are presented and networking can be optimized.

Sustainable Development, Development Cooperation and Fight against Climate Change

In the framework of the initiatives dedicated to Africa, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has promoted the organization of numerous events in Italy to study African situations of interest to Italian companies, such as business forums, country presentations and workshops on specific sectors (for example urbanization), as well as numerous economic missions (often including political guidance) and intends to continue along the road embarked upon with ever greater emphasis.

Finally, the theme of technological innovation and digital connectivity must not be disregarded, since this could contribute to the development of the Continent, particularly among the vast numbers of younger Africans, through so-called “Leapfrogging”. An example is the steady growth in the number of African start-ups, which is having a positive impact on the development of various sectors across the Continent. Among the others: agriculture and agro-industry; the logistics and transport sector; crowdfunding and crowdsourcing; energy (in particular, photovoltaics). All areas in which there is a transformation of African value chains, greater integration with global production circuits, and a more intense transfer of services and knowledge within the Continent.

One of the main results of Italian action in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship was the Africa Innovation Leaders (AILs) project, conceived during the Italian Presidency of the G7 in 2017. Assigned to the Polytechnic Universities of Milan and Turin, this project involved 6 African countries: Tunisia, Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique.

The initiative was oriented at promoting innovation in Africa and, above all, the adoption of the Next Production Revolution to facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals on the Continent, while helping to reduce the potential gap should Africa be excluded from innovation processes in manufacturing and infrastructure. AILs is an empowerment project, training trainers and leaders in various sectors: agriculture and digital irrigation, energy, digitization of production systems. The first 18 leaders were selected from among 450 high-level curriculums and were all professionals in a position to create steady dealings between the private sectors of their home country and Italy.



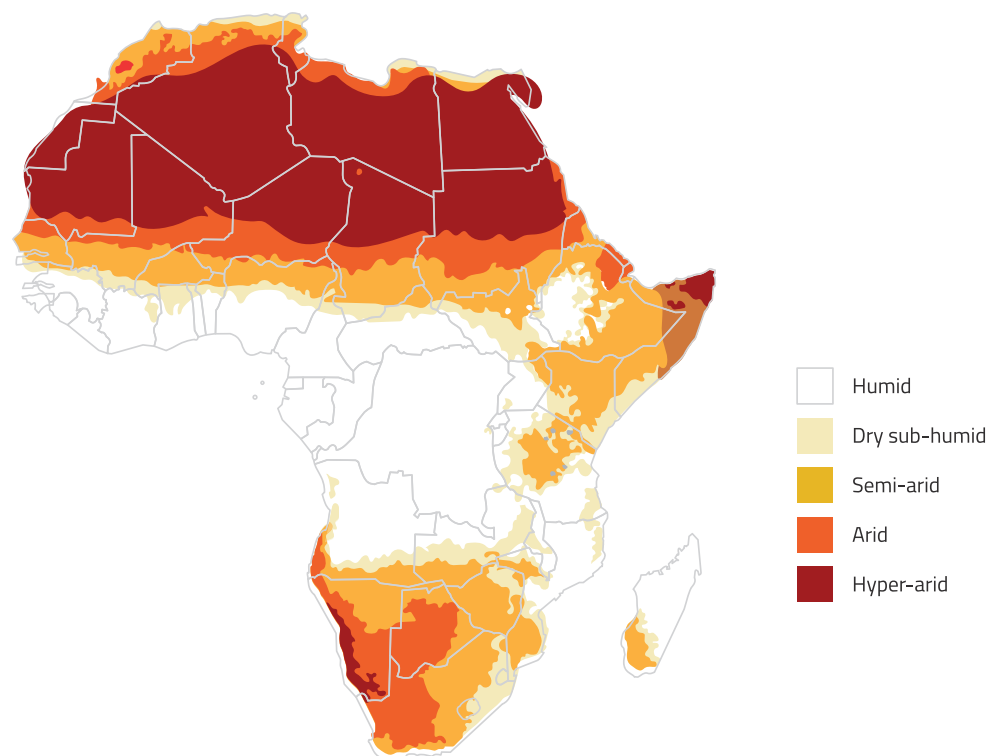
Humanitarian flight of the Italian Development Cooperation to Khartoum, September 2019

Sustainable development is one of the priorities of the African Union’s action, as reaffirmed in the 2063 Agenda.

In compliance with the priorities set out in this document and in the UN 2030 Agenda, Italy’s commitment to Africa, also through Italian Cooperation, includes initiatives that seek to create key conditions for sustainable development, taking into account the Continent’s low capacity to adapt coupled with poor resilience to the impact of climate change. Situations of instability and conflict, combined with limited access to capital, knowledge, infrastructure and technology, make it particularly difficult to expand the ability to adapt to the anticipated climate vulnerability in African countries. The 5th IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) assessment report in 2014, “Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability” highlighted that substantial future climatic impacts are foreseen for African ecosystems, as well as for the Continent’s population. The increase in the average annual temperature, compared to the average temperature at the end of the 20th century, is likely to exceed +2 °C in Africa by the end of this century. Furthermore, variations in the precipitation regime will exacerbate the already existing stresses on water availability, thus increasing the vulnerability of agricultural systems. Lastly, insufficient access to drinking water and healthcare, combined with an increase in food insecurity and poor education, will increase the risk of climate-related health problems.

Italy’s projects aim to combine food security and environmental protection through measures to adapt to climate change, to safeguard biodiversity and successfully manage soil and water

CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA



resources, while paying ever greater attention to the interactions between agriculture, health, energy, and the environment.

Concrete actions: In Africa, there are 11 of the 22 priority countries for Italian Development Cooperation, 8 of them belonging to the category of Least Developed Countries. In recent years, the political-economic-environmental circumstances underlying migratory phenomena have increased the importance of certain macro-regions, within which priority and non-priority countries are considered synergistically; while reserving the majority of resources to the former, the latter are far from residual, either in the context of regional programmes or specific interventions, which are often of considerable extent and importance. Through a renewed partnership with Africa, Italian Cooperation has chosen to adopt a coordinated approach with that of other donors, placing the population's needs at the centre while tackling emergencies, stabilization, and development.

As for environmental cooperation, the Italian Ministry of the Environment has already concluded,

or is negotiating, over 22 Memoranda of Understanding with African countries, whose goal is to support partners in the fight against climate change. In particular, the activities envisaged by these MoUs focus on water management and treatment, and the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The Ministry of the Environment has also financed, in close collaboration with the FAO and UNDP, the Centre for Sustainable Development of Africa, based in Rome, with the aim of facilitating exchanges of information on effectiveness, synergies, and complementarity of current initiatives in favour of sustainable development throughout the Continent. The areas for collaboration identified include: the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on African agricultural production; issues related to food security and water resources; access to reliable, sustainable, modern, and affordable energy.

Environmental cooperation in areas where there are situations of vulnerability, (exemplary in this sense is the Lake Chad basin) is even more important given the confirmed link between climate change and security. In fact, climate change is considered a multiplier factor for such geopolitical risks as poverty, corruption, terrorism, and migratory flows. For this reason, action in favour of environmental protection must first focus on the most fragile ecosystems, such as the arid and semi-arid regions of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, areas where there are already numerous countries aided by Italian Cooperation interventions.

Furthermore, the Cooperation, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Italian National Civil Protection Service, is committed to strengthening African capacities (at continental, regional and national level) to reduce disaster risks, of early warning and response coordination in case of extreme weather events.



Graduation ceremony
at the Somali National
University, Mogadishu,
2019

Particular attention will also be paid to the African continent on the occasion of the Italian co-presidency, together with the United Kingdom, of the COP-26 in 2021. In this context - in addition to holding events such as Pre-COP and "Youth4Climate 2021", which will provide a space for young people's requests to be heard – a Ministerial meeting on Africa, focused on environmental challenges, originally scheduled for 2020 and postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be held in October 2021. Such event will offer an important opportunity for dialogue on crucial issues such as, among others, sustainability, adaptation to climate change, the protection of biodiversity, and the fight against desertification.

Cultural and Scientific Cooperation

Culture

Cultural promotion in Sub-Saharan Africa has taken on renewed importance in recent years, both because of the profound political, social and economic transformations which have affected a large part of Africa's countries, and because culture can represent a reference point for an internal process of social and ethnic reconciliation which many of these countries are currently experiencing.

Africa's cultural heritage is extremely rich, but is not always given sufficient importance. And it is inextricably linked to tourism potential, it too with exceptionally large margins for improvement throughout the Continent. On the fronts of both cultural and tourist revaluation, which would help to bring new companies, employment and wellbeing to Africa, Italy can and must do a lot in the future, by virtue of its experience and practice in these sectors.

In this context, Italy's commitment must be characterized not only as an effort to promote the culture of our own country, but also and above all as an action to build solid and enduring cultural relations based on the concepts of cooperation and dialogue through the exchange of experiences, and cultural and artistic initiatives which can positively affect the local context.

Cities like Asmara and Addis Ababa could represent a symbol of our interventions on the local artistic and historical heritage. Also the archaeological missions in Africa, financed both by the MAECI and contributions from institutions, foundations and companies, are of prime importance as a tool to promote the sustainable socioeconomic development of the Continent and to stimulate the recognition of diversities and their peaceful coexistence.

Investing in culture in Africa also means perpetuating those human and personal bonds, beyond institutional and political ones, which represent a qualifying feature of Italy's history on the Continent. Consider the mark left by the Comboni missionaries in Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda, or by the Capuchin friars and Salesians in Angola, whose legacy is still alive and tangible today, or by the Xaverian Missionaries in Burundi and Sierra Leone and the Consulate in Tanzania. Furthermore, consider the Somali National University of Mogadishu, founded by Italy, which continues to be the only secular academic institution still active in the country after the start of the civil war in 1992; or the Italian School in Addis Ababa. The recent reopening of the Italian Cultural Institute in Dakar is also part of this tradition, joining the other three institutes already operating in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Concrete actions: Along with this consolidated commitment to the field of traditional education, our country is increasingly adding initiatives aimed at encouraging the development of local business skills. One of the most important Italian projects in this field is called E4Impact, a non-profit initiative involving 15 countries, with the three-pronged mission of business training, stimulating collaboration between Italian and African companies, and improving the quality of



"70 years of Italian fashion genius" - South African Fashion Week, Johannesburg, 2019.

local universities through partnerships with Italian universities.

These training projects have a multiplier effect which leads to the creation of new companies and new jobs, triggering a virtuous circle of work-training-work with a beneficial effect for the emerging economies of Africa.

Science

Over time, scientific cooperation between Italy and Africa has proved to be a strategic resource for Italy's projection on the Continent. There are many sectors in which this collaboration has become a fundamental tool of "scientific diplomacy" with a notable impact on the participating countries. Significant roles are played by the fields of theoretical physics, biotechnology, genetic engineering, and aerospace.

In terms of bilateral agreements, Italy has signed scientific and technological agreements with Algeria, Egypt, and South Africa for the financing of joint research projects and to foster mobility among researchers. There are currently two scientific attachés working on the African continent, in Pretoria, South Africa, and in Cairo, Egypt.

As a further demonstration of the strategic value of scientific and technological cooperation in this area, the MAECI has recently approved the establishment of new posts of Scientific Attachés to be sent to the Embassies of Nairobi and Dakar also with a view to taking advantage of the many opportunities offered by a market in constant growth and with enormous potential.

In the aerospace sector, the further development of the "Luigi Broglio" Space Centre in Malindi, Kenya, could constitute yet another channel for Africa's involvement in a key sector in the economy of the future, as well as being one of growing strategic importance.

In the multilateral context, the role played by the Scientific Centre of Trieste stands out. This centre, which also works in close collaboration with UNESCO, includes top-flight research institutes and programmes with a specific focus on Africa, and special attention to research as well as training in particular of women.

In the scientific field, collaboration between European and African states can result in beneficial effects of greater impact on the Continent's populations. In fact, Italian research teams participate in various scientific and technological cooperation projects also within the context of European projects which, especially with Horizon 2020, have represented a preferential channel for partnerships with African countries.

Concrete actions: Looking ahead, strengthening Italian support to African research will guarantee not only positive impacts on the scientific-technological advancement of the countries involved, but will also help to strengthen African economies, with returns in sectors with high added value. In this context, initiatives worthy of support are those aimed at the new East African Institute for Fundamental Research (EAIFR), a UNESCO regional centre for scientific and technological cooperation. Also of significance are the training courses and the transfer of technological programmes to help countries facing internal and international crises or natural disasters.

Geographical Priorities

Mediterranean Africa

In Libya, Italy's commitment to stabilizing the country remains a priority and is anchored in the principles of unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The lasting and sustainable stabilization of Libya is an indispensable condition for effectively combating the terrorist threat, in collaboration with the Libyan authorities, preventing irregular migratory flows and trafficking in human beings, and protecting the energy and, generally, economic-commercial interests of our country. In the firm belief that there can be no military shortcuts, we strongly support the efforts of the United Nations within the framework of the "Berlin Process" for a political solution to the Libyan crisis that promotes full pacification and a return to normality for the country. The conclusion of a ceasefire agreement between the parties in October 2020 and the continuation of the intra-Libyan political dialogue are certainly important and welcomed signals, which must however be further encouraged and protected from the negative interference of external or Libyan "spoilers". The presence in Tripoli of the Italian Embassy – the only one among all the Western countries – provides our action in Libya with special relevance.

The centrality of the Libyan dossier must not make us forget the complexity of the balances of power in the other countries of the region. In a regional scenario that remains characterized by strong instability, Italy attaches high importance to the encouraging dynamics represented by the ongoing changes within Algeria. Italy has always guaranteed support for Algiers, avoiding interference in internal dynamics but at the same time hoping for an evolution that would consider the legitimate aspirations of the Algerian population. Algeria has embarked on a political-institutional process that offers important opportunities for future relations between Rome and Algiers. Italy is now committed to strengthening bilateral cooperation in numerous areas of mutual interest such as the political, economic, energy, security, and cultural sectors. Also in Tunisia – young democracy that emerged in the "Arab Spring" 's aftermath – Italy has been called upon to maintain a very high level of attention and engagement. The commitment is to support of the local institutions, with which our country intends to work on the many areas of common interest. This must begin from the management of migratory flows and economic cooperation. The aim is to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth that can meet the expectations of a population that, in this country as in the rest of the area and the Continent as a whole, consists largely of young people. The attention Italy pays to the Kingdom of Morocco is also constant: "an island of stability" in the Middle East and North Africa and a reference partner in the region, with whom we concluded a "Multidimensional Strategic Partnership" in 2019. This partnership has given new political impetus and broader horizons to the bilateral relationship.

Then there is Egypt, a pivotal country between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which also plays a strategic role in the Continent. Consider, for example, the possible Egyptian contribution to the development of the Continent in terms of interconnection through the appropriate development of transport infrastructures, and in terms of energy supplies, thanks to its

extraordinary offshore natural gas resources. Italy's interest in organizing all-out cooperation in Africa with Cairo does not deflect from our determination to continue to demand that full light be shed on the barbaric murder of Giulio Regeni, so that the perpetrators are brought to justice as soon as possible.

To the strategic nature of relations with the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean is also given priority within the framework of the EU's Southern Neighbourhood Policy, which includes the four North African countries (in addition to Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Syria). Italy staunchly supports the need for a strategic relaunch of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership based on a new paradigm to jointly manage "Euro-Mediterranean common goods", i.e. through intensification of cooperation on climate, environment – including energy resources and digitization, and on a more incisive commitment of the Mediterranean countries to security (including the fight against trafficking in human beings and illegal immigration).

Concrete actions: Mediterranean Africa is closely linked to the rest of the Continent. This is made evident by the dynamics of migration flows, by the common membership within the AU and by the various ways in which the main continental issues are interlinked. Recent history has shown that Italy's security also depends on what happens on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in terms of clandestine human trafficking, illegal weapons and substances, and the circulation and activity of terrorist networks. Investing in North Africa means, for Italy, first and foremost, investing in its own security. But not only that; in fact, our country's investment in this area not only concerns security and political stabilization, but also economic, social and cultural dimensions.

The Horn Of Africa and The Red Sea

The Horn of Africa is undoubtedly the area where Italy's presence in the sub-Saharan belt is most deeply rooted, by virtue of historical relationships and the strong appreciation expressed by regional interlocutors for the role we play.

Around one-third of global maritime commercial traffic passes through the Gulf of Aden, a fact that has always given the region fundamental importance, but also enormous instability. In recent years, the Horn has become a field of political, economic and military antagonism, placing itself at the centre of a larger crisis zone, which extends from Sudan to Yemen and is intersected by interests of an increasing number of players. The bilateral and European contribution to the creation of peace, stability, and development, as well as the security of maritime traffic, the fight against violent extremism, piracy and illicit trafficking, is therefore a priority in our current and future agenda. Support to the institutional processes in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, but also the intensification of political and economic dialogue with Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti are of fundamental importance.

In addition, support to the countries in the area (above all Somalia and Sudan) in the process to normalize their relations with the International Community, and especially with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), is of particular relevance. Supporting and encouraging this path will be important to facilitate regional partners' access to international credit (as happened last year with Somalia through the provision of a bridging loan to settle arrears with the IFIs), even more essential in the current pandemic phase.

Concrete actions: The Horn of Africa (in an enlarged dimension, including the Red Sea) is going through a delicate historical phase in which we are witnessing for almost all the countries of the area a political, social and economic contrast between centripetal (centralization of power, inclusion, interdependence) and centrifugal dynamics (separatism, exclusion, independence).

After Brexit, Italy is now called upon to perform a central task both in Europe and in line with national interests: namely, to preserve the European Union's maximum attention to the Horn and, at the same time, to assume a role of growing leadership to ensure stability, peace, and development for all the countries in the region.

Support to multilateralism and the functional strengthening of such regional bodies as the AU and the IGAD must be confirmed by maintaining a financial effort aimed at supporting their decision-making effectiveness, through proven and viable financial channels such as:

- the Italian African Peace Facility IAPF, to the benefit of the African Union, for increasing the levels of training of civilian and military personnel engaged in the most complex of scenarios;
- the "Missions Decree", in support

- of capacity-building in the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- of mediation processes for peace and governance in countries such as South Sudan (through the IGAD).

It will also be appropriate to maintain a leading role in Somalia, in terms of a major presence in EU CSDP Missions and Operations.

Furthermore, it will be possible to consider intensifying triangular commercial partnerships for the modernization and implementation of infrastructure projects suited to development demands from several countries including Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.

And again, taking advantage of the G20 presidency in 2021, Italy will be able to spark a concrete debate on the conception of new formulas to access sustainable international financing for those countries most in need in the area.

Finally, particular importance will be given to the Italian projection in the Horn in terms of development cooperation activities. In this context, maintaining priority for Italian Cooperation of countries such as Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, in addition to strengthening interregional coordination and programming mechanisms, could well represent key elements to strengthen a policy aimed at stability, development and protection of vulnerable groups within the population.

The Sahel

Following the Libyan crisis, the Sahel region has increasingly become the southern border of Europe, acquiring strategic value for Italy in terms of security, management of the migration phenomenon and the fight against illegal trafficking of all kinds, which have found fertile ground in the fragile social, economic, and institutional fabric of the Sahelian belt. In the Sahelian area, already historically characterized by socioeconomic precariousness, environmental vulnerability, community fragmentation and difficulties in accessing state institutions in the more peripheral areas, additional factors of instability have been added over the years deriving from climate change, demographic expansion, global economic volatility and the advance of jihadist extremism. Large areas of the Sahelian states still evade the control of central governments and the activity of numerous criminal and terrorist organizations, attributable to the galaxy of Isis and Al Qaeda, has taken root in the area of the Lake Chad basin, at the border between Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Chad, and along the porous borders of the Liptako-Gourma triangle between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. From here, these groups increasingly threaten to unroll their influence southwards (to countries such as Benin, Ivory Coast, Togo and Ghana) with the risk of access to traffic in the Gulf of Guinea.

The factors of instability common to the Sahelian countries therefore risk welding the numerous theatres of local crises into a single continuous space of insecurity in the heart of Africa, with destabilizing consequences for the entire Euro-Mediterranean area. For this reason, it is necessary to deepen the partnership with the countries of the Sahel and with the Regional Organizations involved to strengthening local institutions and providing long-term political answers to the root causes of instability.

Concrete actions: Together with our European partners and within the framework of our participation in the European Union and in the new Coalition for the Sahel, Italy will ensure a growing commitment to the stabilization of the region, promoting an adequate balance between the contribution to security, strengthening institutions and Development Cooperation. Italy will also favour the expansion of the international partnership in support of the G5 Sahel, promoting greater participation of Regional Organizations such as ECOWAS and the African Union, and developing dialogue with non-European partners such as the United States.

On the bilateral level, Italy will continue to strengthen diplomatic presence in the region, which has already begun in recent years with the opening of Embassies in Niger, Guinea and Burkina Faso, in addition to the opening of a new Embassy in Mali. This strengthening will be accompanied by the intensification of the program of political visits and the development of the partnership with the G5 Sahel. In this regard, it will be of vital importance to support collaboration, between the G5 Sahel Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in promoting the adaptation of the Joint Force to the rules of international humanitarian law in police operations against terrorist groups.

Italy's action for the benefit of the region's stability must also continue through the activities of the MISIN (a military training mission for Niger forces) and through our country's participation in EU civilian and military missions, such as EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger and the United Nations Mission for the stabilization of Mali (MINUSMA).

Southern Africa

Southern Africa represents a key area for Italian initiatives not only in the economic field, but also in cultural and scientific sectors. Angola and South Africa can be seen as the two political and economic protagonists of this region. In fact, these two countries play a major role in launching virtuous processes throughout Africa, with South Africa the leading economy on the Continent despite the recent difficulties imposed by an unfavourable economic environment and the Covid-19 pandemic being an active promoter of regional economic integration, while President Lourenço's Angola representing a positive example of the fight against corruption as well as being committed to pacification of the Great Lakes region. Italy can pride itself on excellent relations with both countries, as evidenced by President Mattarella's visit to Angola - home to important Eni investments - in 2019, and by the numerous fruitful collaborations which link Rome and Pretoria from commercial, scientific, and technological points of view.

The official visit of Mozambican President Nyusi to Rome in July 2019 also strengthened relations between Rome and Maputo, another key partner of our country in the region. The historical friendship between Italy and Mozambique dates back to the key role played by our country in the negotiations which ended the civil war in 1992, renewed with the signing of Peace Agreements on 6 August 2019. As for economic cooperation, Italy boasted a position as the first European and third global investor in Mozambique for the period 2012-2019, with major offshore activities by Eni in the country for the exploration of huge gas fields and further potential in the infrastructure, transport, and agri-food sectors. However, the fragility of the Mozambican State cannot be overlooked, threatened as it is by a worsening of the terrorist crisis in the province of Cabo Delgado in the far north of the country. In the province, abounding in natural resources and offshore gas fields, for some years there have been terrorist attacks, which recently culminated in an occupation of the port of Mocímboa da Praia by Islamist militiamen, who declared themselves part of the Al-Shabaab organization. Well aware of its difficulties in dealing with this worrying situation in the north, the Government of Maputo recently requested assistance from the European Union, which is providing solid collaboration to identify a solution to the ongoing crisis.

Concrete actions: The intense institutional contacts of recent years, aimed also at fortifying the economic-commercial partnership, will need to be maintained and bolstered through further political visits to the countries in the area, as soon as the health situation allows it.

In multilateral fora, Italy has long promoted the highest standards of respect for human rights in the countries of Southern Africa, and in recent years, our country has also been focusing heavily on environmental protection, negotiating agreements to this end with various States in the region. It will be crucial to continue this effort.

Lastly, the major security problems affecting some areas of the region cannot be overlooked. The terrorist crisis in Cabo Delgado, as well as the dramatic security situation which is rife in the provinces to the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes Region – on the border with Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda – risk compromising the promising but fragile development results already achieved. Arm in arm with the European Union, Italy needs to continue monitoring the evolution of the situation in order to understand the best way to tackle the challenges posed by the numerous terrorist and rebel groups, providing assistance to those countries of the region requesting the Italian contribution, in the name of stability, security and peace.



"The Economist" covers, representing how the perception of the African continent changed over the years.

Conclusions and Lines of Action

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The dialogue with Africa is necessarily destined to be a primary theme for Italy, due to clear strategic, historical, geographical, economic, and cultural considerations. The entire Continent will become both the most populous and the youngest in the years to come, and will see itself at the centre of multiple, highly complex dynamics: conflicts and poverty in some countries, stability and economic growth in others; risks of the proliferation of terrorism; climate change; the influence of external players. This is without considering the impact of the pandemic crisis, which may make some phenomena more complex or accelerate new dynamics (e.g. continental integration or digitization).

With these premises, what is needed more than ever is a strategic vision of our relations with Africa and inspiring and stimulating action from within the EU.

In the current era, in which there is a tendency to seek instant short-term solutions, the complexity of the African scenarios instead obliges us to adopt medium- to long-term approaches. On the other hand, from a historical point of view, the affirmation of independent states in Africa is relatively recent, given that the decolonization process ended towards the end of the last century; it would therefore be utopian to think of achieving immediate results (stability, full employment, an end to migratory flows, widespread wellbeing throughout the Continent).

Starting from this perception, in a similar way to the actions of other EU partners (France, the United Kingdom and Germany), it is necessary to develop an all-out engagement that is continuous, not sporadic, and above all committed.

The answer to the African challenge lies in greater political attention to the specific features of Africa; in allocating the necessary financial resources to the Continent pursuant to the UN Agenda 2030, which requires a convergence of Official Development Assistance towards 0.7% of Gross National Income; in a global approach that includes the ability to know how to wait without suddenly forcing and accelerating the results of a long-term, constant and effective commitment that can unite politics and civil society within the goal of a genuinely equal Italian-African partnership.

1. Strengthening political relations with African countries through an extension of our diplomatic network and intensification of the programme of political visits at the highest level, as soon as the evolution of the epidemiological framework allows it;
2. Continuing to expand educational, training and capacity-building activities in the peace and security sector, both in Europe and bilaterally, especially in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions;
3. Promoting the creation of more employment opportunities in Africa through economic and training initiatives;

4. Keeping the development cooperation channel open, and never forgetting the substantial resource represented by cooperation operated in parallel by foundations, businesses, banking groups, private entities, and associations;
5. Deepening and intensifying dialogue with the African Union and continental regional organizations;
6. Keeping a wary eye on governance and human rights as essential factors in conflict prevention;
7. Strengthening the partnership with African countries of origin and transit of migratory flows;
8. Focusing increasingly on commercial promotion and investment development, through trade fairs, system missions, country presentations and shows, ensuring, as far as possible, better financial coverage for economic initiatives in Africa;
9. Promoting initiatives in the cultural field, to develop the tourism sector, and collaborations in the scientific field;
10. Supporting the process of continental integration: in its political dimension, aimed at affirming the role of the African Union and regional organizations as central players in the resolution of African and economic crises, in order to support implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement - AfCFTA.

