

**INTERVENTO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO ALLA
“UNIVERSITY OF GHANA “
“A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA”**

(Accra, 28 novembre 2019)

Vice Chancellor Owusu,
authorities,
distinguished guests,
dear students,

Maa ha, eti sen? *(trad: Buon pomeriggio, come state?)*

It is an honour for me to be in Accra and to be hosted by the University of Ghana, a beacon of learning and a symbol of Ghana’s advancement.

I am deeply grateful for the kind hospitality of President Akufo -Addo, of the Chancellor of the University and of the people and youth of Ghana.

Being a Law professor, visiting a University is like coming home. And talking to students, listening to their hopes, their vision of the future, their talents, is always an extraordinary source of inspiration. This is the reason why I am particularly happy to conclude my visit to Ghana today with you, dear students, to convey the friendship of the Italian people.

There is so much that binds Italy and Ghana together: our history, our peoples, our economies. Our countries share values based on the respect of democratic principles, sustainable and inclusive development, economic co-operation and free trade.

Over the years, Italy has assured its support to Ghana's development in many sectors, not only through institutions: our companies work hand in hand with Ghana's government, local authorities and enterprises, establishing long lasting links aimed at promoting ultimately the sustainable development of Ghana's people. Italian entrepreneurs have contributed to your Country's economic growth by providing energy and building roads, hospital and major infrastructures.

Nowadays, the Italian company ENI has made one of the biggest foreign direct investments in Ghana.

This morning I have inaugurated a training center in Dormaa. The center, financed by ENI, will train 800 (eight hundred) Ghanaian youth in the field of agro-industry, benefitting indirectly an average of 8.000 (eight thousand) people, through the promotion of entrepreneurial skills and the launch of business projects.

This initiative, whose name is "Okuafo Pa" (*good farmer*), is a contribution to President Akufo Addo's long sighted vision of "*Ghana beyond aid*". A new approach that Italy fully supports, based on the promotion of the private sector and local entrepreneurship, to allow access for SMEs to credit and to promote an inclusive business model for women. "*Africa beyond aid*" is about bringing mutual benefit, as President Akufo Addo recalled during the Conference "G20 Compact with Africa" that we both attended last week in Berlin.

This is exactly the model of partnership that Italy is promoting in and with Africa and that I have recalled during my visits to Horn of Africa and Sahel. A partnership grounded in mutual responsibility, aimed at fostering a shared and sustainable development and reinforced by the absence of hidden agendas.

As a Country committed to peace and stability, a founding member of the European Union, a responsible player in many international organizations, Italy wants to work together with the countries and peoples of Africa for a change of paradigm in our relations.

A new cooperation for lasting peace and security, for strengthened governance, for long term and sustainable investments, for better managed mobility and migration. A partnership among equals where the obsolete “donor-versus-recipient” relationship be definitively overcome, to address together common challenges.

To trace this new path, some elements are of paramount importance.

First, economic growth.

If we want to grow together, we should exploit the complementarities of economic structures on both sides of the Mediterranean and, of course, we must invest.

Investing means finding appropriate resources. The extent of the interventions requires joint and reciprocal commitments; going beyond the national interests of the individual countries. The strategy is already outlined in the 2063 Agenda of the African Union and the 2030 agenda of the United Nations for development. We are not starting from scratch, but from the funds allocated in 2016 by the European Union's External Investment Plan, which is expected to make available over 44 billion euros in public and private investments in the coming years.

Have a look at the data: Europe is the first investor in Africa with over 350 (*three hundred fifty*) billion euros invested. In the European context, Italy is at the 3rd place for FDI (*Foreign Direct Investments*), with 24 billion euros invested in the Continent throughout the last 10 years. Our goal is to ensure, also through these investments, sustainable growth based on the transfer of technology and greater market integration.

In this regard, I wish to praise the extraordinary role played by Ghana in the negotiations of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. It is no coincidence that the Secretariat of the new Organization will be based in Accra.

Still, the market integration will be completely effective only when business climate in the whole Africa will get better. In this endeavour, we hope that Ghana will take the lead for all the necessary steps to improve the business environment in the Continent.

Italian investments in Africa are increasingly based on environmental sustainability, because our vision of the future of the world economy is based on a “Green New Deal”, aimed at addressing climate change and economic inequality in a strategic and systemic way, transforming energy transition in an extraordinary opportunity for development. These themes will be at the core of the next COP-26, that Italy is co-chairing with the UK and that will devote a special focus to Africa.

But our partnership is not only based on trade and economy.

It also requires political stability and security. This is a strategic challenge on which European and African interests fully converge. We all have the same, legitimate expectation of living safely. When we say that Africa's security is our own security this is not rhetoric, but concrete reality.

We see it in the Sahel, where the deterioration of the security conditions are now threatening both West Africa and Europe, especially after the crisis in Libya.

The fight against violent extremism and every form of terrorism must target first and foremost the roots of these phenomena. We must reduce the space of manoeuvring to radical movements through an efficient coordination and dialogue among Europe, Africa and the United Nations.

Africa is increasingly moving along the path of full ownership of security issues under the auspices of the African Union. Italy – as the first and only European country having a diplomatic Representation at the African Union - commends the efforts for the establishment of a robust security architecture on the African continent, granting quick response and timely interventions to threats and conflicts.

Once again, let me praise the role of Ghana, a country that identified very early the high intensity of the threat coming from the Sahel and launched the “Accra Initiative” together with its neighbouring countries. Ghana is also one of the main players inside the ECOWAS, a Community which has become a reliable and effective source of stabilization in the region, fully embodying what is known as “African ownership of African crisis”. This is a principle that Italy puts at the core of its security cooperation with African countries.

Finally yet importantly, political stability plays a crucial role in attracting international investments and in securing a better future to your Continent. Political inclusiveness, democratic development, good governance, participation of the civil society in political life and a greater participation of women are key drivers of stabilization and development. Ghana is setting -again- one of the most positive examples in the whole Africa.

Human development - including culture, education and mobility - is a key element in the relations between Italy and Africa. 60% of the African population is under the age of 24 and the African continent has the highest population growth rate worldwide. This is a formidable challenge to meet the demand for basic services, particularly in the education sector and to create jobs, but it is also an opportunity to put an extraordinary and vibrant human capital in a system of growth and economic development. It is a challenge that Africa and Europe share, as the phenomenon is destined to involve both - due to geographical proximity - in economic, social and mobility terms.

The theme of education is fundamental to address the issue of mobility with a new, fresh approach. In the short and medium term, there will be a growing number of students looking for adequate training and integration into an increasingly global and interdependent economic system.

A broad partnership is therefore needed, also in terms of professional qualification, regular intra and extra African mobility and creation of job opportunities. This is a common responsibility. Also in this case we do not start from scratch: the European Union Trust Fund for Africa provides financial resources to support programs aimed at combating phenomena of uncontrolled mobility and to strengthen locally the creation of new jobs.

Italy intends to fully play its part and field its own excellence. As one of the closest European countries to Africa, we have the ambition to strengthen our role as a “bridge” between the two Continents, favouring the exchange of knowledge, experience, know how, assets, as well as investment flows in key economic sectors such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing. Also thanks to the historical and passionate commitment of our Development Cooperation and our non-governmental organizations, Italy can and wants to play a strategic role in some leading sectors: education, cultural promotion and tourism.

Dear students,

my lecture today was intended to present you the Italian commitment to a broader dialogue between Europe and Africa in which security, development, sustainability and prosperity are increasingly interconnected. It is the fundamental mission of the leaders of today not to miss the opportunity to start building a sustainable architecture for a common tomorrow, by granting the next generations of European and African citizens the sacred right of pursuing their self-realization in life.

It is therefore also my mission, as well as the mission of the African leaders.

I am confident that the young African leaders of today and tomorrow, like you could be one day, will be able to write a new page in Africa's history.

One that tells of partners fighting together to address global challenges; one of hope, opportunities, resilience and innovation. It won't be easy, it will take time and energy. But I can assure you that Italy and Europe will be at your side.

Thank you.