

Intervento della Vice Ministra Marina Sereni

Heart of Asia – Ministeriale di Dushanbe

“Strengthening Consensus for Peace and Development in the Heart of Asia Region”

HE President Rahmon

HE President Ghani

Minister Muhridin [Mae Tagikistan]

Minister Atmar [Mae Afghanistan]

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished delegates,

I wish to congratulate the Governments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan for organizing this Conference, despite the very difficult times we are experiencing at global level.

We reiterate our appreciation for the Heart of Asia platform, established “with Afghanistan and for Afghanistan”, which keeps at its core the regional dimension of cooperation as the key element to promote peace, security and prosperity in Afghanistan.

As one of the supporting countries of the Istanbul process, Italy is pleased to take part in this event.

As suggested by the theme of this year’s Ministerial Conference, peace and development are strictly interlinked.

Peace is an essential precondition for a durable development, while a just and sustainable development is the best guarantee for peace: these are the main objectives, which Afghanistan must focus on in order to turn page and offer new prospects to its citizens.

In pursuing these objectives, regional support is indispensable, since interconnection between Afghanistan and its neighbours is of crucial importance.

Italy fully supports the vision of Afghanistan as a country at peace within its borders and with its neighbors, fully integrated in regional cooperation and trade flows.

These are indeed times of challenges and hope for Afghanistan.

Challenges, because the pandemic is summing up to decades of conflicts and to an unabated level of violence.

Hope, since for the first time we see in place a negotiating process that, despite the difficult choices lying ahead, offers a real opportunity for national reconciliation.

Italy welcomes continuing engagement by international and domestic stakeholders to promote the cause of peace in Afghanistan

Eventually, it will be up to the Afghan parties to decide about their future; the forms and contents of a peaceful co-existence.

We are encouraged by the United States continuous commitment to help advancing Afghanistan Peace Negotiations and we welcome the central role the United Nations has been called to play in it.

We do hope that ongoing national and international efforts will succeed in achieving a significant reduction in the level of violence, paving the way to a comprehensive and long-lasting cease-fire, which is a key requirement for peacebuilding.

Preserving and strengthening the fundamental gains of the past two decades must be the guiding lights of any reconciliation process, starting with the protection of women, children and minorities rights, as well as adequate guarantees for civil society.

With regard to the Confidence Building Measures in which we participate,

Italy has been working side by side with the Afghan institutions - in cooperation with FAO – in the RURAL DEVELOPMENT and FOOD SECURITY sectors to increase productivity of Afghan farming, being aware that agriculture is the largest sector of the Afghan economy.

Concerning CONNECTIVITY, over the last ten years, Italy has contributed to developing infrastructures with about 360 million Euros, to interlink Afghanistan to other Eurasian countries and to global markets.

Recently, a new project, for an amount of 60 million Euros in soft loans, has been approved for the ongoing construction of the Afghan segment of the railway connecting Khaf and Herat.

Italy will continue supporting Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process in this challenging endeavor of building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, which means also a stable and prosperous region.

We wish Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul process full success.