

**Address by Stefania Giannini,
Minister of Education, University and Research
on the occasion of the First International Space Forum**

Trento, October 24th, 2016

Honorable Ministers, Presidents,
Distinguished Delegates and Heads of Space Agencies,

It is an honor and a pleasure to welcome to Italy, for the first International Space Forum dedicated to “Space Science for Global Challenges”.

First of all, let me congratulate the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) and, of course our Italian Space Agency for promoting this Forum.

Your efforts have realized and built this first space platform of discussion and dialogue among countries committed to increase the number of universities involved in space programs and activities.

I would like to thank also the Province of Trento and its President for hosting this Ministerial event, as well as the University of Trento here represented by the Rector.

Today we have all convened in Trento to analyze and better understand how Space Science can concretely contribute in addressing global challenges for the benefit of all humankind.

We don't have doubts: the use of Space technologies and applications for peaceful purposes is an extraordinary opportunity to increase the quality of life and protect our Planet, to explore the Universe and increase our knowledge.

Italy recognizes the fundamental role of space science and academia in addressing global challenges such as climate change, environment, health, energy, transportation, migrations and earth protection.

Today, distinguished experts will present their proposals to address, through space solutions, these global challenges.

At the same time, through this Forum, we would like to encourage the sharing of knowledge among Universities and civil society, in order to create a worldwide inclusive and effective community of space experts and knowledgeable people.

Although I come from another field of research within the University, in the last years, in my capacity as Minister of Education, University and Research, also in charge of the space sector, I have become more and more aware of the proactive role that space plays in expanding the frontiers of knowledge and technology.

For this reason, I believe that governments should develop sustainable space policies in order to improve the life of citizens and to find solutions for global needs, particularly with regards to developing countries.

We promote this vision and strategy as one of the founding members of the European Union and the European Space Agency, aiming at responding to the new global challenges through international cooperation.

In particular to support long-term sustainability of outer space activities in various sectors (earth exploration and observation, telecommunication and navigation), Italy participates since its foundation to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) of the United Nations, of which today all of you are also members.

In this context, and in preparation of the UNISPACE+50 in 2018 (50th anniversary of the United Nation Conference on the Exploration and

Peaceful Uses of Outer Space), I would like to recall the Italian initiative “Open Universe” proposed during the 59th session of the COPUOS in June 2016.

The target of our project is to build and strengthen the capacity in the use of open source space science data and technology through international cooperation.

Universities occupy a key position in this approach working as laboratories of knowledge, creating and regenerating new ideas, innovation, skills and capacities.

Indeed, a fruitful interaction between basic and applied research starts from the universities and their connections with the private sector.

For this reason, Universities and Academia should play an invaluable role in promoting space capacity-building curricula and research activities, at local, regional and international level, in particular in developing countries.

Higher education attitude to international cooperation offers opportunities to shape global communities of knowledge. We should take advantage from this openness, by supporting the inception, preparation and exploitation of space and research activities regardless of their geographical location.

Space science is a unique combination of science, technology, history, and culture and can be used to teach different topics, not only space related, and to capture the attention and interest of students, society and policy-makers.

Universities could contribute to increase awareness among the international space community and the general public of the importance of peaceful space activities to improve economic and social welfare of humanity.

Our effort today is aimed at:

- Finalizing the “Trento Space Statement”, which collects the results of our discussion in a set of recommendations and actions to connect people in using space science and research, knowledge and integrated space related applications;
- Developing innovative partnerships by using tools and platforms to facilitate university access and participation to space strategies and policies;
- Supporting the development and the harmonization of Space Curricula at local, regional and international level paying the greatest attention to developing countries

Finally, I hope this Forum will be the first of a long series. I support the common intention to repeat this Space Forum next year, in order to increase the number of representatives from scientific communities and academia.

This ambition will contribute to prepare new generations of global space leaders.

There will be a long array of scientific successes to share and celebrate together in the future. Exomars experience teaches us that these successes could arrive also from first achievements and failed attempts.

Science profits from trial-and-error and government should support it unconditionally. Errors are just a *felix culpa*, the price that we have to pay to progress.

Thank you.