Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Dear Colleagues,

It’s a privilege to take today the floor in this extraordinary assembly, among distinguished Ministers, colleagues and friends, all gathered here to understand and discuss how Universities and Academia can support space sciences, technologies and applications for the sustainable development in Africa.

A real sustainable development, in fact, requires concrete and urgent actions to be achieved with a broad partnership between Governments and civil society, starting from development of local capacity building projects. However, many countries in the world, and in Africa the majority, cannot afford a standalone space program and access to space. In this regard, the **international cooperation could be the key for space economy and capacity building development.**

Italy, and the Italian Space Agency in particular, are strongly committed to pursue sustainable development programs, contributing to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030.**

Mr. Chairman, let me briefly present some concrete actions in this regard.

Italy began to conduct space activities in Africa during the 1960s in cooperation with Kenya at **Broglio Space Center (BSC)** in Malindi (Kenya). Between 1967 and 1988, Italy performed 27 satellite launches from the BSC in collaboration with NASA. Today, the BSC, under the framework of the bilateral cooperation between Italy and Kenya, is mainly dedicated to ground control and data receiving activities for national and international missions.
The need for **space capacity building in Kenya and in the region** became soon clear with the growing awareness that cooperation in space activities represents a source of scientific, technical and economic benefits. In particular, the Italian Space Agency is committed to providing scholarships and fellowships to Kenyan nationals to attend undergraduate and post-graduate degree programs.

In this framework the Sapienza University of Rome and the University of Nairobi have launched joint projects supported by the Italian Space Agency. Among these, let me mention the **SBAM Project** focused on earth observation applications for agriculture, and the **IKUNS (Italian - Kenyan University Nano-Satellite) Project**, for the development of a nano-satellite for earth observation. In June 2017, the two Universities launched the **International Post-Graduate Course in Space Mission Design and Management** to educate students for the realization of the IKUNS Project through a focused and comprehensive training.

On the basis of the abovementioned experience, a team of the University of Nairobi applied to the first **KiboCUBE** call launched by JAXA in 2016 and won the selection with a proposal for the development of a cubesat named “1st Kenyan University Nano-Satellite (1KUNS)”. The first Kenyan cubesat will be launched soon and deployed from the International Space Station.

Mr. Chairman,

This **International Space Forum**, after the first edition of the Forum organized in Trento (Italy) in 2016 with the title “Space Science and Academia for sustainable development in Africa”, aims to encourage discussion on how space education and technology can support the understanding and exploitation of space benefits for the socio-economic development in Africa. It is understood that African Universities and Academia need to become part of the global space network to benefit from scientific and technological knowledge.

The main outcome of the 2nd ISF will be the adoption of the **African Page/Nairobi Space Statement**, that will be added to the Trento Space Statement, issued at the end of the 1st ISF in 2016. The Nairobi Statement/African Page will summarize the main results of today’s discussions and provide recommendations to the African space community on how to develop local capacities, abilities and space cooperation as a driver for capacity building and socio-economic development.
Mr. Chairman,

The Italian Space Agency has been working to establish an **International Center for Space Education in Africa** located at the Broglio Space Centre in Malindi (Kenya), with the main mission of educating African students and trainees to become the future African leaders in the field of Space Science and Technologies and of promoting regional and international cooperation for a peaceful and sustainable development of the African Continent. Thanks to its consolidated infrastructure with high-level technological capabilities and qualified human resources, the Broglio Space Center can contribute to do so.

The International Center will be open for cooperation with national and international space Agencies, Universities and any other public and private institutions interested in promoting space education and culture in Africa and in offering the best space capacity-building portfolio. ASI is ready to discuss all details with interested partners.

In conclusion, Italy and the Italian Space agency are deeply convinced that Space Capacity Building in Africa represents a precious contribution to the United Nations 2030 agenda, as well as to the African Union 2063 Agenda.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, I thank you for your kind attention.