

## **Statement of Italy**

**By Giuseppe Valditara**

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Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Heads of Space Agencies and representatives, Rectors, Professors, All Authorities, Distinguished Delegates,

It is for me an honor to be with you today at the opening session of the 4th International Space Forum 2019 – The Mediterranean Chapter

First of all, let me thank the organizers of this event:

- the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), here represented by its President, Dr. Jean-Yves Le Gall, and his Vice President for Science and Academic relations, Dr. Gabriella Arrigo;
- the Italian Space Agency (ASI), here represented by its President, Eng. Giorgio Saccoccia;
- the University Mediterranea of Reggio Calabria, here represented by its Rector, Prof. Santo Marcello Zimbone

and the local Authorities that believed in and contributed to organizing

this Forum:

- the President of the Regional Council of Calabria, Dr. Nicola Irto;
- the Mayor of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Avv. Giuseppe Falcomatà.

I also wish to thank all the delegations of the Countries that have accepted the invitations of the Italian Minister and of the Forum' organizers.

This gathering of the International Space Forum – The Mediterranean Chapter - follows the one held in Trento in 2016, the second regional edition in Nairobi in 2017 (The African Chapter) and the third edition in Buenos Aires in 2018 (The Latin American and Caribbean Chapter).

**The main goal of this initiative is the promotion of space programs through the involvement of a growing number of Academicians and Universities.**

I am delighted that this edition of the Forum is hosted in Reggio Calabria, a city of southern Italy that stands at the center of the Mediterranean. We wish to encourage and support dialogue among the Countries of the region by enhancing the common commitment in favor of space, research and innovation.

**Italy has always played a leading role in the Mediterranean dialogue.** Its geographical collocation at the crossroads between Europe and Africa, western and eastern routes, places us in a privileged position; we benefit from historical flows of people and ideas; from the exchange of goods that has generated wealth and progress; from a stimulating intellectual environment that has been the backbone of European innovation for centuries. The present Mediterranean region has grown in size: as the sea has taken over large parts of the hinterland and has gone beyond the northern and southern shores, at the same time it has produced different, fragmented interests and needs.

However, **the Mediterranean remains a global platform for dialogue** between Europe and Africa, Middle and Far East. The Mediterranean stands at the center of several global challenges; it is a unique microcosm that once again bares great potential for generating wealth and progress.

For years the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has been hosting in Rome the **“MED-Mediterranean Dialogue”**, attended by distinguished speakers, experts and political Authorities of the Countries of the region and outside. This event has become a global *Hub* for debating the centrality of the Mediterranean in the international arena. The Mediterranean Chapter of the Space Forum has been inspired by the same fundamental wish to discuss and identify ways and means for exploiting the great potential present in coordination between countries on the shores of our beautiful sea. This sea has a remarkable past, but it also projects us towards the future: there is nothing more innovating and fascinating than space.

The title of the International Space Forum 2019, **“Space technology and applications meet the Mediterranean needs”**, is not only a contribution made by Italy to dialogue in this region, to its security and prosperity; but it also represents a challenge and a work program for the present and the future. Furthermore, it intends to be as a contribution to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

The Mediterranean makes daily headlines because of crises and conflict. **Space technology and its applications can turn emergencies into prevention, management and efficient planning.** Space technology can bridge gaps and contribute to meet the needs of different peoples. It is a valuable tool for promoting peace and harmony in the Mediterranean. Today, we will discuss technical and scientific aspects of three main topics: **Maritime**

**Surveillance, Space and Blue Economy, Space Education, Cooperation and Scientific Research.** Three topics that can turn contemporary human tragedies into opportunities of growth for the young generations of the Mediterranean, of Europe and beyond.

I am not a space expert. Other speakers will depict the activities and programs in which Italy is engaged, often in a leading position. However, from my role and perspective **I fully share and support the central objective of this Forum: to increase the number of Universities involved in space activities.**

Our Universities, the Universities in the world, are the “Treasurer” of our future, of our culture, of our identities. Space research in Italian universities has stood out as a national priority since the 1960s, when Italy became the third country, after the United States and the Soviet Union, to launch a satellite into orbit. **The Italian School of Physics and Engineering has a long-standing tradition;** it annually provides excellent young professionals to the international space community. However, **space activities requires also economists, managers and legal experts.** For this reason several prestigious Italian universities offer Study and Master Courses in space engineering and technology, in economics and space law, in international space relations and institutions.

These courses are systematically linked to other European and international Degrees and Master courses; this interaction demonstrates that the **space system is, by its own nature, transnational.** Effective international cooperation is thus needed in all areas of space activity: in infrastructures; in coordinating space operators; in gathering resources; in identifying global challenges in connection to the exploration of the Universe; in the observation of the Earth; in monitoring the environment, so that better control over our coasts and seas may be achieved; in evaluating the trends of land and sea cultures, that are strictly connected global warming and other phenomena of our times; in gathering data on landscape and archeological heritage; in fine tuning applications that contribute more accurate weather forecasts. It is therefore an extremely wide range of activities that we are looking at, and that we should target together.

The Università Mediterranea of Reggio Calabria is developing a curriculum of space studies to respond to the needs of the Mediterranean region. In this regard, later today, the Italian Space Agency and the Università Mediterranea will sign an agreement which outlines a roadmap to be implemented together, with all of you.

Recently, Italy has adopted a new space governance. The President of the Council of Ministers is now responsible for coordinating space and aerospace policies, supported by the Ministries involved in our national space endeavor, as well as by the Italian Space Agency, which is both

the “architect” and the “operator” of the system. The Ministry of Education, University and Research is in charge of financing the bulk of our national space activities, as well as of promoting space science and culture in schools and universities. Therefore, this Ministry, and my Department, in particular, are indeed most willing to cooperate with you in view of enhancing synergies and developing space projects.

Finally, I thank again the International Astronautical Federation, the Italian Space Agency, the Università Mediterranea and local Authorities for inviting me to chair this Forum.

I wish all of you a fruitful day of work and a pleasant and instructive visit to the ASI Geodesy Space Centre in Matera tomorrow, for which I would like to also warmly thank the Italian Air Force for its generous contribution.