

Welcome Remarks

M. Enzo Scotti

Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy

High-Level Roundtable

“The Inter-Ethnic City:

Management and Policies for a Better Integration of Migrants”

28 Settembre 2009 – Nazioni Unite

It is an honour and a pleasure to open today's important meeting.

I want to thank Canada, the International Organization for Migration and the Alliance of Civilization for joining us in organizing this event.

And I want to stress how grateful I am to “Fondazione Aldo della Rocca”, and particularly to its President, my friend Professor Beguinot who has studied the problems of the city for many years with his outstanding team of researchers, many of whom are here with us.

He was the first to propose holding an event at the UN on this important topic. His passion and commitment are the reason for us to be here today.

This last week, with all the world leaders in New York, the United Nations tackled all the great challenges of today: disarmament, climate change, poverty, food security, the economic crisis, peace and security, inter-cultural dialogue. What we have learnt is that all these issues are interrelated and that we can succeed only if we move away from the idea of a clash of civilizations and we start working together to reach our common goals.

We do not simply need to disarm our weapons. We also need to disarm culturally, getting rid of ideological divides that set us

apart. This is the background of today's meeting, whose goal is to tackle another great challenge of today: the crisis of the city.

I am convinced that the urban level has a central importance in any strategy to foster understanding and in all integration policies.

The city is at the forefront of globalization reproducing its effects. It is a place of increasing challenges: poverty; insecurity and crime; separation among communities at the social level creating separate and conflicting spaces within the same urban context. But at the same time the city is also the place for increasing economic opportunities, enhanced communication, cultural vivacity, scientific advances.

We have therefore to look for practical solutions, for a better model of urban planning, of city management, of social integration capable of overcoming those challenges and exploiting those opportunities. This is what many cities around the world are trying to do and their experience could be precious for our project.

To be successful, today's meeting cannot be just a self-contained single event. On the contrary it must be the beginning of a process. We have to start from the ideas and the proposals that are going to be presented today and act upon them.

What next then? In order to highlight the topic and give it more visibility, I believe we should explore the idea of creating an "AoC Model City" as a concrete example of best practices in urban policies and integration. To achieve this goal we should call on experts worldwide to provide proposals, solutions and suggestions and, from there, we could move to convene an international conference in 2010, under the auspices of the United Nations, and particularly with the support of UN HABITAT and the other partners involved in today's event. The Conference, which could take place in late fall next year, could be the occasion to take stock of these proposals, putting together different experiences and points of view involving civil society, cultural institutions,

academia, NGOs already active in this field. I hope that with the help of everybody we can make this possible.

I thank you all for your participation and I look forward to what I am sure will be an enlightening discussion.