

ITALY



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights

**STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY FABRIZIO PETRI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2019 UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON BUSINESS AND
HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**National action plans from paper to practice: lessons learned,
challenges, innovation**

Italy approved a 5-year National Action Plan on *Business and Human Rights* in 2016, and carried out a related *mid-term review* in 2018: a process, which took approximately 9 months, including the institutional review, the multi-stakeholder dialogue and the on-line consultations.

Since then, our work on *Business and Human Rights* has further developed, also in view of an increasing interest on the topic amongst the private sector.

The ethical principles of *sustainable development* - pursuing both economic growth and social wellbeing - are ever more common in Italy, and a growing number of Italian companies are showing an actual engagement with Human Rights issues.

Therefore, our *Inter-Ministerial Committee for Human Rights* has found some favorable conditions in furthering the BHR dialogue with a series of important companies operating in Italy, including *Barilla, ENEL, ENI, Generali, Hitachi Rail Italy* and *CNH Industrial*, among others.

Eventually, a number of these companies - which we have named the '*BHR Champions*' group- have also agreed to establish a regular consultation process with our *BHR Steering Committee*, on the grounds of what they have already undertaken in order to promote *social responsibility* and respect for Human Rights.

Through the help of these '*Champions*' we now aim to reinforce the communication of *Business and Human Rights* principles and 'best practices' across the national territory, to the advantage of a more effective application of the Italian BHR National Action Plan.

These '*Champions*' do mainly represent big economic enterprises. However, the main goal of this cooperation is to reach out to *Small and Medium Companies*, given that these represent over 90% of our national economic structure.

This shall be done through a variety of communication activities, targeting especially SMEs, which may leverage on both the Champions' experience and their extensive corporate networks and supply chains.

In this framework, we are also considering to develop a specific Logo, including for our communication through online-Media and the organization of specific events.

Many of these ideas were inspired by the launch of the '*Good Human Rights Stories Initiative*', promoted by the European Union and numerous third countries, with the aim of reinforcing the understanding of BHR principles in different parts of the world.

An objective, which we now also care to pursue as a priority in Italy, as we emphasized in our national report for the Universal Periodic Review.