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**Statement of Italy**

Item 8. Space for sustainable development

Monday, 30 August

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

Italy continues to pay its utmost attention to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and to the contribution that space technology and applications may bring to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Italy is launching a series of initiatives to spreading the awareness regarding the benefits of space technology and related applications and services, including by offering capacity building opportunities to its partners and to those countries that wish to get closer to space disciplines and space activities.

On 5 July 2021, the Italian Space Agency and the University Mediterranea of Reggio Calabria (Italy) jointly organized a virtual Conference with the countries of the Mediterranean region, which follows the International Space Forum at ministerial level, held in Reggio Calabria on 5 September 2019. The meeting gathered 17 countries, namely Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Tunisia, Turkey and, of course, Italy, as the organizing country. They were represented by ministerial and embassies delegates, heads of space agencies and research institutions, as well as representatives of universities of the region. The event testified the particular moment that the world is experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the pandemic could not stop further the path towards a greater space cooperation in the Mediterranean area.

Participants presented their views on space activities in the Mediterranean, their own space programs, as well as those made in cooperation with other countries, mainly in the Earth observation field, showing their usefulness and precious

contribution in monitoring and protecting the environment, including the coastal and sea areas, also from pollution; in disaster early warning and management; climate changes; and ship routing, also in combination with satellite telecommunication and navigation data. Some countries explained the governance structure of their space sector, the strategies adopted and the action plans for the future; others highlighted the fact that they are not yet space-faring countries, that funds for research are limited, but wish to have opportunities to become more active in the field; others pointed out that the small size of a country does not represent a limit to the development of space activities; there were those who made proposals for future cooperation; others stressed the importance of a greater collaboration among Academia and the private sector; and those representing countries members of the European Union, highlighted the value of the EU space programs and projects also for the entire Mediterranean region. Finally, all participants expressed their wish for more cooperation to benefit the Mediterranean region through space applications and services.

ASI presented the “*1<sup>st</sup> Winter Course on Geo Information and Space Data Management for the Needs and Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean Region*”, that is being jointly organized by ASI, the University Mediterranea and the Italian company e-Geos. The course is dedicated to the Mediterranean countries and represents a first Italian concrete contribution to the creation of a Space Curriculum focused on the needs of the Mediterranean region.

An ad hoc Committee will select 25 participants and make sure that gender equality will be respected and women's participation promoted. Attendees will acquire knowledge on a wide range of disciplines, such as regional planning, emergencies management, environmental sciences, resources management, geography, including an overview of the international space programs on Earth Observation in support of decision makers and operational activities in the Mediterranean area.

The training course will include lectures, presentations, hands-on activities and technical visits. It is addressed to Bachelor or Master Degree holders in the fields of Engineering, Information and Communication Technologies, Aerospace,

Physics, Natural Sciences, Agronomy and Geology, as well as to government officers and employees and to researchers who operate in the following areas and entities: Emergency Management, Environmental risk management, Civil Protection, Cartographic Institutes and Land management agencies. Within the limited financial resources available, the 25 selected participants will be offered financial support to attend the training course.

The course is expected to take place in November at the premises of the University Mediterranea and will last for two weeks. An announcement of opportunity will be issued on 15 September 2021 and will provide all the details for the participation.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

allow me to conclude by stating that Italy attaches an important role to space diplomacy in the cooperation among Mediterranean countries, which share an ancient and rich history. We believe that the attractiveness that space activities and space exploration have on all countries, also non-space-faring countries and small countries, may work as a powerful glue among Mediterranean states and their peoples, and contribute to the peace and stability of the region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.