



ITALY

**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
12TH SESSION**

**LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP
INITIATIVES**

**Statement at the High Level Segment
Mr. Corrado Clini
Director General
Ministry for the Environment and Territory**

**NEW YORK
April 29, 2004**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Partnership initiatives represent a key instrument for stimulating local businesses and ensuring that the Johannesburg objectives are achieved by actively involving all the necessary actors within a local context.

Partnership initiatives make it possible to stimulate private capital at the national and international levels; they aid in the mobilization of financial resources earmarked for the transfer of environmentally friendly technologies; and, at the same time, they help to create local business capacity and facilitate the sharing of technological know-how.

This is particularly clear in the context of water management, which represents not only a key factor for economic development and environmental protection but can also provide immense opportunities of earning for the industrial system.

As you all know, the potential partnership contributions in this field were the topic of discussion at the International Forum on Partnerships for Sustainable Development held last March in Rome.

The Forum highlighted the particularly important role that such initiatives play in priority areas of development, like basic services in water management, sanitation, health, energy, and transport.

As far as water and sanitation are concerned, the conclusions of the Forum emphasize how public-private partnerships, with the participation of international financial institutions and United Nations agencies, represent the best instrument for combining technology and management systems with innovative financial mechanisms and self-financing.

Within this perspective, Italy promoted programmes for cooperation and several type II initiatives. Its aim has been to strengthen local capacities; to provide support to the decision-making process; to promote the transfer of environmentally sustainable technologies and integrated management resources; to promote the decentralization of services and the involvement of the private sector and to facilitate innovative financial tools.

In particular, some of the initiatives promoted by the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory are currently being implemented in the Mediterranean Region, in Southern

Mesopotamia, in the Balkans, and in China, with the active involvement of Italian and local private partners.

I would like to recall the following projects:

- waste water treatment through the use of solar energy in the desert zones of Algeria;
- supply of drinkable water and water for irrigation in Egypt;
- water purification and recycling in Israel;
- in Southern Mesopotamia, the “New Eden Project” started and represents a highly important programme for the environmental restoration of wetlands and the integrated management of the Tigris and Euphrates river basins;
- in the Balkans, we are working for the environmental restoration of the Neretva River Delta and a rapid assesment of environmental and health risks in the area;
- and, lastly, in China, a long-standing project for Italian-Chinese cooperation includes an initiative for sustainable agriculture and the qualitative-quantitative protection of irrigation water as well as the monitoring of inland waters.

At a national level, we are working to create synergies between competence of both public bodies for water administration and management and private enterprises operating in the field of water infrastructures and supply services.

The Johannesburg Summit recognized the crucial role that the business community must play in partnerships.

The Rome Forum highlighted the importance of partnership contributions in sustainable development.

It is clear that cooperation among States cannot be bases solely on the transfer of financial resources. It requires concrete actions and the integration of public and private initiatives in order to strengthen business, technology, and finance capacity. In doing so, economic growth is stimulated in developing countries and countries in transition, thus guiding them toward sustainability.

Thank you, Mr Chairman