Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Participants,

I would like to take this opportunity to present the Italian perspective on ICT and e-Government for development, from the initial steps undertaken by the Italian Development Cooperation to today’s meeting.

G8 Summit Genoa, Italy, July 2001

In 2001, the G8 leaders approved the Genoa Action Plan to bridge the Digital Divide. This plan encouraged "the development of an Action Plan for e-Government to strengthen democracy and the rule of law by empowering citizens and making the delivery of essential government services more efficient". At the Summit, Italy announced its intention to launch projects in Developing Countries and in Countries with Economies in Transition on e-Government for Development.

e-Government for Development Palermo, Italy, April 2002

As a follow up to the Summit, in 2002 Italy launched officially the e-Government for Development Initiative at the International Conference on E-Government for Development held in Palermo. More than 90 countries and about 700 ministers and delegates participated in this event.

During the Conference, the Italian Government signed agreements on technical cooperation and for the financing of the Initiative with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Development Gateway Foundation.

In addition, an open PLAN of ACTION on e-government for Development prepared in collaboration with UNDESA was presented by the Government of Italy. It contained elements to formulate NATIONAL STRATEGIES APPROACHES to e.gov.

Sustainable Development Summit Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2002
At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Members States of the United Nations emphasized the need to give practical effect to a new aid policy.

This encompasses actions ranging from the simple transfer of resources, to the creation of partnerships between industrialised and Developing Countries and Countries with Economies in Transition, with the participation of international organisations, non-governmental organisations, businesses and civil society.

The Summit reasserted the importance of mainstreaming and promoting good governance through initiatives for greater public administration efficiency, transparency in public finance, and the fight against corruption.

The key role of good governance had already been highlighted in the Monterrey Consensus, in March 2002.

**Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Development Cooperation activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed towards the accomplishment of these policies.

With reference to Information and Communication Technologies, with the rollout of the Italian Initiative, the Government recognized ICT as one of the components of its international development cooperation and foreign policy with a view to promote good governance and strengthen public administration reforms.

**Partnership and Innovation for Re-inventing Government in the South Pacific**

As an example, the Italian Cooperation is supporting the initiative “Partnership and Innovation for Re-inventing Government in the South Pacific” within the overall process of the Global Forum on Reinventing Government. The objective of this programme, executed by UNDESA, is to assist Governments in the Pacific region to strengthen their public administration and governance capacities to achieve Millennium Development Goals

The thematic covers:
A) Access to services;
B) E-government ;
C) State Capacity and Innovations to more effectively manage globalisation;
D) Participation and Accountability in Governance.

**Programme on Reinventing Government**
This Programme focuses on assessing and conveying the role of public-private and other types of successful partnerships for development in which Capacity Development is a key objective.

It will create a regional forum as the primary means through which case studies and practices will be disseminated.

This project is part of a larger programme in the Asia Pacific region funded by the United Nations Development Programme through UNDESA, together with the Italian Cooperation.

More efficient strategies (NEW)

We believe that beneficiaries Countries, in particular, should focus on two fundamental lines of behaviour:

1) create legal and material conditions, so that more efficient strategies can be established with the task of spreading new technologies.

2) launch adequate transformation processes of their own administrations, for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of services.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

On the other hand, to respond to countries’ needs, Industrialised Countries’ task should give life to cooperation on issues related to Innovation, Communication and Technology (ICT), consisting on

• offering experience and specific support in this field in order to favour a sustainable and long-lasting development,
• facilitating a fair and universal access to the most sophisticated digital technologies.

In such context, the Italian Cooperation has supported numerous programs, in particular with the United Nations Agencies, first of all UNDESA, with the aim to contribute to transform methods and organisational processes of the Public Administration.

In this context, Italy has worked with the Region to realise in the Caribbean
a Centre on climate change as a place of excellence for technical training and capacity building activities.

- The extension of the ICT to the environmental field would have in the Caribbean region an extraordinary impact both in the terms of "capacity building" and in "institutional building" and would give to the Italian action a character responding to the requirements of development in the Region that strongly depends on climate changes.

- Now let me ask Mrs LAURA CANUTO, Member of the Italian del. to present briefly the recent development of this initiative.

Thank you Ms. Canuto

Through the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Italian Cooperation has financed the organisation of 4 Caribbean ministerial consultations, under the auspices of CARICOM and in collaboration with CARICAD, in order to define the guidelines of a regional strategy due to facilitate the introduction of the e-Government at national level.

We are very pleased that the V° ministerial consultation has adopted the regional strategy for the introduction of ICT in the public sector. I would like to stress that the process of the formulation of the strategy was also supported by the Italian Cooperation.

In this regard, we intend to evaluate the possibility of supporting the implementation of this strategy, particularly in collaboration with other donors and international organisations, such as UNDESA, CARICOM, the European Commission and the Caribbean Development Bank.

Perspectives of further development

Cooperation’s possibilities of expansion between Italy and CARICOM are mainly tangible in the fields of the ICT and small and medium enterprises.

We have already listened to the presentation of Ms. Jennifer Britton of CARICOM on these issues.

PARTNERSHIP

The objective to obtain a Public Administration that is effective, efficient and near to the citizens needs can only be reached through a strong partnership between Countries, and multilateral organisms.
In order to reach this objective, the Italian Cooperation has given enormous importance to training activities. Italy’s attention has focused not only on specific fields in Public Administration, but it has also activated cross-sectoral initiatives.

The aims of these projects are:

The aims of the projects in the field of Public Administration are to:

- create conditions that can sustain efficiency and transparency in the public administration;
- reduce public administration running costs;
- promote the creation of an economic environment capable of attracting public and private foreign investment;
- develop skills and expertise capable of creating e-Government policies;
- bridge the Digital Divide;
- create a virtuous cycle of development.

The Caribbean e-Justice

With the support of Italy, Caribbean countries have agreed on creating a communication environment (specifically, a web-based portal) through which lawyers may contact and exchange information with branches of the judiciary, engage in dialogue and co-ordinate activities. The countries have applied through the Inter-American Development Bank.

The system will make judicial procedures more efficient and at lower costs, making it possible to share information and disseminate know-how.

Mozambique Government Network

Another example of Italian support to e-government is the project launched in Mozambique which will establishes a Government Network (Intranet) to favour the exchange of information and services among Ministries and Departments.

Albania-Accounting and the Population Registry

A further example is the activity undertaken in Albania that led to the identification of two main projects for the modernisation of the public administration.
The two main areas identified at this stage of assessment are: the public accounting system (e-Accounting) and the Population Registry.

e-Government means reforming public administration processes

In conclusion, by providing beneficiary countries with financial resources and know-how, the Italian Government is promoting projects that have a direct impact on the functioning of the State.

This involves a wide range of reforms relating to procedures, services and regulations, which are of fundamental importance in enabling new technologies to successfully transform socio-economic realities.

A Government-to-Government cooperation mode

Government-to-Government cooperation transfers the experience of Italian public offices to beneficiary countries. This ensures the sharing of knowledge resources.

The initiative is therefore designed:

to contribute to Public Administration reform, while fully respecting the cultural heritage, traditions and development choices of the recipients.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Italy’s commitment and auspices is that the partnership between the Italian Cooperation and the United Nations carries on and is further strengthened.

The experience of this Caribbean meeting has proven the validity of this modality of cooperation, which we believe is beneficial to all partners.

All this encourages us to continue on this process.