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**Food security: the relaunch of Italian-African cooperation**

***On the final day of Agrilevante, staged at the Bari exhibition centre, Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani emphasised Italy's role in agricultural development projects in Africa and the Mediterranean. A 'diplomacy of growth' to strengthen trade relations and at the same time support struggling countries.***

The development of agriculture is crucial in the Mediterranean area and across the African continent, and Italy can play a leading role. The Italian agricultural machinery industries produce means suited to the needs of North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa as well as the Middle East and the Balkans, and aim to strengthen their presence in these markets. At the same time, the Italian government is intensifying its activities in support of technical and economic cooperation, so that the most disadvantaged countries can acquire food security and achieve greater social stability as soon as possible.

This is the message emerging from Agrilevante, the international exhibition of technology and machinery for agriculture, which comes to a close this afternoon after four successful days of impressive public participation and a packed programme of technical and economic meetings. Most of these were dedicated to the new challenges facing agriculture, the development of trade relations, and cooperation projects including in the field of education and professional training.

On the final day of Agrilevante, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Antonio Tajani delivered his message to FederUnacoma President Mariateresa Maschio and the Federation's top management, recalling the government's active role in agricultural development, particularly in North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

"The government is looking with priority interest at the potential of agriculture in the Mediterranean area and the opportunities for cooperation in this sector," said Minister Tajani, "particularly with the countries of the Southern Shore, also in the strategic perspective of combating human trafficking".

Recalling the International Conference on Development and Migration on 23 July, the Second Summit on Food Systems on 24 and 26 July organised by Italy and the United Nations, and government missions such as the one to Egypt last March, the Minister referred to the possibility of structural interventions to deal with emergencies and support economies on the African continent.

"The issue of food security is a key element of the government's strategy that will take the form of the Mattei Plan for Africa and aims to become part of a broader European Marshall Plan. We are working to strengthen the sustainability and solidity of supply chains from a regional perspective," the minister stressed, "and to counter the food crisis that has particularly affected the vast Sahel area stretching from the Gulf of Guinea to the Horn of Africa".

"The government has given new centrality to economic interchange with the vast Mediterranean area," Tajani concluded, "as part of a strategy of growth diplomacy that I have activated since the beginning of my mandate. The interchange has reached EUR 118 billion. A leap forward of 75% compared to 2021".

**Bari, 8 October 2023**