



**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR JEZILE AT THE OPENING OF THE 4TH CONFERENCE
FOR A EURO-AFRICAN ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP**

30 SEPTEMBER 2022, TERAMO

I thank you Chairperson,

At the outset, I wish to thank the University of Teramo for hosting this important 4th Euro-African Academic Partnership Conference and the gracious invitation to make some opening remarks.

This conference takes place following the successful conclusion of the 6th European Union – African Union Summit where Africa and the European Union consolidated and renewed a Partnership especially on sustainable and sustained economic development.

I also wish to recognise with appreciation the commitment to advance cooperation with Africa by the Government of Italy. I further wish to acknowledge the significant collaboration between the International Centre for the Study of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the University of Teramo and the Diocese of Teramo-Atri, building on the foundations of the round table on “Partnerships in Universities, Science and Technology” held in 2019 in which Monsignor Leuzzi spoke about the importance of University cooperation and objectives of internationalisation. Monsignor’s reference

to “globalisation that de-routes, is not positive” meant that cooperation must have development as its goal, therefore ethical globalisation must promote education of young people and contribute positively to developing countries in Africa. Universities as the institutions of education to advance knowledge through research and dialogue about emerging topics of today. Universities amongst others serve to harness capabilities of reading the present, cultivating awareness about Humanism and its significance in promoting ideas that encompass heritage, nature, and technological innovation in order to establish new values of coexistence, unity between generations, for the purpose of people, planet and prosperity.

Chairperson,

The world is faced with unprecedented challenges of war, conflict, injustice, hunger, exceeding planetary thresholds, climate change and a lingering COVID pandemic that negatively impacts on sustainable growth, food security and peaceful coexistence.

In dealing with these challenges investing in research and training and using existing and forging new partnerships, especially between Africa and Europe, is of crucial importance.

Advancing gender equality and providing access to women and girls and the youth in general to education and training is a requirement to implement sustainable development goals.

The African Continent is blessed to have more than 400 million young people and this positive demographic dividend is key to Africa’s lasting development.

At the African Union this has been recognised through, among others, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Youth Charter, Youth Decade Plan of Action, and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment.

On a national basis South Africa has, for example, adopted the National Youth Policy 2020-2030, that outlines policy priority areas to accelerate youth development. Important priority areas include quality education as well as on social cohesion and nation building.

At the European Union – African Union Summit those aspects of research and training were reinforced through a commitment to support scientific cooperation between researchers, sharing technology and expertise, including through a joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda. The Teramo Charter signed 22 June 2021 is considered an important instrument to implement the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in advancing youth development and exchange programs for European and African students.

It is encouraging that a commitment was also made to promote exchanges of young citizens and students, including through the expanded Erasmus+ programme and to further develop partnerships between universities.

This 4th Conference for a Euro-African Academic Partnership is, therefore, a practical step to operationalise this joint commitment and partnership between Africa and the European Union.

Chairperson,

In this context, I also wish to recognise with much appreciation those activities that are practical examples of fostering African capacity

building and training such as the UNIDROIT “International Summer School” that focussed on Africa in 2022 and ICCROM’s “Youth Heritage Africa Programme”. ICCROM’s innovative initiative on establishing hubs across Africa to contribute to capacity building research and innovation, currently underway in Senegal, Rwanda, Kenya, Egypt, Benin, Mali, and Zimbabwe.

South Africa is also proud to have been selected to host a heritage hub at the University of Cape Town in the context of this ICCROM Programme. South African and Italian Universities have entered into more than 50 cooperation agreements to enable mutual partnerships and advance exchanges in various knowledge and research fields creating concrete opportunities for synergies in human capital development. One of the existing successful cooperation agreement is between the Zoo-prophylactic Institute (IZSAM) and South African universities/Institutes (University of Pretoria, Agricultural Research Council, etc.), on detection of exotic animal diseases, and a post graduate exchange initiative.

In conclusion Chairperson,

After all before trade and investment, education is the foundation for the future.

I wish you a successful conference and extend a challenge to not only identify, but also implement concrete actions to further enhance the African Academic partnership with Europe.

You have the full support and cooperation of South Africa.

I thank you.