

**Address by the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti
on the occasion of the Seminar “Building Together - Italy & Israel”
Dan Tel Aviv Hotel – February 6, 2019**

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to greet once again to Israel the large delegation of Italian companies led by the Italian Association of Engineering, Architectural and Technical-Economic Consulting Organizations (OICE) and the Italian Association of Construction Companies (ANCE).

We had the opportunity to meet last night, just after your arrival, and I am very glad and proud today to launch the “Building Together: Italy & Israel” event, organized by the Italian Trade Agency in partnership with the Commercial Office of the Embassy of Italy in Israel.

I am sure that this event will be a big success, and I would like to thank Mr. Roberto Carpaneto, Vice President of OICE, and my colleague Vincenzo Ercole, Head of International Business Development of ANCE, who are leading the Italian delegation. Let me also welcome Mr. Alberto Castronovo, Head of Business Development at Simest.

I acknowledge with pleasure the presence of Colonel Ziva Eger, Chief Executive of Foreign Investment & Industrial Cooperation at the Ministry of Economy, Mr. Opher Eliashar, Director of Financial Planning at the Ministry of Transportation, Mr. Yechezkel Lifshitz, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Energy as well as Arch. Yigal Govrin, Chairman of the Israeli Association of Construction & Infrastructure Engineers and Mr. Shay Pauzner, Deputy Director General of the Israel Builders Association.

My dear Israeli colleagues and friends, I have a message for you: these Italian companies are here with the determination to create a network of collaborations, a real long-term cooperation in infrastructure, engineering and construction projects.

They have the capabilities, they have the experience, and they came here to work.

The Italian stamp of excellence may be seen in design and construction projects all over the world today. As a matter of fact, the activity of Italian construction

companies in foreign markets has shown an extraordinary increase of almost 10% growth per year during the past decade!

Italy - the second largest manufacturer in Europe and the seventh in the world - has a long standing significant partnership with Israel in the scientific, technological, and industrial fields, with impressive results in many fields, from the medical field, to space, from the field of renewable energy to agriculture, from cybertech to artificial intelligence.

Tomorrow we will celebrate the 70th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. In these decades, we built a strong strategic partnership. On the occasion of the visits of our Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, our leaders pledged to bring this partnership to new, higher levels.

Therefore, the market of infrastructure and construction is just a natural additional area where we can - and must - develop new opportunities for cooperation and business with a win-win approach.

In this respect, I am thankful to the Israeli speakers who will give us today an overview on the activities and trends in this vibrant market with a focus on the many challenges and opportunities, and I am sure that these presentations will be very interesting, detailed, and stimulating.

I also have a message for my fellows Italians. Israel is a small country, but Israel's market is big and its growth is expected to accelerate as leading projects in the rail and port sectors will continue and energy, telecommunication, residential and tourism infrastructure will further be developed.

In this perspective, the complementarity of our ecosystems in this field - ALSO in this field I should say - is worth the utmost attention and we must all work to free the potential of our cooperation, looking also to the many opportunities to develop innovative ideas and advance our technological level, together with Israeli partners.

Our Embassy, as well as the Italian Trade Commission, is at your disposal for any kind of support you may need in your future interactions.

Now, let's do business!