

**Address of the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti
on the occasion of the Italian-Israeli Workshop on Artificial Intelligence
Tel Aviv University - November 20, 2019**

Prof. Itzhak Ben Israel, Head of the Blavatnik Interdisciplinary Cyber Research Center,

Prof. Rita Cucchiara, Director of the Italian Lab on Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Systems,

Honorable members of the Italian and Israeli delegations,

I am very pleased to open our second bilateral workshop on Artificial Intelligence promoted and supported by the Embassy of Italy with the collaboration of the Israel-Italy Chamber of Commerce and hosted by the Tel Aviv University.

We are in the middle of the AI week, and therefore this meeting is a perfect opportunity for a concrete discussion on possible collaborations in the AI fields of Mobility and Health that are today's focus, but also in other verticals.

We have shaped a delegation of representatives from academia, research institutions and industry all very involved in AI and interested in identifying together with the Israeli counterparts the market's necessities and the industrial applications in the AI domain in order to develop bilateral collaborations.

The Italian delegation participated yesterday in various sessions of the "AI International Conference" and this morning they met with the Vice President of the Israel Innovation Authority, Nili Mandelbilt, for an in-depth discussion about institutional opportunities for collaboration within the framework of innovative industry.

Now we are here to continue our bilateral exchanges between experts and the fact that it is the second seminar in the same year demonstrates beyond any doubt our solid standing next to Israel and our interest to be one of your strategic partners in the "AI revolution" that we are about to witness in the next coming months and years.

As Ambassador of Italy, I tell you that my personal engagement and commitment to support this process of scientific and industrial exchanges will continue also in the future. We have already put in our agenda and in our budget a new bilateral seminar dedicated to AI and robotics for next year and our bilateral programs promoting academic and industrial projects and startups exchanges will continue to focus also on AI in consideration of the great potential bilateral cooperation.

Italian AI ecosystem encompasses several fields, including machine learning, natural language, optimization, computer vision, robotics, speech processing, human-computer interaction, data management and knowledge-based systems, security, and education.

Italy has a long-standing tradition in scientific research on AI. During the last years a coordination process strongly supported by our Government led to the institution in 2017 of the National Laboratory CINI on Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Systems. The Lab operates under the direction of Prof. Rita Cucchiara, who leads the Italian delegation also this time. At present it gathers around 900 scientists through a network of 50 research groups and around 200 startups all involved in AI.

We can learn from our respective experiences and challenges. We can put together our common strengths and complement each other where we have distinctive capabilities. We can work together to be more effective, more far-reaching and, at the bottom line, to serve better our economies and our peoples.

We have at our disposal our strong academic and business communities, an extraordinary Government to Government Framework Agreement, which provides us with political support and generous financial assistance for innovative projects.

We at the Embassy are at your disposal for any ideas or request you might have to facilitate future collaborations.

We must therefore continue to put in sync our energies and our work especially in this field, a field that, as we all know very well, is going to change our life in not such a distant future.

As I often say - borrowing a sentence from President Rivlin - thanks to our people and our scientific communities' friendship and similarities, we are not doomed to work together, we are destined to work together!

Thank you.