

**Address by Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti**  
**on the occasion of the Webinar “Medical Devices and Telemedicine**  
**Overview, Trends, Opportunities, and Regulations”**  
**Tuesday, 20 October 2020**

Dear Participants,

I am happy to launch today’s webinar, a solid proof that in the present situation, even if we cannot pretend that business is as usual, we can certainly confirm that we are fully in business.

I wish to express my personal gratitude to the Italian Trade Agency, Confindustria Dispositivi Medici and the Israeli Export Institute that put so much time and effort to support and ensure the success of this Israeli-Italian webinar.

The Italian medical device industry encompasses roughly 4.000 companies, more than 76.000 employees, and a domestic market of 11.4 billion Euros. The last relevant number is that export of *Made in Italy* medical devices amounts to more than 5 billion Euros with a 5% annual growth rate. In this field, the Italian industry is considered highly sophisticated and is based on innovative, high-tech medical technologies.

Let me now switch to telemedicine. With the COVID-19 emergency, the interest and demand for telemedicine increased considerably among medical doctors and patients. According to a survey conducted in June 2020, 11 percent of medical doctors reported that they used telemedicine before the pandemic. Today, the share of general doctors that would be interested in carrying out tele-examinations reached 54 percent and the interest for the use of telemedicine in the future appears to be generally high, especially for monitoring patients’ health status.

Against this backdrop, and considering that Israeli competence and industrial technological capabilities are also very strong in both

sectors, today's event represents a significant opportunity to put forward what each country has to offer and what it needs with a specific goal of finding and exploiting all opportunities offered by a bilateral cooperation in research and development, industrial production, and market expansion.

We are on the eve of a new revolution, the big data and artificial intelligence revolution that will change several paradigms of our way of life in the next ten years. In the health sector this revolution, as well as an open innovation approach, has already started and will strongly accelerate in both our countries where human health systems are very advanced and represent a strong component of the social security policy. This perspective is one more important element to take into consideration in promoting and pursuing the bilateral cooperation in the field of medical devices and telemedicine.

Before giving the virtual floor to the Chairman of the Israeli Export Institute, Adiv Baruch, let me just share with you a bit of information in two useful programs that we have developed in the framework of the bilateral Agreement on Scientific, Technological and Industrial Cooperation to support bilateral cooperation projects.

The first program is a call for industrial joint project. It is published every year and is aimed at bringing together companies from both countries to develop innovative prototypes, also in the health sector. The two governments support the call with an annual budget of around 1.6 million Euros that usually finance 6 two-year projects. The call is currently open and the application must be submitted by 25 November 2020.

The second program - "Accelerate in Israel" - is a tool to support a three month period of acceleration for promising Italian start-ups in various fields, including health tech. This program is in its second year and with the contribution of the Italian Trade Agency

we have managed to significantly expand the budget to hopefully support around 40-50 startups. We received 53 applications that we are now evaluating, including nine specifically in the health sector.

I invite all of you to consider our Economic and Scientific Offices at the Italian Embassy and the Italian trade Agency office in Tel Aviv at your disposal for any sort of support you may need.

Our mission is to find, promote, and support any possible joint cooperation that will benefit our companies, our economies, and our societies. This is a goal that in the medical sector is even more important today under the present circumstances.

Thank you very much for your attention and participation. I wish you an interesting discussion.