**

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation***

***Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights***

***ITALY***

***Contribution of Italy to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to the Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/41/21 of 12 July 2019 entitled "Human Rights and Climate Change”.***

***December 2019***

**

**ITALY**

**Contribution of Italy to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to the Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/41/21 of 12 July 2019 entitled "Human Rights and Climate Change".**

Further to your query in relation to the Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/41/21 on human rights and climate change, Italian Authorities are in a position to provide the following contribution, **for your information only**.

1. *Please describe the impacts of the adverse effects of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities. Where possible, please share specific examples and stories.*

In Italy, there is great attention to the issue of the effect of heat on mortality. In particular, vulnerability to extreme temperatures has recently increased, partly as a result of an ageing population as well as an increase in the most vulnerable population groups, including people with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are generally more susceptible to the adverse impact of climate change, due to their inability to fully respond to physical emergencies such as storms, floods and extreme heat waves. The same population that is vulnerable to heat waves is also vulnerable to other exposures that occur in the winter season, such as flu epidemics, cold waves, spikes in air pollution. Particular attention should be given to people with cognitive impairment and/or mental disorders who may not be able to organize themselves in a timely and appropriate manner to the change in temperature or to communicate the discomfort related to the sudden cold. This category of people may also follow treatments with certain drugs that can increase the risk of hypothermia. Some drugs such as sedatives can indirectly aggravate the effects of low temperatures by reducing vigilance compared to feeling cold. Cold temperatures favour vasoconstriction or increased blood pressure, which could compromise brain and muscle functions in already weak individuals such as people with cognitive and motor disabilities: as way of example, Parkinson's patients and those suffering from neurodegenerative diseases such as Sla as well as people in wheelchairs, whose forced inactivity does not favour the proper functioning of the cardiovascular system.

1. *Please describe any relevant commitments, legislation, policies and other measures that you have taken, in compliance with applicable international human rights law, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to promote an approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation that ensures the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities. Please also note and identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments including their means of implementation.*

In 2015, a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (SNAC, 2015) was approved, outlining a national vision and providing a framework for adaptation measures. In support of the Strategy, Italian authorities have issued a technical-scientific document called "Elements for a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy", which identifies the main areas affected by climate change and defines strategic objectives and actions for impact mitigation. This document has been reworked further to a public consultation, in order to include the suggestions and comments of all relevant stakeholders.

At the same time of the SNAC approval, the decree of adoption of the Ministry of Environment and Protection of the Territory and the Sea stated the establishment of a National Observatory composed of representatives from the Regions and local administrations, for the identification of territorial and sectoral priorities, as well as for the subsequent monitoring of the effectiveness of adaptation actions.

The Ministry of Health, in the context of the activities of the CCM (National Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), launched in 2004 the National Operational Plan for the prevention of the effects of heat on health. The aim is to promote inter-institutional coordination at various levels and to provide operational lines for the creation of a centralised system of forecasting and prevention of the effects of heat on health. In Italy, most of the cities included in the National Operating System for the Prevention of The Effects of Heat have set defined procedures for the identification of people susceptible to the effects of the heat and have organised archive systems ("registries of the susceptible individuals"), which support health professionals in prevention activities. The registries collect data from the information systems of the territorial services (namely, archives of assisted admissions, pharmaceutical prescriptions, drug requirements, exemptions from health contributions for pathology, civil disability, home care, etc.) and acts as referral service for general physicians reporting on those individuals at risk. Following the introduction of the Heat Effects Prevention Plan, a reduction in the risk of heat-associated mortality was observed In Italian cities. Due to the results achieved, the Plan has been extended to other extreme hazards such as cold waves and heavy rains and floods. The activities include a) monitoring of weather conditions that put health at risk during the winter; b) the management of the mortality detection system for rapid monitoring of the impact of cold on health; c) the Ministry of Health's information campaign on the prevention of risks associated with cold waves and heavy rains and floods. The municipal warning systems, called Heat Health Watch Warning Systems (HHWWS), can predict up to 72 hours in advance the occurrence of climatic conditions that might put at risk the health of the population. The results are reported in a summary bulletin that contains summary weather forecasts and a graduated alert level (level 1, 2, 3) to allow modulation of prevention interventions based on the expected level of risk. During summer, daily bulletins are produced for the 27 cities included (Ancona, Bari, Bologna, Bolzano, Brescia, Cagliari, Campobasso, Catania, Civitavecchia, Florence, Frosinone, Genoa, Latina, Messina, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Perugia, Pescara, Reggio Calabria, Rieti, Rome, Turin, Trieste, Venice, Verona, Viterbo). The bulletins are published on the web portal of the Ministry of Health and sent to a local reference centre for each of the cities (the Municipality, the local health care company, or the local centre of Civil Protection). From May to September, also a Mobile Application is active in order to know the expected risk levels in the 27 cities, the Hot and Health App.

It also worth mentioning that in 2018 the Ministry of Health developed the Country Profile Italy Programme, a global initiative launched in 2015 to develop country-specific evidence on climate and health risks and to draw up national adaptation and mitigation strategies.

1. *Please share a summary of any relevant data that captures how the adverse effects of climate change have affected persons with disabilities, taking into account multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (i.e. discrimination based on a combination of multiple grounds, including disability, gender, race, colour, sex, language, religion, nationality and migration status).*

Women with disabilities are exposed to multiple discrimination, as a consequence of being discriminated both as women and as disabled. This type of discrimination is intersectional because the discriminating factors interact with each other, adding up. For example, a woman with a disability in a situation of environmental danger sees her rights denied very often, because in addition to be a woman, environmental obstacles are added up as barriers. The National Observatory on Persons with Disabilities, during the session held last July 2019, approved proposals for actions with regard to women with disabilities, including fight against discrimination, prevention of violence, labour, and parenthood.

In October 2017, Italy adopted the Second Biennial Action Program for the Promotion of Rights and Integration of Persons with Disabilities, with a definitive transition to a vision of disability based on respect for human rights, by considering disability not as a result of the subjective qualities of people, but the relationship between people’s characteristics and the way in which the society organizes access and enjoyment of rights, goods and services. For the financial year 2019, the Legislator has taken steps (Act No. 145/2018) to consolidate all the main Funds that impact on the rights and quality of life of persons with disabilities. Also for the financial year 2020, the Government has confirmed Italy's commitment to the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. The 2020 budgetary planning document, in emphasizing the issues related to the protection of persons with disabilities, has provided for the reorganization of the discipline on support in the field of disabilities and non-self-sufficiency, to be carried out through measures ranging from establishment of the Disability Fund to find new resources.

1. *Please describe mechanisms and tools that can be used to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities*.

Italy has activated a Daily Mortality Surveillance System (SiSMG), whose aim is to monitor in real time the number of daily deaths among the elderly population (age 65 and over). In collaboration with the Municipal Registry Office, mortality data is acquired throughout the year through an online entry system. Daily mortality is reconstructed through reports of death sent within 72 hours. The Epidemiology Department (DEP) of Lazio Region manages the daily mortality database to monitor the real-time impact of extreme weather events (heat waves, cold waves, etc.) on health. In addition, a supervisory system is activated in some sentinel structures of the largest urban areas, acting as a surveillance system of access in order to monitor even non-fatal outcomes and support the timely response of hospital emergency services during the heat waves. The system is based on procedures similar to those of the mortality detection system. Monthly and seasonal reports are produced every summer with a summary of the impact of heat waves on health. Since 2017, SiSMG data have been published in a weekly surveillance report throughout the year, in order to identify in a timely manner changes in mortality in the Italian cities included in the plan. These weekly reports allow for a first timely assessment, both of extreme weather events (heat or cold waves) and of flu epidemics. SiSMG is part of the European surveillance network EuroMOMO, which publishes a weekly bulletin on mortality surveillance for 19 European countries.

1. *Please identify and share examples of good practices and challenges in the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of the human rights of persons with disabilities in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. Please include examples that highlight multilateral cooperation and approaches that are implemented in close consultation with and with the active Involvement of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.*

In 2004, the collaboration between the Department of Public Emergency and Civil Defence and the most representative national associations of persons with disabilities produced the handbook "Help for people with disabilities: suggestions for emergency management", which identifies some effective ways to intervene in cases of emergency in favour of people with motor, sensory or cognitive disabilities.

In 2007, as part of a European project, the "Verona Charter on the Rescue of Persons with Disabilities in the event of Disasters" was issued with the involvement of the Civil Protection, local institutions and representatives of the EU Parliament. The Charter identifies the essential foundations of the activities necessary to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk. The Verona Charter highlights the need for a multidimensional approach that takes due account of the various types of disability and degrees of vulnerability, taking care of the differences between people with disabilities, e.g. between those who have improved resilience skills and those who have become disabled due to catastrophic events. This document is central to the national strategy for the rescue of persons with disabilities in the event of disasters, especially for the management of emergency situations in which people with disabilities may find themselves, either as a result of disasters or as a result of human events. Among others, it provides for the following measures:

1. people with disabilities and their organizations must participate in the planning of activities and search for solutions for risk reduction in emergency situations, also according to the various types of disability;
2. the potential of new technologies to support people with disabilities and ensure equal treatment in emergency situations must be fully realised and used;
3. in emergency situations, both the containment of physical damage and the containment of psychological alteration must be taken into account;
4. information, including on safety procedures, must be correct, easily understandable, accessible to all and appropriate, also taking into account the different types of disability;
5. all actors involved in risk management situations and rescue processes should be made aware, informed, trained and motivated to fulfil their responsibilities even when it’s about meeting the needs of people with disabilities in emergency situations.

In 2009 in Tuscany, national associations of disabled people and Cesvot, a voluntary organization of the region, organized the first specific training course for civil protection volunteers involved in the rescue of people with disabilities. The project aimed to train the Voluntary Civil Protection staff who operate in emergency conditions and in situations in which people with disabilities are involved, in order to respond in the best possible way both to the emergency and to the assistance of the people involved. It is also interesting to mention that, following the seismic events that happened in Ascoli Piceno, in 2016 the administration has activated the Project "Disability in Emergency", in collaboration with the Order of Architects and associations of people with disabilities in the area. The Municipality has mapped its territory to know where and how to intervene to help non-autonomous citizens in case of emergency or evacuation, reporting in special data sheets information on the accessibility of the building, degree of autonomy of citizens with disabilities and medical aids used, in order to make rescue more effective in case of intervention or sudden evacuation.

1. *Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action that promotes the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities.*

People who are deaf, or have visual impairment, may not recognize a danger nor hear verbal instructions that intimate evacuation. In this regard, an effective communication system that alerts those with sensory disabilities would allow a more immediate response in emergency situations. It would be appropriate to adopt beeps containing complete information about the subject of communication or the realization of surfaces with tactile references. In addition, all services offered to the general public in emergencies should also be accessible to disabled people. The construction of ramps in shelters, an efficient transport system during evacuation for those with walking difficulties, as well as the accessibility of buildings, should also play a key role. Indeed, construction-type obstacles such as steps, nonlinear paths, the presence of passages of inadequate width or protruding elements that can make a path tortuous and dangerous, as well as the lack of escape measures alternative to the stairs, might slow down and compromise a timely response in case of emergencies. Therefore, buildings should be renovated or re-developed to make them universally usable, escape routes should be designed in order to facilitate the exodus of people with disabilities and specific trainings for the staff involved in the rescue of persons with disabilities should be strengthened.

Italian Authorities take this opportunity to further reiterate their firm willingness to continue full and extensive cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all other relevant UN mechanisms and bodies.