

**Human Rights Council – 12th Special Session -
15 October 2009**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. LAURA MIRACHIAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY**

Mr. President,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Less than two weeks ago this Council deferred the discussion on the Goldstone report to the March session. It was a wise decision, which did not undermine the principle of accountability for the concerned parties, nor underestimated the importance of serious and credible investigations into human rights and humanitarian law violations. This decision was, first and foremost, the recognition that the work of this Council is not isolated but is intertwined with the broader political dynamics linked to the substance of the matter at stake.

By giving time to the parties to be held accountable and to seriously address the human rights violations enlisted in the Goldstone report, the Council would serve the crucial goal of avoiding a confrontational outcome and further complications for the revival of the Peace Process in the Middle East, which remains, and should remain, at the top of our common priorities.

Mr President,

The reasons for this decision are still valid today. We cannot afford the risk of going in a wrong direction.

Mr. President,

Let me briefly refer to the incidents around the Al-Aqsa mosque, just to recall our firm view on the principle of freedom of religion (as already mentioned in the EU Presidency statement).

I would conclude by repeating that Italy supports in any possible way the re-launching of credible negotiations in an atmosphere conducive to their success. We will continue to grant our support to all ongoing diplomatic efforts, inside and outside this Council, towards this goal.

Thank you, Mr. President.