



Conference "The Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Conference: a new era for business?"

(March 15th, 2016)

On 15th March ***"The Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Conference: a new era for business?"***, conference was held in **Milan**, an event which was sponsored in partnership with **Assolombarda, CSR Manager Network, the Global Compact Network Italy Foundation** and the **Sodalitas Foundation**.

2015 was a pivotal year for sustainable development. The new Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September by the United Nations, which aims to address the current economic, social and environmental challenges that are an obstacle to a green and inclusive economic growth for both the current and future generations. The agenda includes, among other things, **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. It ended in December with the cd. Paris Agreement, the twenty-first meeting among the parties within the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (COP 21). The agreement provides for a very ambitious goal: to keep the increase of the planet's global temperature far below 2 ° C, ideally pursuing the goal of + 1.5 ° C.

The main purpose of the conference was to create an opportunity for discussion and joint reflection on the role that the private sector can play in the new and challenging institutional framework for sustainable development described above.

The conference opened with a **message from Lise Kingo - Executive Director** of the **United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)** addressing Italian firms. In the Annual Letter to the participants of the UNGC of 4th February 2016, L. Kingo wrote, *«The adoption of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate have inaugurated a new era for business. The new agreements clearly indicate the road ahead for a sustainable future and have received unprecedented support from governments, firms, civil society and citizens. Therefore, the time has come to turn these agreements into a global movement for a more responsible and sustainable business. The private sector can play a unique and vital role in translating SDGs into new markets, services and sustainable products.»*

The **first round table**, presided over by Alessandro BEDA – Steering Counsellor of the Sodalitas Foundation, was devoted to a **comparison of corporate experiences** about **SDGs**. **Three major Italian firms** brought along their testimonies and were represented by: **Filippo BETTINI**, Director of Sustainability and Risk Governance, Pirelli & C. S.p.A.; **Stefano GARDI**, Director of Sustainable Development, Italcementi Group; **Andrea VALCALDA**, Head of Sustainability, Enel.

The **second round table**, presided over by Fulvio ROSSI – President of the CSR Manager Network, was aimed at an **in depth study of the tools and solutions** that companies can adopt in order to





give maximum deployment to *SDGs* at national and international levels. **Pietro BERTAZZI**, Public Policy and International Affairs Senior Manager, GRI – Global Reporting Initiative; **Vittorio BIONDI**, Director for the Territorial Competitiveness Sector, Environment and Energy of Assolombarda; **Sabina RATTI**, Director, Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation, took part in the roundtable. The two round tables showed some convergence on the following points:

- the importance of an "integrated approach" to sustainable development by the United Nations, governments and institutions, NGOs and civil society, and firms
- the need to support individual actions for sustainable development, multi-stakeholder partnerships and collective action ("global cooperation")
- the importance of the role, even of leadership, of the private sector with respect to the implementation of the *SDGs* and the UN Agenda 2030 (concerning both individual and collective actions, and with reference to the Public Policy Action)
- the request to the firms of every sector to implement concrete actions for the *SDGs*; to measure the progress achieved in relation to every goal; and, to report externally on the outcomes and impacts of their work.

The conference ended with a presentation by Marco FREY, President of the Foundation Global Compact Network Italy, of the **Local SDG Pioneers Program** recently launched by the United Nations Global Compact.

