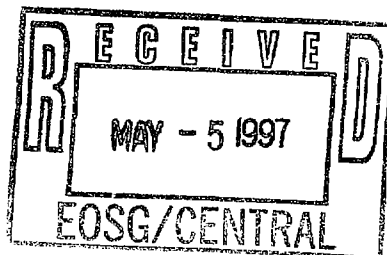


*Italy
Italy Trip (4/97)*



29 April 1997

Excellency,

Upon my return to New York, allow me to express my appreciation, and that of Mrs. Annan and my delegation, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality afforded to us during my first official visit to Italy.

I should like, in particular, to thank you for taking the time to meet with me and for the wonderful lunch you hosted for me at the Quirinale. That encounter, as well as the other meetings I was privileged to have with the Prime Minister, members of the Government, parliamentarians and other leaders of Italian society, reaffirmed my conviction that Italy and the United Nations are engaged in a very special partnership.

The United Nations draws essential support from Italy, not only in terms of financial and human resources but intellectually as well. In this latter respect, allow me to pay tribute to the contributions of Ambassador Fulci, who so ably represents your country in New York.


I was encouraged to find a broad consensus of support for the United Nations across the Italian political spectrum. This consensus is reflected in the decision to lead the multinational humanitarian force in Albania, a decision for which the United Nations and the world are indebted to your country. I am confident that this operation will be a success.

His Excellency
Mr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro
President of the Republic of Italy
Rome

This consensus is also of crucial importance to me as I steer the world organization towards far-reaching reform. I was gratified to hear that all my interlocutors shared my view that reform should be aimed at increasing the relevance and cohesiveness of the United Nations.

Finally, allow me to pay tribute to the magnificence of your country. I used to say that I would like to retire to Tuscany. After having visited Sicily, my heart is divided. I am sure it will be divided further as I get to know other Italian regions.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Kofi A. Annan