**Submission of the Italian Government**

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

*Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights*

**General Discussion on the Draft General Comment on State Obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Context of Business Activities**

The Italian Government refers to the invitation of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to submit written contributions to the General Discussion on the *Draft General Comment on State Obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Context of Business Activities*, to be held on 21 February 2017.

Italy ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1977: as a result, the Covenants became part of Italian domestic law. The Italian Government confirms its commitment to fully comply with its treaty obligations.

The Italian Government also attaches great importance to its obligation to provide protection against human rights abuse by business enterprises domiciled and/or operating within the Italian territory. In December 2016 Italy adopted a **National Action Plan** (2016-2021) for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as part of its efforts to ensure the respect of human rights within economic activities.

This Plan gives special attention to the most vulnerable groups, the rationalization of the domestic legal framework, the raising of awareness by the business world, tackling issues such as ‘caporalato’ and any other form of workers exploitation, also in the context of migration flows governance and policies.

In particular, following public consultations - with experts, business representatives, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and civil society – on the text, we inserted a specific paragraph on human rights defenders, as recalled in § 23 of the Draft General Comment.