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**WCOA Opening Ceremony**  
**November 10, 2014**

More than 140 delegations from all over the world  
More than 200 speakers  
More than 1,460 workdays  
More than 3,900 participants  
Thousands and thousands of emails

Finally, the great moment has arrived!  
(pause)

Distinguished guests, honored speakers and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am touched and deeply honored to give my warmest welcome to all the colleagues and guests arrived from every corner of the world to open this 19<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Accountants.  
On behalf of the Italian profession – Welcome to Rome!

This Congress is held every four years and represents a special and unique opportunity for all of us. It is a long tradition rooted in the past 110 years. This tradition began with the first world congress, held in St. Louis, United States, in the far 1904. CNDCEC and the Italian accountants are proud and honored to become part of this long chain, joining together generations of accounting professionals.

Each congress has a different main theme, that presents innovations and thorny issues, local culture, together with convivial and networking moments. This year the Congress is dedicated to the relation between the past and the future under the title: Learning from the past – building the future.

Which past experiences need to be considered? What future do we want to build? And for whom? These are the major questions that need to be answered.

To this end, I would like to invite you to walk together along ancient and new roads, to cross bridges, and follow the narrow paths and the main avenues that this Congress is opening up for us.

Coming to the numerous sessions of the Congress, I would like to highlight three issues in particular:

- Access to credit, development and social values
- Taxation systems and policies
- Accountability in the public and private sector.

Let's start with the first issue, (*that is*) access to credit, development and social values.

We live in a socially and politically complex reality, and our future horizon cannot be built only with numbers. We must give expression to human creativity and let the social and ethical dimensions of the business activity come to surface. Access to credit, dynamic financing, re-launching and improvement of activities with high innovative potential and social impact are all issues which must be taken into consideration. This is a call to governments, international organizations, lending institutions, and our profession to include these element in their plans and projects.

We come now to the second issue, (*that is*) taxation systems and policies.

This congress will focus on taxation, which, in the past, was rather considered as an issue related to national sovereignty and policies. The development of technologies, market globalization and the presence of multinational market players, result in taxation policies that need to be addressed at a shared level – not only national level, not only European level, but a global vision.

In this context there is need to reflect also on other important issues, such as:

- the ethics and fairness of taxation, and
  - the sustainability of the fiscal pressure for natural and legal persons.
- For all these we need to specify the role of the accountancy profession, as tax experts.

Finally we come to the third issue: (*that is*) accountability in the public and private sector.

A topic that is today more and more discussed is long term sustainability.

Reporting systems and performance of the public entities' are under scrutiny of citizens, oversight authorities and professionals. As we are professionals with specific expertise in accounting, organization and management, we are called to give our contribution on these issues.

At the same time, the society and the profession are increasingly concerned with corporate reporting models focused on communicating more than financial results. In this perspective, integrated reporting intends to improve the nature and quality of the disclosures, explaining how enterprises and organizations are planning to preserve and create value over time.

It is true that we are qualified consultants, auditors and tax experts - but not only.

We have to enhance the social role of our professional category in the regulatory process, in the G8 and G20 fora, and the main international organizations. We have interdisciplinary expertise, we are mediators in financial integration processes, and we generate social value also with our commitment to ethics and legality. We should really try to maximize this social role. We know it, we live it, but we must be able to communicate it to the other market players and to young people – the students of today, the professionals of tomorrow.

The future cannot be built only looking ahead, accelerating and running alone. We can build, mature and believe in a future, only if we start from a deep consideration of the past and make choices with competence and courage on the following:

What should we keep? What should we change?

What should be shared at a wider level? And what should we treasured at all costs?

The future we are building depends also on our commitment to the integration of peoples, working against their decay, that is wished by some.

I wish to address a message to the younger ones: do not stay still, do not wait for your future! Do all you can so that the building you are raising will be sound and resilient, and will inspire generations of future professionals.

Finally, I wish to thank all the delegates that are here today, who with their enthusiasm and energy have surely set another cornerstone for our future.

I hope that these days of study and networking will stimulate commitment and curiosity, courage and faith in seizing the opportunities and challenges that are waiting for us.

Thank you.