TRACCIA ESTRATTA

The Amazon rainforest biome is a vital ecosystem that supports 10% of global biodiversity and 47 million people, including 2 million indigenous people. However, this ecological marvel faces unprecedented threats. Since the 1970s, road construction and agricultural expansion have led to the loss of 17% of the forest. This loss is accompanied by widespread degradation of remaining forests, caused by factors such as illegal or unsustainable selective logging, forest fires, edge effects and droughts.

The Amazon's ecological significance is profound. As a vast carbon storage, it plays a critical role in mitigating climate change by absorbing vast amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. It also regulates regional and global weather patterns, thereby influencing rainfall distribution and air temperature across South America and beyond. Moreover, the Amazon is a biodiversity hotspot, harbouring countless plant and animal species, many of which are endemic to the region.

To address these challenges and safeguard the future of the Amazon biome, it is imperative to have accurate and timely information about its condition. Earth observation technology has emerged as a powerful tool for monitoring forest cover changes. By analysing satellite imagery, scientists can track deforestation rates, identify areas of forest degradation and regrowth, assess the impact of human activities on the ecosystem, and guide effective forest restoration strategies.

Within the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument Global Europe, the AMAZONIA+ programme includes action plans to be implemented in the Amazon Basin countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. As a part of its response to this mounting crisis of the Amazon forest, the European Commission and its member states launched a Team Europe Initiative (TEI) for the Amazon to address some of the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The AMAZONIA+ programme seeks to strengthen the conditions and ability of the Amazon Basin countries to combat deforestation, forest degradation and its main drivers through the promotion of ambitious and effective policy-making and implementation, improved statistics, effective forest monitoring systems, and inter-sectoral, multi-level, multi-actor and regional articulation. The Amazon Fund, currently containing more than USD 700 million donated by the EU, Norway, Germany, and others, has been reactivated in 2023 and now supports a large number of activities related to environment, bio-economy and society, mostly located in the Brazilian Amazon.

The European Union's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has been at the forefront of using satellite data to monitor the Amazon rainforest for more than 30 years. Through its Tropical Moist Forest dataset, the JRC provides detailed information on changes in forest cover, including deforestation, degradation and regrowth. This dataset offers valuable insights into the drivers of deforestation, such as agricultural expansion, infrastructure development and land grabbing. In parallel, the JRC develops the ‘EU Observatory on Deforestation and Forest Degradation’ that aims to provide scientific evidence with regard to global deforestation and forest degradation and related trade.

TRACCE NON ESTRATTE

Dear President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Takaaki KOMATANI san, dear Secretary General, Davide FANTONI, distinguished members of the ICCJ, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, good evening and welcome back to the Embassy for the 2025 General Assembly of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

It is always a great pleasure to host this important meeting and to see so many familiar and new faces, all committed to strengthening the economic ties between Italy and Japan, particularly after the launching, in January 2023, of the Strategic Partnership.

This Partnership is both a great accomplishment, marking the importance of the bilateral relationship, and our starting line for a journey that will bring our bilateral cooperation to a higher level. The compass to navigate in this "new era" is the Joint Action Plan agreed last June by our Prime Ministers on the margins of the G7 Summit in Puglia.

In this framework, last year has been for the whole "*Sistema Italia*" in Japan a critical year to strategically creating new business opportunities among Italian and Japanese companies, as well as enhancing the cooperation in the political and security fields, in the trade and industrial sectors, and in the scientific and cultural domains.

In doing so, the ICCJ has been instrumental to expanding and exploiting the occasions for enhancing the economic ties, strongly contributing to supporting the Italian and Japanese companies in their business activities. This effort, sustained also by the Embassy and conducted under the leadership of Davide Fantoni, resulted in aggregating an impressive number of new members to the Chamber. *Congratulazioni*.

Looking ahead, the current year presents even more chances to further reinforcing the partnership between Italy and Japan. In fact, in a few weeks, Expo Osaka 2025 will open its doors offering for six months an extraordinary opportunity for Italy to highlight its cultural and artistic heritage, its traditional craftsmanship, its unique products, and its technological capabilities.

The Embassy, together with all the relevant Italian institutions, the "Sistema Italia" in Japan and the General Commissioner for Expo, is already working in order to arrange a full and dynamic program meant to display at its best the economic, industrial and cultural assets of our territories.

In the six months of EXPO, we will welcome to Japan many Ministers, all the Italian regional Governors, representatives of a very high number of Italian companies from aerospace and robotics sectors to agriculture, from life sciences and advanced technology to fashion, as well as delegations from research centers and universities.

Expo Osaka will therefore represents a unique opportunity to make the Strategic Partnership between Italy and Japan even more effective and solid and to strengthen the business, industrial and scientific cooperation.

We cannot miss this chance and I am sure that, together with the ICCJ and all its members, we will be able to exploit this opportunity and make this year, once again, a memorable year for the bilateral ties.

Thank you very much for your commitment to expand our bilateral relations and best wishes for a peaceful, happy and successful “year of the snake” to all of you.

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) has proved to be one of the more enduring and important multilateral treaties negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations. Its conclusion was part of an effort undertaken in the early years of the United Nations to put customary international law into treaty form. The drafters of the U.N. Charter identified such an effort as a key task of the new international organization. “The General Assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations,” the Charter recites, aimed at “encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification.” Acting under this mandate, the General Assembly created an International Law Commission (ILC) and tasked it with analyzing customary law on particular issues and, on the basis of states’ practices, to formulate multilateral treaties. In the realm of relations between states, two issues were identified: diplomatic relations and consular relations. Consular relations was identified as early as 1949 as a key issue. U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie highlighted the need for uniform regulation of the work of consuls at a time when communication and transport were growing and increased trade could be anticipated. From 1949, the ILC focused on consular relations, and by 1957 the special rapporteur on the topic, Jaroslav Zourek, produced a report containing draft articles. The ILC itself forged Zourek’s draft articles into a draft of its own. Viewing the work of the ILC as promising, the General Assembly decided to convoke a conference. In the spring of 1963, the U.N. Conference on Consular Relations met in Vienna, with ninety-two states. Given that many colonial territories had yet to gain independence, this number represented nearly the entirety of the states of the world. A precedent had been set for work on consular relations by the ILC’s work on diplomatic relations. An ILC draft on diplomatic relations resulted in a conference of states in Vienna in 1961, leading to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR).

The role of consuls in providing protection to sending-State nationals under arrest has proved to be one of the more problematic issues covered in the VCCR. Historically, and to the present day, protection of nationals arrested abroad has been a key function of consuls. Arrest in a foreign state presents great difficulties requiring assistance from consular officials. Consuls can ensure the well-being of a sending-State national under arrest by facilitating contact with relatives in the sending State, arranging for legal representation, and following judicial proceedings to monitor compliance with procedural rights by the courts of the receiving State. The receiving State is obligated under the VCCR to facilitate this protection work of consuls. Most significant, the receiving State must inform a foreign national under arrest of the right to communicate with a home-state consul.