



GIUSEPPE MISTRETTA

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Ambassador Giuseppe Mistretta – the Italian senior official with the longest direct experience and service in Africa (almost 20 years) – is currently serving as Director for Sub-Saharan Africa at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Before this position, he was Ambassador of Italy in Ethiopia and Ambassador of Italy in Angola. Over the years and thanks to his experience on the Continent, he has developed a strong and extensive network of contacts with African leaders and officials, especially during his tenure as Ambassador to the African Union and IGAD.

He holds a degree, cum laude, in Political Science and International Relations from “La Sapienza” University in Rome, Italy. He speaks English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. He is married and has two daughters. He has published several books and essays regarding Africa (Mistretta G., 2021, *Africa’s pathways. The future of the Continent through Europe, Italy, China and New Actors* – Foreword by Romano Prodi, recently published in English by LUISS University Press); “*La Bottega degli Alibi*” published by LuoghInteriori, 2020; “*I noti ospiti*”, published by Greco e Greco, 2018; a touristic guide entitled “*Un Paese moderno al centro dell’Africa*” published by Polaris, 2014; “*Un ponte lungo quattro secoli*” published by Gangemi, 2013; “*Nel Paese chiamato Alebri*” published by Albatros, 2012; “*Per conto del nero*” published by Borla, 2002.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

October 2017 – to date

Director for Sub-Saharan Africa at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

In his capacity as Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, Amb. Mistretta has a crucial role in proposing and implementing Italian national policies towards the region, where Italy has been increasing its political visits, investments and initiatives in recent years. He is responsible of all the desk offices (30 people staff) that implement and monitor Italian policies in the region and he contributes to the allocation related to the development cooperation budget towards the region, amounting annually to nearly 200 million euros. He maintains regular contacts with leaders and top officials from African countries and the African Union. He oversees the Italian African Peace Facility (10 million euro over the last three years), a financial tool designed to assist the African Union with projects in the peace and security sector, maintaining regular working relations with AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. He also proposed the creation of the position an Italian Permanent Representative to the African Union, making Italy the

only Member State to have a dedicated Representative to the AU and confirming our strong partnership with the Continent. In his current capacity, Ambassador Mistretta has been supervising, among other things, Italian bilateral relations with the Horn of Africa countries: Sudan, which he visited several times, during the current political and economic transition; South Sudan, with special regard to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' support to the mediation carried out by the Community of Sant'Egidio; Somalia, whose institutional and economic transition Italy has always supported, most recently through a bridge loan to Mogadishu; Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Kenya, by maintaining with them an intense political dialogue. In December 2020, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a policy paper on the Italian strategy in the African Continent, "A partnership with Africa", with a leading role of the Sub-Saharan Africa Department in its drafting, and which includes a paragraph dedicated to our geographic priorities in the Horn of Africa. In the last three and a half years, Amb. Giuseppe Mistretta took part in all the EU COAFR meetings at the level of Directors and, accordingly, he perfectly knows the main topics of the European policies about Africa and its regions.

March 2014 – September 2017

Ambassador of Italy to Ethiopia, South Sudan and Djibouti, with accreditation to the African Union, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and UNECA.

During his mission as Italian Ambassador to Ethiopia, South Sudan and Djibouti, Amb. Mistretta maintained also regular contacts with the African Union, the several UN Institutions and Agencies present in Ethiopia and IGAD. As the Italian Co-Chair of the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), he participated regularly in IGAD Summits, in particular those dedicated to the South Sudan peace process. During his mandate, he established regular exchanges with the leaders of Ethiopia and the wider region, developing an extensive network of contacts with the local leadership. He had constant exchanges with AU Commissioners and the UNECA Executive Secretary. He managed a staff of 90 people, an administrative budget and development aid projects worth over 350 million USD over 3 years and a half. He devoted special attention to the empowerment of collaborators and gender balance, making them fully aware of their importance in reaching the common goal, at the same time providing them with suggestions and advice. He wrote one book dedicated to Ethiopia.

August 2009 – March 2014

Ambassador of Italy to Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe

As Ambassador of Italy to Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe, Amb. Mistretta established working relations not only with all institutional actors, government officials and members of the Parliament and of the Military, but also with representatives of the business community, major cultural organizations, civil society and NGOs, foreign and national press. He managed a 30 people staff, with an administrative budget and development aid projects worth over 50 million USD over 4 years and a half.

He wrote two books dedicated to Angola.

August 2005 – August 2009

Head of the Far East Office (China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia), Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

During this time, Amb. Mistretta travelled extensively in Asia, accompanying Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, contributing to strengthen Italy's political and economic relationship with China, Japan and South Korea, also through the conclusion of several bilateral agreements.

August 2001 – August 2005

First Counsellor, Embassy of Italy in London

At the Italian Embassy in London, he took up the duties of Head of the Consular Section, overseeing the activity of the Italian Consulates in the U.K. and coordinating the assistance to the Italian community in the country, one of the largest in Europe.

October 1997 – July 2001**First Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Italy in Tripoli**

At the Italian Embassy in Tripoli, Amb. Mistretta played a key role, as Deputy Head of Mission, in a period of particularly intense relations between Libya and Italy, with frequent bilateral visits and a significant increase in Italian Foreign Direct Investments in a wide array of sectors.

November 1994 – October 1997**First Secretary at the Directorate General for Migration and Social Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Upon relocation to the Ministry's Headquarters, Amb. Mistretta contributed significantly to the Italian migration policy.

August 1990 – November 1994**Consul of Italy in Detroit, U.S.A. (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana)**

As Consul of Italy, he organized, among other things, a fundraising campaign to renew the Italian rooms of the Detroit Institute of Art, where still exists a plate in memory of this endeavor.

October 1987 – August 1990**First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Italy in Kinshasa**

During his first diplomatic post overseas, Amb. Mistretta assumed at a very young age the duty of Deputy Head of Mission in Kinshasa, taking full responsibility over a number of areas, including the relevant development cooperation projects.

March 1984 – October 1987

Entered Diplomatic Career, Second Secretary at the Political Affairs Directorate (Africa Department), Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.