Thanks to the Mayor, thanks to the Art Direction of the Festival and to the Art Direction of the project being inaugurated today, the Museum of Non Humanity, for inviting me here.

Your invitation made me very glad. I am glad to be here to remember an era that is luckily gone: the times when our country saw me being nominated as the first black minister in the history of the republic. Back then, some people reacted with disbelief. They could not accept that a black woman might represent Italy, and compared that woman to an animal. They threw banana peels and toy animals at that woman.

Those episodes, chronicled in this exhibition as a past example of discrimination that eventually disappeared, bring to mind the discrimination between human and non-human, between human and animal, as a way to indicate someone’s unfounded inferiority and to encourage racial hate.

Incredibly, one of the people who most vehemently gave a voice to hate speech, comparing a minister to a sub-human, was the then Vice President of the Senate. Even more incredibly, he was allowed to keep his role, and the Senate itself protected him from trial. Luckily the trial did eventually take place thanks to the Constitutional Court, and that politician got the conviction he deserved.

That historical judgement, together with the endless fight by all the anti-racist movements, allowed us to get to where we are today. All these things that happened at the beginning of this century would be impossible today: any person representing an institution and promoting racial hate would have to resign, because of popular indignation, even before legal intervention.

Today, at last, in our institutions, anyone, whatever their skin colour, their history and background, Italian-born or not, can represent our country.

Today, as you know, young Europeans move to Africa to embrace its thousands and thousands of opportunities, and at the same time young Africans move to Europe. This kind of mobility does not generate xenophobia any longer. On the contrary, any xenophobic episode based on the discrimination between human and non-human would be condemned by the citizens first and foremost, even quicker than by laws, and it would have no consensus, because today we are all perfectly aware that a new flare-up of this divergence would doom our planet to self-destruction.