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Opinion

Regeneration, inclusion, innovation: Rome aims to host World Expo 2030

By Romeo Orlandi

A STROLL through downtown Rome is enough to understand why the city earned the title of "Eternal City," and how well deserved it is. Its many and deep layers of history co-exist folded together and overlapping in a harmonious whole. This historical stratification is invaluable for scholars, unique for the city's proud inhabitants and fascinating for tourists from all over the world. For more than 2,000 years, the [capital of Italy](#) has offered an example of awe-inspiring continuity, of thriving splendor and of a profound and diverse artistic richness. Now, this city has offered its candidacy to host the [World Expo](#) for the year 2030.



[Romeo Orlandi](#) CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Yet, the city did not base its proposal just on the potential for strong mediatic impact, nor did it intend to capture global attention merely by invoking Rome's universal, historic fame. Instead, it opted for a distinctive, succinct programmatic slogan that implies a clearly defined and comprehensive commitment: "People and territories: [Urban regeneration](#), inclusion and innovation." This formula addresses a challenge that is common to all countries, and relevant to the international community. It reflects the recommendations of the [United Nations](#) and of the most important multilateral forums today. Indeed, the themes selected by Rome concern the whole planet because they point to unavoidable issues that will need to be addressed worldwide. The program's implementation is manifold as it includes development, diversity, sustainability, mobility and digital connectivity. Rome intends to address these issues while at the same time stimulating dialogue, developing consensual solutions and pointing to a collective path.

The city of Rome is the metropolis with the highest number of green spaces in [Europe](#). Its urban parks, historic villas, gardens and nature reserves provide a precious balance, an integration of its citizens with nature that is centuries old. Furthermore, with its mild climate, it is the largest agricultural municipality in Europe. Intensive cultivation of edible crops within the city limits generates both employment and income. The resources used — water, raw materials, fertilizers — traditionally change only with the seasons' cycle, in keeping with an ancient tradition of mutual respect and shared prosperity. Here too, the legacy of the past is not a burden but rather an inspiration, a springboard rather than a spectacle.

Rome has valued diversity since ancient times. Diversity has increased over time, becoming a fertile path to growth and cultural enrichment. Rome — in the center of the [Mediterranean](#), at the crossroad of three continents — has attracted ideas and talents that have found multiple ways to express themselves. The extraordinary conglomeration of art and civilization we can find in Rome would not have been possible without a culture of sharing and welcoming. Throughout the districts of the city, and in the streets crowded with foreign visitors, the international and inclusive character of the capital is still clear today. The result is a unique blend of history, nature and people reflected in the quality of life, in the constantly renewed beauty, in the harmony of architecture and landscape.

The site chosen by the city of Rome to host the World Expo 2030 (were this task to be given to Rome by the Bureau [International des Expositions](#) in the vote next year in [Paris](#)) is located in a large, fully equipped area on the outskirts of the city, adjacent to one of its university campuses. This site truly represents the excellence of the scientific community's contribution to Rome's candidacy. The event is expected to take place in full compliance with the most stringent sustainability standards, with zero carbon dioxide emissions, reuse of materials, and respect for the life cycle of water, air and energy.

The Roma 2030 logo is a stylized arch, which changes color and gives life to infinite combinations. It is an NFT (non-fungible token), in other words, a non-reproducible work of art. It connotes the solidity and elegance of ancient Roman monuments while embodying the reality of the digital present. It powerfully communicates its originating concept: the arch allows entry, it is an open door for new and different inputs and influences. It also suggests a joint path, and a range of opportunities such as the co-creation of the various national pavilions. Rome expects that by the end of 2030, 30 million visitors will have passed through that arch, in order to admire the exhibition pavilions of 150 countries.

For work and pleasure, I often visit [Asia](#). Every time I am in touch with the [Philippines](#), I see constant signs of growth, progress, modernity. I find this country, like many other Italians, fascinating and also rich in history, culture and welcoming traditions. I have always noticed a special attention in the Philippines toward [Italy](#) (this year we celebrate the momentous 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations) and especially Rome. Our bond is further strengthened by the presence of a numerous, well-integrated and hardworking Filipino community in Italy, famous for its professionalism and dedication and whose welfare, traditions and ways of life will always find in Italy a friendly and respectful haven. I therefore hope that Filipino visitors — tourists, students, business people — will be able to continue to appreciate the countless attractions of the Eternal City — art, food, shopping, universities, economic opportunities — and, in 2030, to immerse themselves in the experience of a truly forward-looking Expo based on sustainability and inclusivity, in Rome.

Romeo Orlandi is the special ambassador for Asia on the World Expo 2030 Roma bid committee.