

UNIDO Goodwill Ambassadors Ceremony, 14 October 2004

Statement by Mr. Mohanty, Principal Adviser to DG

Mr. President, Director-General, Managing Directors, Sir Ronald Grierson, Mr. Mamadou Mansour Cama, Excellencies, distinguished representatives of the Member States and friends,

Good morning.

It is also a privilege for me to welcome you all to the ceremony where two eminent international personalities will be designated UNIDO Goodwill Ambassadors.

As all of you know, since 1998, we in UNIDO have been engaged under the leadership of our Director-General, Mr. Magariños in implementing a comprehensive reform programme – both organizational and programmatic reform – which, I believe, has sharpened the agency's focus and improved the substance of its technical cooperation activities. The results have been quite encouraging and are reflected in the agency's financial stability, the relative job security of its employees, the increased level of its annual technical assistance delivery and steady increases in the voluntary contributions received from the donors.

In this situation it is perhaps natural to be complacent, it is somehow tempting to think that all is well with the organization, and given this feel-good factor, forget that less than a decade ago, an international commission – I think it was the Commission on Global Governance – had concluded that UNIDO, along with UNCTAD, had become superfluous and therefore should be abolished; and some of the Member States went as far as questioning the continued relevance of a specialized UN agency dedicated to promoting industrial development in countries with developing and transition economies.

What this really means is that we cannot afford to rest on our laurels; it means that not only should we do useful and relevant work, we should also at the same time take pains to inform the world of our activities and achievements. The best way to do this is to have honest friends, eminent personalities who have distinguished themselves in trade and industry and also in their personal lives and show them our work, request their advice and honest and objective opinion if our activities are on the right track, in line with the requirements of the intended beneficiaries; and if they are convinced of their relevance and usefulness, to request them to tell others – especially the donor Governments, decision-makers, the press, the civil society and the international community – about the good and relevant work that UNIDO is doing in various fields.

In other words, we need to have eminent personalities as our Goodwill Ambassadors who can undertake both advisory and advocacy functions and help us in our tasks.

We are happy and grateful that at the request of our Director-General, five distinguished persons from different regions of the world have agreed to be our Goodwill Ambassadors. Two of them – Sir Ronald GRIERSON and Mr. Mamadou Mansour CAMA – have honoured us by their presence here today and three others – Mr. Yongtu LONG from China, Mr. Jorge Alberto BLANCO VILLEGAS from Argentina and Mr. Peter SUTHERLAND, former Director-General of WTO from Ireland – are expected to come to Vienna on 5 November for a similar ceremony. We thank them for accepting our Director-General's offer and for agreeing to spare so much of their valuable time to help us.

On behalf of all my colleagues in UNIDO I also thank the distinguished representatives of Member States for attending the ceremony.

I thank you all for your attention.