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Madras University honours UNIDO Director General

Vienna, 8 September 2008 – The University of Madras, India, conferred the Honorary Doctor of Literature degree on Dr. Kandeh K. Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), along with Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Congress President and Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance, and Dr. M. Karunanidhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on the occasion of the special convocation and valedictory function of 150th year celebrations of the University.

The University citation read out by Prof. S. Ramachandran, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras, stated that the honorary title had been conferred for the Director-General's:

- Eminence and focus on manufacturing as a dynamic force of rapid economic transformation, with an accent on fostering economically efficient, ecologically friendly and socially desirable pattern of sustainable development
- People-centred management style that makes his colleagues work with dignity, honesty and integrity
- Re-definition of the mandate of UNIDO with practical foresight and orientation of its core programmes and reforms of its practices
- Total commitment to promote South-South cooperation as a compliment to North-South cooperation.

In his acceptance speech Dr. Yumkella, said “Knowledge is a source. And, innovation is a force, which propels the wheels of socio-economic transformation in societies. Universities are playing an increasingly important role in generating new knowledge, which is commercialised by dynamic firms. The skills and capabilities today stem from an interactive framework between universities, institutions and enterprises. Such an interactive framework is the nerve centre of national and sectoral innovation systems and the basis for sustainable wealth and employment creation.” He added, “ In an internationally competitive environment, it is not the question of survival of the biggest or smallest. It is a question of the survival of the fastest. The fastest are those who interact with centres of excellence. European Universities were established 600 years before the industrial revolution. The then pattern of industrial production did not require the type of skills and knowledge generated by those universities. The origin of the industrial revolution took place in a small workshop and not in the classroom. Today's innovative ideas stem from the classrooms of universities. This process necessarily implies that the major focus of policy initiative should be on the temples of learning. Now, the process of industrial development is not driven by resource endowments alone. It is now largely driven by knowledge,

technology, skills, information and networking.”

The Director-General wished the University of Madras well in its endeavour to generate new knowledge, skills, capabilities and networks with the corporate sector as major sources of dynamic growth. He also saluted all who have worked so hard for the University during the last 150 years, making it the great University it is today. He also mentioned that what the University has so far accomplished is a journey of great achievements. But this is not the end of the journey. The University has a great future. He expressed his confidence that it would continue to grow from strength to strength and that the roots of the 150-year-old tree will make all the branches of University bear more fruits.

For more information:

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About UNIDO

UNIDO is a specialized agency of the United Nations system that works towards improving the quality of life of the world's poor by helping countries achieve sustainable industrial development. UNIDO views industrial development as a means of creating employment and income to overcome poverty. It helps developing countries and economies in transition to produce goods they can trade on the global market. It also helps provide the tools – training, technology, and investment – to make them competitive. At the same time, it encourages production processes that will neither harm the environment nor place too heavy a burden on a country's limited energy resources. UNIDO has 172 Member States and has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. More information is available at www.unido.org