Africa Day Celebration 2015: “The United Nations Industrial Development Programmes in Africa: The journey so far and what’s next?”

Excellencies,
Honorable guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my sincere pleasure to take part in this year’s Africa Day Celebration. Please allow me to thank the Africa Group in Vienna and in particular H.E. A. A. Ayoko, Ambassador of the Republic of Nigeria, for inviting me.

This year’s Africa day celebration brings about a renewed opportunity to reinforce the partnership for prosperity between, African countries, the African Union and the United Nations family.

I would like to seize this opportunity to commend the continuous support that the African Union has rendered to UNIDO over the last decades and reaffirm our strong commitment to support the African Union 2063 development agenda and related strategies.

Today’s theme: “The United Nations Industrial Development Programmes in Africa: The journey so far and what’s next?” is really opportune as it is central in the discussion shaping the post-2015 development agenda. It is an important recognition of the critical role played by industrialization as the main engine of economic growth, a major factor of poverty eradication and job creation.

Indeed, Africa has recorded an annual average growth rate of 5 per cent over the past decade, with some countries reaching more than 7 per cent. However, this continuous solid growth, based mainly on commodity exports and the extractive industries, has demonstrated significant limits in terms of socio-economic transformation, inclusiveness and economic resilience. In
addition, 60 percent of Africa’s unemployed are women and young people, representing a
tremendous untapped work force potential.

At UNIDO, we are profoundly convinced that there can be no long-term development without
placing industrialization at the centre of countries’ economic transformation. Industry increases
productivity, stimulates job creation and generates income, thereby providing opportunities for
social inclusion, including safe and universal energy access, food security, access to clean water
and sustainable agricultural production. We know this because we have seen it happen in various
countries.

UNIDO’s mandate of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID), given to the
Organization by its Member States in the landmark Lima Declaration adopted at our last General
Conference, highlights the critical role of industrialization in accelerating economic growth and
broader socio-economic development. ISID has been widely and increasingly recognized as a
distinctive contribution and key tool to support the structural transformation process of African
countries while safeguarding the environment and promoting social development.

Furthermore, by encompassing the three dimensions of sustainable development, ISID has
anchored UNIDO at the forefront of the post 2015 development agenda and its underlying
sustainable development goals, which include SDG 9: ‘Build resilient infrastructure, promote
inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation’. Indeed, building vibrant and
systematic partnerships with all development actors represents a crucial prerequisite for the
successful implementation of a transformative agenda for Africa.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The relevance of UNIDO’s mandate and mission has never been stronger and we are very
grateful to all of you for your strong support throughout the deliberations of the past few years
which have led to the recognition of the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrialization.
We note with great satisfaction that UNIDO’s mandate - Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development - is in line with both the Common African Position (CAP) on the Post - 2015 Development Agenda, and your vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa set out in Agenda 2063.

I therefore firmly believe that you will continue to play a most significant role in ensuring that Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization is part of the final document of the Post- 2015 Development Agenda, and the recommended SDGs

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For decades, UNIDO and the African Union have been trusted partners and have together sought to play a catalytic role in contributing to the continent’s sustained growth. UNIDO actively supported the development and execution of tailor-made regional industrial policies and strategies in all the economic regions of Africa. As such, within the context of the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA), UNIDO is assisting the African Union Commission (AUC) towards the implementation of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA) and the Accelerated Agribusiness and Agro- industries Development Initiative (3ADI).

As the specialized agency of the United Nations system mandated to support inclusive and sustainable industrial development, and encouraged by the strong commitment to industrialization of many leaders of African countries, UNIDO adopts a holistic yet customized approach to meet the industrial development needs of its Member States, providing a range of services including policy advice, technical cooperation, normative and convening functions and the promotion of partnerships. The programmes implemented by UNIDO cover SME creation and entrepreneurship development, rural electrification, agribusiness, food safety and trade capacity building, ultimately increasing productive capacities, competitiveness and market access.
Likewise, in close cooperation with African governments, the Organization provides tailored analytical and advisory services for the creation of an enabling business-friendly environment allowing all parts of the population to become active agents of development.

Any progress on poverty eradication will be short-lived if not done within an environmentally sustainable framework. Consequently, UNIDO encourages the use of clean energy and energy efficient technologies as a core determinant of economic competitiveness and sustained growth.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

As a way to effectively implement the post-2015 agenda in support of Africa’s industrialization, new partnerships and implementation models are required. UNIDO’s Programme for Country Partnerships (PCP), which is currently being piloted in Ethiopia and Senegal, addresses current challenges, including the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination, and thus presents an effective and efficient partnership model for operationalizing SDG 9.

This new approach, through this Programme for Country Partnerships, aims at increasing resource mobilization and strengthening cooperation between Governments, development finance institutions and the private sector with the goal to establish workable frameworks that will scale up and speed up the process of inclusive and sustainable industrialization to generate strong national capacities to eradicate poverty. In this regard, it is our hope that the results of our PCP’s interventions will be replicated all over the African continent.

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Much remains to be done to generate inclusive growth and create sustainable jobs and livelihoods. Yet, I would like to reiterate my commitment that UNIDO will continue to assist the African Union in prioritizing structural transformation for inclusive and people-centered
development on the continent and to “optimize the use of Africa's resources for the benefits of all Africans”, in accordance with the African Union’s Agenda 2063. In addition, let me ensure you that UNIDO will remain strongly engaged in all processes leading to Industrialization in Africa, a land of hope, a land of prosperity.

The shift to an industry-driven African economy should not be delayed anymore.

I wish you a very successful Africa Day Celebration 2015