Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you, distinguished Legal Advisers, to the Vienna International Centre and to the Headquarters of UNIDO.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. Two thousand and fifteen is also a special year for UNIDO. It was 50 years ago that the General Assembly of the United Nations agreed to establish, within the United Nations, an autonomous organization for the promotion of industrial development, to be known as UNIDO. Twenty years later, in 1985, the Constitution of UNIDO entered into force and UNIDO became the 17th specialized agency of the United Nations.

These anniversaries provide an opportunity for us to take stock of the changes that have taken place and of the many challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.
As UNIDO commemorates 30 years as a specialized agency, we are actively engaged in the shaping of the post-2015 development agenda. We are committed to the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the implementation of UNIDO’s mandate to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID).

More than ever, industrialization is central to the global fight against poverty, food insecurity, and social inequality and polarization. Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development: social equity, economic growth, and environmental protection.

I am mindful, however, that UNIDO’s mandate to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) relies on an important pillar, a pillar that is common to all organization in the United Nations system.

Like every member of the United Nations family, UNIDO is firmly committed to respect for, and progressive development of, International Law, which is one of the founding pillars of the United Nations. As the Preamble to the Charter makes clear, the members of the United Nations are determined "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained".
I believe that meetings such as the present one contribute to this objective. And, in so doing, the necessary coordination and support that is required to achieve organizational mandates is strengthened.

As a specialized agency with a global mandate and global activities, UNIDO is keenly aware that it cannot work effectively without appropriate legal frameworks that protect the independence and integrity of its operations, assets, and personnel.

Like other specialized agencies, UNIDO is both a beneficiary and a steward of international conventions and system-wide legal standards and practices. UNIDO, however, also knows that its own actions may have legal consequences for the rest of the United Nations system, just as the actions of other agencies may have consequences for UNIDO.

UNIDO cares in particular about legal developments that touch on the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. UNIDO also cares about actions or positions of states and other entities, whether public or private, governmental or commercial, which may hinder the ability of United Nations organizations to meet their objectives or which undermine their financial interests.
And we wish to learn about judicial decisions or arbitral awards, whether national or international, that might affect our understanding of our legal rights, obligations, and relations.

These are just some examples. There are many other areas of legal practice of the United Nations and our sister agencies that is of interest and concern to UNIDO.

I am, therefore, very pleased that UNIDO has the privilege of hosting this year’s meeting of Legal Advisers. Vienna is a city with a long history of successful international meetings and conferences. I look forward to learning about your exchange of ideas and information, and about your suggestions to further our understanding of the collective law and practice of the United Nations system. I wish you good luck in your deliberations.