

UNIDO General Conference 2019: Ireland's National Statement

Mr President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and delivers these remarks in its national capacity.

Firstly, allow me to take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to you, Mr President¹, and to thank our hosts for their wonderful hospitality.

The theme of this year's General Conference is *Industry 2030 – Innovate. Connect. Transform our Future* and Ireland is certainly in agreement that innovation and increasing connection are essential for transformative change.

In February of this year, Ireland launched our new policy for international development, *A Better World*. The Sustainable Development Goals set out an ambitious view of the world we want to live in by 2030. Ireland, and the European Union, have placed the SDGs at the heart of our approach to international development, and this is reflected in our new policy.

This policy provides the framework for the Irish Government's commitment to reach the international target for overseas development assistance of 0.7% of GNI by 2030. In doing so, our investments will focus on the furthest behind first. Ireland has chosen to concentrate on a few areas in which we believe we can make a real difference including gender equality, governance, climate action and reducing humanitarian need.

The new policy focuses on conflict prevention, sustainable food systems, health and education, and dealing with humanitarian emergencies. It raises the emphasis on gender and climate action across Ireland's international development programme. And it reinforces Ireland's contribution to multilateralism where countries co-operate for the greater good. Climate change, terrorism, inequality and migration are worldwide challenges, and we cannot solve them on our own.

The multilateral system is needed now more than ever as we take on these challenges, yet it is also under unprecedented strain. Ireland is committed to supporting and strengthening the multilateral system, through our support for international accords such as the Paris Agreement, the Global Compact on Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals. Our ongoing contribution to

¹ H.E. Mr Suhail Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Industry of the UAE

peacekeeping and international development, and our determined efforts to participate on and shape the work of the UN Security Council also demonstrate our commitment to multilateralism.

Trade is central to economic growth and poverty reduction. Virtually every country that has achieved sustained economic growth has done so by opening up their economies. However, many low-income countries are still confronted by major obstacles in expanding and diversifying their trade. In recognition of the important role of trade and economic growth, Ireland supports a range of initiatives and programmes at national and international level aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries to expand and benefit from international trade.

UNIDO's focus on sustainability and the climate and its recognition of the vital importance of gender equality echo Ireland's own values and priorities. During a very fruitful visit to Ireland in April of this year, Director General LI Yong himself noted that with the publication of our new development policy, Ireland and UNIDO's priorities, areas of intervention, and regional focus have never been more aligned.

In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the organisation's new gender strategy. Ireland recognises and commends Director General's Li's strong personal and professional commitment to placing gender at the heart of everything UNIDO does. We look forward to working together to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Ireland has also launched a new strategy for our partnership with Small Island Developing States. As a small country, we know how powerful we can be when our friends understand our concerns and work with us to address them. In facing the climate challenge of a generation, deepening our partnerships is essential to help us face an uncertain future together. As part of the new strategy, we will work closely with Small Island States in international processes, particularly at the UN, to coordinate action to address shared challenges on climate change and the blue economy.

We are happy to see that UNIDO shares our view of the importance of the Small Island Developing States and has developed its own SIDS strategy. Ireland is pleased to co-sponsor the resolution entitled "UNIDO and Small Island Developing States" and we urge UNIDO to continue its work to support the sustainable development efforts of SIDS, to address climate change, reduce poverty and inequalities and to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge that the implementation of UN Development System reform has changed the context in which both Ireland and UNIDO operate. Ireland is entirely supportive of the reforms, and welcome the opportunities it offers for greater collaboration and efficacy.

[Thank you]