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SLOVENIA

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you, Minister Suhail Al Mazrouei, for your election as the President of the Eighteenth UNIDO General Conference and wish you every success in discharging your duties. In addition to what will be said on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make several remarks on behalf of Slovenia. First, let me say a few words about Slovenia; around 21.000 km² big country which lies between the Mediterranean Sea, the southern part of the Alps and the Pannonian Plain. It has a population of 2 million, who generated nearly 50 billion euros of GDP in 2018. Slovenia is proud member of EU and EURO zone. Around 60 % of our territory is covered by forests and green, circular and sustainable economy is very much in focus. On the other hand, Slovenia is third most industrialized country among EU member states - more than 20% of GDP is generated by industry. Because of 48 kilometers of Adriatic coastline, modern spas and beautiful mountains, tourism is also among the most important industries. And by the way, we are the current European Basketball Champions and Vice-Champions in Volleyball.

Mr. President,

The world is facing one of the most challenging periods in economic and industrial transformation, called Industry 4.0. But not only industries also societies all over the world are facing major challenges and the answer could be the concept Society 5.0. This new paradigm shifts aims at transforming industries and societies and has a potential to reduce inequalities and raise quality of life, including preservation of natural resources, climate and biodiversity globally. At its core are the enabling emerging technologies such as robotisation, blockchain, big data, internet of things and of course artificial intelligence, which already have a huge impact on certain industries. Improved methods of production and business models will inevitably lead to higher productivity and better competitiveness of the companies in many industrial sectors. And by transferring those concepts into everyday life, a technology-based human-centered society can be build. Yet, significant challenges still remain.

We believe that collaboration, creation of value chains, connecting different stakeholders and adaptation of education and skills strategies will be needed to ensure that "no one is left behind". In these endeavors the role of UNIDO will be indispensable.

We are of the view, that by actively promoting the innovation, potentials of new technologies, knowledge and experience sharing among different stakeholders, UNIDO is well - positioned and well - equipped to build awareness on achieving inclusive and sustainable industrial development and Sustainable Development Goals through opportunities offered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Innovative solutions can substantially improve access to production facilities and organization of processes at lower social, economic and environmental costs.

Turning to Slovenian achievements, I would like to highlight the development of strong value chains in nine smart specialization areas of Slovenian economy, which can be shared through UNIDO to other countries in support of strengthening their economies, competitiveness, diversity and resilience. As a "green destination" Slovenia is also active in areas of renewable energy, green technologies, conservation of biodiversity and other sustainable development projects, where we can also offer smart solutions towards responsible management of resources and transition to circular economy.

Mr. President,

I would now like to turn to one of the core activities of UNIDO, which is technical cooperation. Slovenia has been a long-standing supporter of these crucial UNIDO's activities. Our extra-budgetary contributions between 2005 and 2018 amount to almost 6 million Euro. In fact, within UNIDO Slovenia remains one of the biggest per capita contributors to technical cooperation projects.

We particularly support UNIDO's activities in Western Balkans, which remains one of the priority regions for Slovenia's International Development Cooperation. Recently, we expanded our cooperation with UNIDO to the region of North Africa and It is on the African continent that we see many opportunities for our future cooperation.

There are currently five ongoing technical cooperation projects financed by Slovenia. They are all in their final stages of their implementation. We are presently discussing our support to two new projects to take place in the European Neighborhood.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I would also like to say that Slovenia appreciates all gender mainstreaming efforts by the UNIDO Secretariat to date. Its efforts aimed at both achieving gender equality among its staff and more systematic mainstreaming of gender equality into its programs and projects are mostly appreciated and strongly supported by my country. We also welcome the personal engagement of UNIDO Director General in the field of gender equality, particularly for being very active Gender Champion.

Finally, let me say that the UNIDO has been always at the forefront of promoting industrial development for poverty eradication, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability. Slovenia therefore deeply values activities of the UNIDO and is grateful to the Director General and the Secretariat for their untiring and valuable work.

We will continue to actively support UNIDO in achieving its noble goals. In that sense, we also count on the support of other Member States in endorsing our candidature for membership in the Industrial Development Board for the period 2019-2023.

Let me conclude with a quote from Michelangelo: **“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.”**

Let's set high, ambitious goals for the common good.

Thank you.