



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE  
18<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNIDO**

**ABU DHABI  
NOVEMBER 2019**

**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO BE DELIVERED AT THE 18<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNIDO IN ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ON 3 NOVEMBER 2019**

**Mr President,**

On behalf of the Government of South Africa, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 18th session of the General Conference of UNIDO, as well as other members of the bureau on their election. You can count on the support of my delegation as you preside over this important session.

Similarly, we would like to express appreciation to the people and the Government of the United Arab Emirates for the warm hospitality received as well as the Secretariat for its excellent efforts in preparing for this session.

We welcome the participation of Antigua and Barbuda, the Federated States of Micronesia and the State of Palestine for the first time as members at the General Conference.

South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China respectively. In this connection, we welcome the Republic of Azerbaijan newest member of the Group of 77 and China.

**Mr President,**

The theme of this General Conference, “Industry 2030 – Innovate. Connect. Transform our Future”, indicates UNIDO’s endeavours in ensuring that no one is left behind in the technological progress that drives economic growth, job creation, income generation, and social inclusion.

**Mr President,**

My delegation commends Director-General, Mr Li Yong, for his leadership of the organisation and efforts in steering UNIDO towards playing a meaningful role in the industrialisation of developing countries. South Africa has its Industrial Policy Action Plan, and has, in response to the rapid advancement of technology, established a Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution aimed at coordinating the development of our national action plan for Industry 4.0. Like many other developing countries, my country still grapples with high levels

of poverty, unemployment and inequality. In this regard, we appreciate that UNIDO's vision of assisting the Continent in broadening its industrial capacity and meet the challenge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. With due regard to the principle of national ownership and my government's objective of ensuring that all our people participate in the industrialisation of our country. In this regard, we welcome UNIDO's role in a number of projects and in a broad and varied range of initiatives in our country.

**Mr President,**

In line with the *Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer*, UNIDO is currently implementing Phase 1 of the *Hydrochlorofluorocarbon phase-out management* in South Africa. We recently witnessed, through UNIDO's coordination, the launch of a project aligned with the realisation of the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision" which is aimed at reducing marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. UNIDO is also assisting our country in the revitalisation of Agro-industrial parks as well as building capacities in the public and private sector, including programmes on the Empowerment of Women in the Green Industry and the Promotion of Export Consortia, amongst others.

**Mr President,**

Regional Industrial development is a core component of Africa's development integration agenda. Regional integration speaks to the envisaged African Free Trade Area and the important role that Regional Economic Communities need to play in developing policies and creating opportunities for developing industry further. UNIDO's assistance to African countries through programmes aimed at improving agro-industrial value chains, energy and the environment, Industry 4.0, and the empowerment of women and youth, in our Regional Economic Communities and at a national level should be commended and strengthened. We therefore encourage the Secretariat and our development partners to continue ensuring the meaningful and impactful implementation of industrialisation programmes and ensuring that our shared journey towards the attainment the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not impeded or compromised by lack of political will and commitment.

**Mr President,**

In this context, during South Africa's Chairship of SADC from 2017 to 2018, we focused on partnering with the private sector in developing industry and value chains in the region. South Africa hosted the second Industrialisation Week in July 2017 to mobilise private sector

investment to promote industrial development in priority sectors and deepened the focus on key investment opportunities in the SADC region. Some of the key strategic deliverables during our SADC Chairship include among others, the establishment of a capacity building programme at the SADC Secretariat in industrial policy making, a SADC Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, as well as a task team to work on the operationalisation framework of the SADC Declaration on the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

**Mr President,**

Africa's major development challenge remains structural transformation, namely to shift its current growth path based on minerals and commodity exports onto a more sustainable industrial development path. This is critical in order to eliminate poverty, inequality and unemployment. In this connection, we welcome the support received by the Continent from our development partners through UNIDO that has contributed positively to the implementation of the Programme for Country Partnerships (PCPs) towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 9. We therefore encourage the Secretariat to continue building on the success, experiences and lessons learned through the piloting phase of PCPs and further strengthen partnerships and cooperation amongst Member States.

**Mr President,**

In this context, we appreciate the central role UNIDO plays as the lead organization for the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and other development partners. We encourage UNIDO and our development partners to assist in the development of quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support sustainable economic development and human well-being.

**Mr President,**

As one of the pilot Champions for the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa and in light of our Chairship of the African Union in 2020, we maintain that the IDDA III should continue to complement relevant key initiatives and mechanisms, including the African Union's Agenda 2063; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); the African Mining Vision.

In this regard, UNIDO's support for programmes and projects should focus on Agenda 2063 of the AU, its First 10-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) and the various Flagship Programmes of the AU, while ensuring industrialisation and economic diversification; infrastructure development; trade and investment; sustainable and inclusive growth; and the integration of the continent.

Digitization has the potential to leapfrog Africa into Fourth Industrial Revolution. However we should be careful to ensuring that Africa is not marginalised in the Fourth Industrial revolution. We must therefore rightly recognise the need for policies and programmes that will mitigate the impact of digitisation on employment. This is particularly relevant given the Continent's youth dividend. Our futures also require us to find better ways to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. We should work together to guarantee the African child access to world class education and training on digital technologies, to ensure that Africa is not left behind.

**Mr President,**

We further welcome UNIDO's continued efforts in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrial development towards enhancing global economic growth and poverty eradication through its core functions including technical cooperation, policy advice, research and statistics, normative functions and standards as well as the building of partnerships.

**Mr President,**

In this regard, my delegation reiterates its call for member states to assist in addressing the situation by contributing in a timely manner to their assessed contributions, and further encourages development partners to continue supporting UNIDO programmes, so as to allow the Organisation to fulfil its core mandate. Our membership and involvement in this robust organisation is informed by the hope we have for our future generations - that they will find our world more equitable, better integrated and better industrialised.

**Mr President,**

Allow me to conclude by wishing this 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference a great success.

I thank you