



**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED
BY
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

AT THE 49th SESSION OF THE UNIDO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

12-15 JULY 2021

**Vienna
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Agenda Item 3: Annual Report of the Director General for the Year 2020

Madam President,

Allow me to join other delegations in congratulating you for presiding over the 49th session of the Industrial Development Board of UNIDO and congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections. South Africa is confident that under your leadership we will have a successful Session, and we would like to assure you, of our cooperation and support.

In the same vein, my delegation would also like to thank the outgoing President of the 48th Session of the IDB, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Indonesia.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the African Group and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Madam President,

South Africa takes note of UNIDO's activities for the 2020 financial year outlining progress made in the implementation of its projects, programmes, and on-going initiatives as reflected in the Director General's Report. In particular, South Africa is pleased to note the progress made in the advancement of the Programme for Country Partnerships (PCPs) which expanded to 11 countries in the year 2020. It is our hope that tangible and sustainable progress is made in industrialising the recipients of PCPs.

We express our confidence in UNIDO's active role in assisting with the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDAIII), which has covered a broad spectrum, including economic diversification, value addition, and job creation to reduce poverty on the Continent.

South Africa has committed itself to re-industrialisation, the protecting of vulnerable sectors against global changes, with Localisation at the core of our policy objectives. We invite UNIDO into navigating this terrain as we seek to reconstruct and make substantive recovery measures for what has been lost as a result of Covid-19 throughout the economy. In this regard, South Africa is encouraged and welcomes UNIDO's support in the development of eco-industrial parks; promotion of electric vehicles; and the implementation of waste management projects. Some pipeline initiatives UNIDO has engaged in within our region include the promotion of circular economy in the textile sector through sustainable chemicals and waste management. South Africa's national Department of Trade Industry and Competition (DTIC) is also collaborating with UNIDO on how to support the PPE sector in Africa. The DTIC and UNIDO are also engaged in a joint capacity development programme for high-level policymakers in the SADC region.

To advance implementation of the IDDA III South Africa further encourages UNIDO to take active steps towards the finalisation of the structure of the IDDA III Secretariat.

Madam President

The implementation of IDDA III should be boosted by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement, which has the overarching objective of boosting intra-Africa trade, deepening the economic integration of the African continent, and creating a single market. In this regard, the need for massive infrastructure development across the continent to move goods across Africa cannot be overstated.

The pursuit of integrated and inclusive economic growth for Africa can, however, not be a complete success if inequality in all its forms – including gender inequality, is not addressed. It is thus important to establish what the AfCFTA means for women and youth participation in the continent's industrialization and in cross-border trade. In this regard, we further call upon UNIDO to support the AfCFTA by continuing to support collaborative technical partnerships through UN agencies, government partners and with private corporations, in order to support skills development and knowledge transfer and also supporting research and development and greater innovation on the African continent.

South Africa commends the Director-General for the unwavering commitment to continue delivering quality technical cooperation amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial difficulties confronting the Organization. We are aware that due to the current financial constraints, more needs to be done to mobilize financial resources to support UNIDO's mandate.

Lastly, Madam President, it would be remiss if we do not reflect on the impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of our people. Our

countries are still constrained by the pandemic due to low levels of vaccination. We would therefore like to urge UNIDO and its membership to support the proposed TRIPS waiver which is a temporary, targeted, and proportional response, which recognises the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and the need for extraordinarily urgent measures.

Lastly Madam President, South Africa would like to congratulate Dr. Gerd Muller on his successful election as the Director General of UNIDO. Please be assured of South Africa's full support and cooperation and we express our gratitude to the outgoing DG Li Yong for his unwavering support and commitment to addressing the challenges facing developing countries.

I thank you.