



Permanent Mission of Italy
International Organisations - Vienna

**Statement by the Italian Permanent Representative
Ambassador Alessandro Cortese
49th Session of UNIDO Industrial Development Board
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Agenda item 3 – Annual Report of the Director General for 2020**

Thank you, Madam President.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Member States of the European Union by Ambassador Klement, but I wish to add also some considerations in my national capacity.

Firstly, let me start by thanking Mr. Li Yong for the excellent results accomplished during his mandate and for the effective cooperation we had. Italy has been always supportive and proactive, in line with his role as one of the main contributors of UNIDO, and we found in the Director General a very responsive and thoughtful partner for all the projects and initiatives we promoted together in the last years. We are really grateful for this.

Also, I am very pleased to extend my congratulations to Dr. Gerd Müller for his designation. His political experience and great competence in development policies is well known to all of us. Italy has strongly supported his candidature and I can assure it will continue to support Dr. Müller in the accomplishment of his mandate.

The election process has been open, fair and competitive. All candidates revealed outstanding skills and great motivation. I want to express to all of them my acknowledgement and deep gratefulness for the vision and the dedication they showed during the campaign. Every candidate gave an important contribution in terms of ideas and suggestions, which should not be dispersed. We encourage the new Director General to treasure them.

Madam President,

in harmony with this spirit, Italy remains committed to supporting the Organization, not only being one UNIDO's main donors, but also in light of its qualified approach to industrial development, mainly focused on the promotion of equal opportunities, women and youth empowerment, capacity building and self-employment, as well as job creation through sustainable investments. A comprehensive approach driven by the general ambition to foster ecological transition, ensuring a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future, having the 2030 Agenda as the main reference.

The same approach is inspiring the Italian presidency of the G20 and the co-presidency of the COP26 with the United Kingdom. We consider particularly important that UNIDO is engaged in three different activities of our G20 Presidency, namely the Task Force on Digital Economy and the working groups on Energy Transition and Climate Sustainability. This engagement confirms the importance that Italy attaches to the wide range of UNIDO's activities and expertise, from technical cooperation to policy advice.

In this context, Madam President, our financial and technical support to UNIDO remains highly significant. Let me just mention the three new projects we launched last February, and I underline that for the sake of time I limit myself to the last three of many: 1) the important project about agro-industrial parks in Ethiopia; 2) the continent-wide programme, "Opportunities for Youth employment in Africa", jointly developed by FAO and UNIDO; 3) the project on "Industrial policies for a circular economy" in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

It's only an example of the themes that are at the heart of our contribution to UNIDO's activities, such as self-empowerment, sustainability and efficiency in the use of resources. During the present recovery phase Italy will continue on this path, with the same commitment and, if possible, with even greater energy.

Thank you, Madam President.