



**Closing remarks of Mr. LI Yong  
Director General  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization**

**at the**

**49th Session of the  
Industrial Development Board**

**12-15 July 2021  
Vienna, Austria**

Madam President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we approach the closure of the forty-ninth session of the Industrial Development Board, I would like to thank all delegates for their active participation, whether here at the Vienna International Centre or connected online.

I would like to thank Your Excellency Ambassador KROIS of Poland for your leadership and commitment, serving as President of the Board, and for having so effectively and efficiently steered the deliberations of this session.

I also thank the other members of the Bureau, His Excellency Ambassador O'LEARY of Ireland for acting as the Chair of the informal consultations, His Excellency Ambassador ANDERSON MACHADO of Peru for having chaired the sessions of the Plenary on Tuesday afternoon and on Wednesday morning, Mr. Zaki of Egypt for chairing the Plenary yesterday afternoon, as well as Mr. Islam of Bangladesh for compiling the report of this session.

I would like to express my gratitude to *all* Members of the Industrial Development Board for their contributions. It has been a great pleasure to work with all of you during this session.

Madam President,  
Excellencies,

In my opening statement, I noted that this session of the Board is a special one.

You gathered here this week to take important decisions that will shape the future of the Organization, and I am pleased to note that you reached your objectives.

We are pleased that the medium-term programme framework (MTPF) 2022–2025 and the programme and budgets 2022–2023 have been adopted for submission to the nineteenth session of the General Conference in November.

Importantly, you have also elected Mr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, for recommendation to the General Conference as the next Director General of UNIDO.

I would like to thank all three candidates for their interest in this important position and for their outstanding motivation and inspiring campaigns, which provided new ideas for the future of UNIDO.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate Mr. Müller very warmly on his election. I am confident that his rich experience and his strong competence in the area of international development cooperation will serve as valuable leadership assets for this Organization and to further our mandate of inclusive and sustainable industrial development. I look forward to his appointment as Director General at the General Conference and to a smooth transition of leadership at UNIDO.

Excellencies,

While these were prominent decisions, the Secretariat and I closely followed all the deliberations of the Board. We have taken due note of the various issues that you raised in your statements, both on behalf of regional groups and in your national capacities.

I thank you for the many encouraging statements made by delegates. You highlighted the successful cooperation with UNIDO and the role of the Organization in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. You also commended us for the response to the COVID-19 crisis, and encouraged us to continue to address its socio-economic consequences in the post-COVID era.

UNIDO's role and contribution as the lead agency in the operationalization of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa will remain essential, particularly with the further implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Agenda 2063. You also commended the role of the Programme for Country Partnership, both as a platform for cooperation with the private sector and to achieve a larger development impact, and we have noted the request for it to be further expanded. The forthcoming Africa Industrialization and Economic Diversification Summit in November is likely to give us further momentum in this regard. I also appreciate the support to the regional strategies for our Member States.

As usual, we also recorded specific requests in areas that deserve further attention. We will stay in close dialogue with you on those matters and will keep you informed of the various developments and proposed solutions.

The UNIDO response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences; digitalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution; as well as climate change, environmental protection, the energy transition and circular economy received particular attention. The mobilization of the private sector and new funding partners, and the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation have been underlined by delegates. We will also continue to advance gender equality, the empowerment of women, and gender equity in the Secretariat. We welcome the important call for Member States to reach consensus on future inputs of the Board to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. We have also noted the request for a further assessment by the Secretariat on the functioning of the United Nations resident coordinator system and the advancement of the ISID mandate in this context.

Excellencies,

Your expressions of support and the positive spirit that you showed over the past few days have given us fresh impetus to progress with the goals that we have set ourselves for this year and the years to follow. Your dynamism and support, as the stakeholders of the Organization, are what guides us in advancing our mandate, inclusive and sustainable industrial development, with full dedication.

Before I conclude my statement, I would like to assure you that the Secretariat and I remain fully committed to advance our mission at full steam.

As I said in my opening statement: the task of fulfilling the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda requires full dedication, solid work, innovation and a sense of urgency.

The COVID-19 crisis continues to inflict human suffering and to devastate livelihoods and economies around the world. Its impact on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is dramatic and we must put all efforts in advancing the goals we set ourselves, including those to address inequalities and the looming climate crisis.

In the complex and interconnected world we live in, our continued cooperation and collaboration will be critical to ensure that we meet our objectives. In this regard, I would like to assure you of UNIDO's full commitment to do its very best in supporting Member States to address the critical development challenges that we all are facing.

In closing, let me thank you once again for your continued support and the trust you have for so long been placing in the Organization and me.

My colleagues and I look forward to continue working in close dialogue with all of you in the months leading up to the General Conference.

I wish all of you a pleasant and safe summer holiday season.

Thank you.