

**Statement of the Republic of Cyprus on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the  
General Conference  
United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)**

**General debate**

**Vienna, 29 November – 02 December 2021**

Mr President,

I would like to congratulate you on your election and to assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation in your important task.

Cyprus aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union, but I would like to provide some additional remarks in a national capacity.

Mr President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The global covid pandemic has confronted all of our societies with unprecedented challenges. Its impact has been particularly disruptive to our health care systems, to our economies and our societies as a whole, exposing vulnerabilities and worsening pre-existing inequalities. Whilst, however, the pandemic highlighted some of the vulnerabilities of our interconnected world, it also illustrated in the clearest manner that global challenges call for global solutions effected through multilateral cooperation. At the beginning of the pandemic, we witnessed a more introvert approach by states, which soon gave way to the realization that collective action is necessary to complement national action in order to safeguard the health and well-being of their citizens.

Within the framework of this collective approach, let me just note that the Government of Cyprus supports the fostering of equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, by approving the donation of 200,000 COVID-19 doses to neighboring countries, through COVAX.

Cyprus joins UNIDO in its efforts to overcome this global crisis and make progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I would like at this point to express appreciation to UNIDO, for its efforts to respond to the challenges, assess the impact and adapt to the evolving needs, as well as for keeping all the operations going, without losing sight of its objective to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

As the world starts to rebuild, fostering cooperation between governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector in the fields of health, innovation and technology, environment, can pave the way for sustainable economies and resilient societies. The aim of an inclusive and sustainable industrial development is a key component to overcoming this global crisis.

The Republic of Cyprus has recently adopted a National Action Plan for the Enhancement of **Circular Economy**, aiming to create circular culture and practices. The transformation of

the economy from linear to circular, as the main aim of this Plan, will reinforce businesses' sustainability and competitiveness and contribute to the reduction of the overall environmental footprint. Specifically, Cyprus' National Action Plan includes measures and actions for financing and providing incentives for businesses of Cyprus to invest in research, innovation and circular economy practices. A key objective is to develop the necessary infrastructure, such as digital platforms, standardization and certification measures. We see this national strategy as coherent with UNIDO's action in promoting circular economy principles and practices.

Creating a culture of circular economy goes hand in hand with international efforts to respond to some of the most pressing global challenges posed by the climate change. Climate crisis is not an abstract concept, but a painful reality that transverses and transcends national borders. Climate change has been an increasingly visible threat to the environment, to our societies and economies, to our planet as a whole. Taking action to effectively address it is imperative. Redesigned and efficient policies and drastic measures are necessary in order to reverse the devastating impact of climate change and contribute to the achievement of the Paris Agreement goals, and Agenda 2030. Cyprus as a small island in the Mediterranean is particularly affected by climate change. We have recently experienced devastating fires that cost human lives, impacted livelihoods and seriously threatened the biodiversity of the island.

Cyprus' strategy for transition towards net-zero carbon emissions up to 2050 includes the introduction of natural gas into its energy mix and developing gas and electricity interconnections with countries in our neighbourhood, ending thus isolation. Minimizing the use of heavy fuel oils and developing the use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and green technologies is another key objective. Data from 2020 shows that the share of RES in the total final energy consumption increased to 17%, thus exceeding the national target of 13%. Developing storage technologies and increasing RES share for self-consumption and commercial use remain critical, taking into account island's isolated grid. Our strategy is in line with the European Green Deal and the EU "Fit for 55" package and will utilize the relevant EU instruments to meet its targets.

I would like to take this opportunity here to acknowledge and support UNIDO's work in the fields of environment and energy, within the framework of promoting an inclusive and sustainable industrial development, as important steps towards achieving our climate objectives of Paris Agreement and COP26.

Mr President,

We particularly praise UNIDO for its continuous and dedicated work to support and promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Empowering women leads to greater prosperity, economic growth, productivity and enhances innovation. Women's empowerment is deeply anchored in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in recognition of the key role of women as agents of change.

The post-pandemic recovery measures which aim for more resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies and to reshape industrial development towards environmentally

sound technologies, provide an excellent opportunity for societies to use women's full potential as leaders, innovators and agents of industrial and environmental change.

Gender equality is one of my government's priorities and we aim for a more active role in regional and global efforts to promote this goal. In this framework, Cyprus is co-organising with UNIDO a workshop on "Women Entrepreneurs for inclusive and sustainable growth in the MENA region", planned for spring 2022 in Cyprus. The workshop aims to bring together women's business association representatives and entrepreneurs from countries from both shores of the Mediterranean with their Cypriot counterparts. We believe that networking and knowledge sharing can help us to share best practices and information on what works in advancing the goal of women's empowerment.

Cyprus is confident that UNIDO will continue to represent a platform of change and innovation and strive, together with its member-states, for a more sustainable future.

Thank you Mr President.