



**European Union  
EU Statement on  
General debate**

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

**Vienna, 29 November 2021**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey<sup>§</sup>, the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Norway\*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

Allow me to congratulate you on your election, Mr. President, and to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

At the outset, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Dr. Gerd Müller on his election as the UNIDO Director General. We look forward to his appointment at this General Conference and stand ready to deepen our co-operation under his leadership. Let me also thank the outgoing Director General, Mr. Li Yong, for his guidance and dedication in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development at the helm of UNIDO.

Mr. President, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

We are gathered in Vienna today under the motto "**Building a Better Future**" to mark the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organisation and to reflect on its achievements. Only recently, the UN Secretary General presented his report "*Our Common Agenda*", where he confronted us with the stark choice of a breakdown or a breakthrough scenario for our common future. Clearly, against the backdrop of multiple challenges ranging from global public health, aggravated poverty and the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, the time to act is now. These challenges require global solidarity and global solutions that can only be achieved through international cooperation and a strong multilateral approach. We consider the whole

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<sup>§</sup> Candidate Country

\* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

\* Norway is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

UN system, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, to be key players in this regard

The European Union and its Member States are fully aligned with the UN's call to 'recover better'. COVID-19 reversed hard won development gains and could lead to a lost decade for development<sup>1</sup>. Now, in this Decade of Action, is the time to reiterate our full commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the blueprint for building back better, smarter and greener leaving no one behind. The EU and its Member States are jointly working, as *Team EUROPE*, together with our finance institutions and agencies, as well as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to address the recovery needs of our partner countries. We have mobilised about EUR 46 billion as of April 2021 to address and mitigate the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic. Additionally, EU and its Member States collectively, are among the largest contributors to COVAX, the global vaccine sharing facility, supporting it with more than EUR 3 billion. The EU is committed to accelerating vaccine sharing with countries in need, leaving no one behind, with the aim of donating at least 500 million doses by the middle of 2022.

Mr. President,

The European Union and UNIDO share the vision that only through an effective multilateral approach can the goal of inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic and industrial growth be achieved. This common vision translates into a tangible cooperation in over 100 countries in all regions of the world. The European Union and its Member States remain UNIDO's largest donors of voluntary contributions from governmental sources, financing projects and programmes focused on poverty eradication, job creation, climate action, resource efficiency and circular economy, and reduction of emissions and pollution. In 2020 alone, the EU and its Member States accounted for 37.6 % of all voluntary contributions and EU Member States contributed 27.6 % of the net regular budget. We encourage the Secretariat to further broaden its donor base, including through public-private partnerships. Only with robust support from its Member States and the necessary financial resources, can UNIDO deliver on its mandate, especially in the present challenging circumstances.

Mr. President,

The EU–UNIDO cooperation spans in the three thematic priority areas of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID), such as Creating Shared Prosperity, Advancing Economic Competitiveness and Safeguarding the Environment. We strive to create decent work and employment for all, particularly for women and youth that can help lift people out of poverty, reduce inequalities and end hunger, while

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<sup>1</sup> UN Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021

promoting health, education, gender equality and sustainable consumption and production.

We cannot miss the opportunity to connect our recovery from the economic impacts of the pandemic to fixing the planetary environmental and climate emergency - for which there is no vaccine! We would like to reiterate our support to UNIDO's activities for sustainable and inclusive industrialization in the fields of environment and energy, contributing to reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement, of the COP 26 Climate Conference in Glasgow, other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and of just and green energy transition. We welcome the Secretariat's intention to prepare a UNIDO wide climate strategy and encourage all Member States to support this work.

The EU welcomes UNIDO's support for the establishment of the "Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency" that we launched together with UNEP last February. Members of the Alliance, which now include fifteen countries, are joining forces to advocate a shift to a circular economy and a more efficient use of resources globally. We commend UNIDO for organising the Global consultations on circular economy and we very much welcome the related Resolution tabled by Austria and Costa Rica to this General Conference. We believe a global just transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy is a fundamental contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 8 and 12.

The accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in this Decade of Action requires global solidarity and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Guided by the Lima and Abu Dhabi Declarations we should continue mobilising the private sector to create decent work and deliver inclusive and sustainable development, focusing on Low Income Countries and Least Developed Countries in Africa and elsewhere. Along those lines, we support UNIDO's role in the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa in cooperation with other agencies and major donors, including the EU and we encourage a more proactive approach in this regard.

Mr. President,

Promoting gender equality and the economic empowerment of women, is at the heart of the European Union's policies, internally and externally. The EU finds it important that the work of UNIDO is inclusive and that gender aspects are systematically mainstreamed in all programmes and projects to help address gender imbalances in the manufacturing sector - such as wage gaps or women's access to labour markets and their unequal representation in industrial leadership positions. As a gender champion, the EU will continue to encourage the UNIDO Secretariat to achieve gender equality in the Organisation, particularly at senior management level in line with the United Nations-wide Gender Parity Strategy. We support the draft Resolution

tabled by Norway and Mexico to the General Conference regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We reiterate our commitment to the reform of the UN Development System and the One UN Objectives through an enhanced role of the Resident Coordinators and the renewed country frameworks. The EU supports this approach to further accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and targets. In this regard, we welcome the UNIDO Programme for Country Partnership, which is already implemented in 11 middle- and low-income countries. It has proved to be a valuable contribution to implement the reform at a country-level and to mobilize resources and partnerships for a larger and more sustainable development impact.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we reiterate our full support to your efforts to have a productive General Conference and look forward to engaging with Member States and observers in an open and constructive dialogue.

Thank you, Mr. President.