



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE
19th SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNIDO**

**VIENNA, AUSTRIA
NOVEMBER 2021**

Mr President,

The Government of South Africa congratulates you on your election as President of the 19th Session of this General Conference and we extend our best wishes to you and the members of the bureau and the secretariat.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China.

Mr President

The Pandemic has underscored the fragile interconnectivity of globalisation and our interdependence in realising the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has also transformed our approach to development and highlighted the necessity for strengthened international cooperation to build stronger and more resilient economies and production structures.

Vaccine inequality has clearly exposed the unfair and deep inequalities and disadvantages developing countries face. Vaccine nationalism is short-sighted as it prolongs the pandemic and feeds the evolution of vicious mutations. We reiterate our call for capacitating developing countries with the essential rights, tools and capabilities to produce vaccines locally to accelerate the global vaccination programme and end the pandemic. We therefore call on UNIDO to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and equipment to developing countries urgently. Remember: no one is safe until everyone is safe.

It would also be remiss not to call for the urgent and immediate lifting of the unfair punitive travel bans placed, not only on South Africa, but on most of our neighbours. The reasoning for these decisions are spurious and seem politically motivated as these bans have not been equally applied to all States where the variant has been detected.

Our excellent, transparent and constructive scientific contributions should not be punished but applauded and replicated. These unreasonable and ill-advised

measures will further damage our economies, increase unemployment and add to human suffering in our countries. The measures are also against international commitments and pledges. We therefore call on all Member States to: a) urgently and unconditionally lift the travel bans; and b) to adopt honest, timely and transparent scientific measures in monitoring and reporting on the virus and all its mutations. With more information now available it seems that the Omricon variant may not have originated in Southern Africa afterall, and yet we are the ones being punished.

Mr President

South Africa welcomes UNIDO's continued assistance in strengthening domestic efforts towards the realisation of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, including through the development of the Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme; the promotion of electric vehicles; the implementation of waste management projects and the acceleration of cleantech innovation to support transition towards a circular economy.

Within SADC, UNIDO is supporting human capital development through the effective management of natural resources in the forestry sector and water resource management. This project follows on the "SADC Phase III" project through which UNIDO collaborated with South African stakeholders to deliver training programs in the forestry sector. We call on UNIDO to continue these efforts and to support of our region's pursuit of the implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063.

Mr President,

We welcome the efforts made towards the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III) including through the Programme for Country Partnerships (PCPs). These efforts can be enhanced through the expansion of collaboration with all relevant development partners in the Continent, such as the African Development Bank. South Africa urges the completion of the IDDA III Secretariat recruitment process to fully operationalise the IDDA III roadmap.

My delegation also notes UNIDO's Strategic Framework for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and encourages investments in technology transfer and capacity building in reskilling employees to adapt to new frontier technologies.

Mr President,

South Africa notes the outcomes of COP26 and joins other countries in expressing our concern over the impact of climate change on all areas of life and livelihoods, especially in Africa. In fact, climate change is the single largest threat to the socio-economic development of our Continent. While sustainable industrial development is strongly linked to energy efficiency, green initiatives must be implemented in a pragmatic manner to avoid job losses within energy-intensive and manufacturing sectors.

South Africa is deeply committed to a Just Energy Transition and encourages developed countries to provide the necessary support and finance to assist developing countries with mitigation and adaptation efforts. We expect that the financial pledge to South Africa made at COP 26 will be implemented speedily and based on mutually agreed terms taking into account our national priorities of job creation, equality and debt reduction.

We also anticipate that the agreement will serve as a model of a truly collaborative partnership between developed and developing countries that it will assist in the transition to clean energy in a just, fair and sustainable way.

I thank you.