



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

**at the**

**Opening of the  
Seventeenth Session of the  
UNIDO General Conference**

**27 November 2017  
Vienna, Austria**

Distinguished Heads of State,  
Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Colleagues and friends,

It is my great privilege and honour to welcome you to the seventeenth session of the UNIDO General Conference.

At the outset, I would like to highlight some of the achievements of the past four years.

As a first step, we jointly refocused UNIDO's strategic direction in 2013 with the Lima Declaration, and anchored the mandate of inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the 2030 Agenda.

The core mission of UNIDO has never been more relevant than today.

Secondly, we set the focus on improving operations, increasing delivery and impact, while enhancing our effectiveness, transparency and results-orientation.

Today, UNIDO's systems and approaches are innovative and fit for the future.

Thirdly, we earned the trust and support of our Member States, the donor community, and our partners. We feel increased confidence.

Growing voluntary contributions and demand for our services speak for the trust placed in UNIDO.

Excellencies,

Today, I stand before you humbled by the trust you place in me to lead this Organization for another four years. I thank you most sincerely for your trust and your support.

I am grateful but also feel a sense of profound responsibility. The global community is still facing a number of unresolved and urgent challenges.

Poverty, unemployment, and hunger remain the most persistent and daunting tasks for our world. Climate change, resource-depletion and environmental degradation, as well as the potential impact of the latest technological revolution, add another dimension.

But, Excellencies, we can confront these challenges. Together.

The theme of this General Conference is representative for the *only* way to solve the challenges ahead of us: in partnership. In partnership with governments, UN sister agencies, the private sector, and civil society.

I will strive to ensure that UNIDO plays an increasingly strategic role as the central coordinator of industrial development in the UN system. As a specialized agency, we also fully support the Secretary-General's reform of the UN development system.

As an international gender champion, I am also committed to engaging all my staff to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

High on our agenda is the assistance to least developed countries and the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, where the majority of least developed countries is located. At the same time, we uphold our support to middle-income countries and economies in transition.

We will work hard to realize our objective of "integration and scale-up". One way to achieve this is the gradual expansion of the Programme for Country Partnership in the coming years. It will further shape the partnership approach around the world.

UNIDO will make best use of its convening power to address emerging issues, such as the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on the future of work, and the promotion of circular economy and green industry.

To achieve these tasks, I rely on your guidance and your support. I will listen to your advice and will build on the expertise of our staff.

Excellencies,

Before I conclude, let me express once again my gratitude for your strong support to me personally and to the Organization.

The achievements of the past years would not have been possible without your contributions.

Let me also acknowledge the hard work of UNIDO staff. I pay tribute to their commitment, passion and dedication.

Excellencies,

As I stand here today in front of you, I also recall my visits to the field. Many times, I hear the voices of poor young people calling for jobs and stability. Many times, I also hear the leaders of our Member States express their desire to achieve structural transformation and economic growth for their countries and people.

The growing challenges confronting the global community today surely require confidence and strong determination.

In this regard, I would like to cite the visionary words of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. I quote:

*“the size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them. If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.”*

Excellencies,

My dream, which I shared with you four years ago, is to give young people, living in similarly poor conditions as I experienced myself in my childhood, an opportunity to play a part, like me, in the global fight against poverty.

Thank you.