



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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Speech at the Inauguration of the Exhibition

**“UNIDO Value-Added: Investment, Business and
Partnerships”**

Vienna, 28 November 2006

Excellency, Shaikh Ebrahim Bin Khalifa al Khalifa, Under-Secretary, Ministry
of Finance, Kingdom of Bahrain,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to inaugurate this exhibition and welcome all entrepreneurs who are with us today. The effectiveness of UNIDO is determined by the extent of our value addition to investment, business and partnerships as evidenced by the displays of the Exhibition.

The entrepreneurial class plays a major role in achieving the basic development objective of poverty reduction as small and medium enterprises constitute direct and indirect sources of job creation and seedbeds for innovation and entrepreneurship. By providing new entry and competition, they can boost efficiency and growth, leading to the overall development of the society. Technological innovations and the shift towards knowledge-based economies enable us to achieve the twin objectives of creating more jobs and more value addition.

A firm's competitive advantage stems from its entrepreneurial capabilities including management and technical know-how, skills, education, networking and adaptability of its employees. Enhanced capabilities to acquire, assimilate, adopt, adapt modern technology and on that basis to learn to innovate are critical for commercializing new knowledge and to capture niche markets.

The exhibition is a good example of what UNIDO can do for small businesses. The Organization increasingly relies on the private sector as an engine for economic growth and as an effective means of reducing poverty. To realize the potential fully SMEs need to be connected to global markets, to find buyers for their products and suppliers for their inputs. Brokering such partnerships, plugging SMEs into global supply chains, stimulating exchange of experience and joint learning, supporting technological upgrading are pivotal for survival in an internationally competitive environment. Reducing

the distance to technological and product-specific innovation frontiers calls for multilateral technical assistance and intermediate institutional support services. And UNIDO is at it.

UNIDO's competitive advantage largely stems from the operation of its worldwide network of ITPOs. Located in major commercial centres, they work with their local business communities to bring specific investment opportunities in developing countries to their doorstep.

Today's exhibition vividly demonstrate the results of the programme "Investment and Enterprise Development" launched some five years ago. This programme was developed jointly by UNIDO and the Interregional Centre in Ahmedabad with the support of the Government of India within the framework of South-South Cooperation. The model was first tested in Bahrain and adapted to the local needs leading to the establishment of the Arab Regional Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment Training. UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office in Bahrain played an instrumental role in launching and developing the programme for wider applications in other developing countries.

It is with a profound sense of gratitude, I would like to express our thanks to the Government of Bahrain and personally, to His Excellency Shaikh Ebrahim for his great support to this programme, in particular, and UNIDO in general as well to the Governments of India for supporting the programme and Governments of other countries for hosting the programme.

The presence of a number of entrepreneurs speaks volumes of the real success of our programmes that support business ventures. I wish them well in their endeavour to create more value and more jobs.

Thank you