



**Statement by the Honourable Minister of State for
Commerce and Industry (HMSCI) Nigeria, at the 13th
Session of the UNIDO General Conference held in
Vienna, Austria from 7-11 December, 2009**

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and other members of your Bureau on your election. Your election is an indication of the confidence we all repose in you and your Bureau, and we believe in your ability to steer this conference to a successful end. May I also express our appreciation to the Secretariat for its indispensable supportive role in providing us with all the relevant working documents, without which, we can't proceed. We also thank other stakeholders including the conference services for their various roles in ensuring the success of this conference.



Mr. President,

2. From the outset, we associate ourselves with the statement (either delivered or to be delivered) by the African Group. It is important and indeed praiseworthy for my delegation to identify itself with the pragmatic and result – oriented leadership of the Director – General of UNIDO, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella. By dint of hard work and purposeful leadership, he has been able to reinvigorate and reposition UNIDO, as a respectable major player among International Organisations within the United Nations System. We therefore congratulate him on his re – appointment to the position of Director – General. He merits it. We have no doubt in his ability to meet our higher expectations in his second term, thanks to his formidable staff and Member States who are solidly behind him.

Mr. President,

3. Vision 20:20:20 constitutes the economic blueprint of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration. It is encapsulated in the **seven – point agenda** of his administration, which focuses on power and energy; food



security and agriculture; wealth creation and employment; mass transportation; land reform; security; and qualitative and functional education. The **seven – point agenda** of the present administration is geared towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its essence is poverty eradication and sustainable economic growth.

4. Nigeria recognizes the critical role which industrialization plays in the economic growth and development of any country. Presently, oil (petroleum) accounts for more than eighty percent of our foreign exchange earning. In order to insulate our economy from the vagaries of fluctuation in the international oil market and the uncertainty it portends, our economic thrust pursues a policy of diversification through industrialization, particularly in the area of agro – allied industries where we enjoy comparative advantage arising from our land mass, skilled and cheap labour, water resources and favourable climatic condition for our agricultural commodities. We believe that our emphasis on agro – industries and agri – business as a strategic diversification policy is replicated in most African countries, and indeed in most developing countries.



Mr. President,

5. It is against this backdrop that Nigeria welcomes the High Level Conference on Development of Agribusiness and Agro – industries in Africa, to be held in Abuja, in March 2010. The objectives of the conference as identified by UNIDO itself include:

- i. Platform for discussion of Heads of States;
- ii. Identification of priorities for investment, and
- iii. Establishment of financial facility.

Mr. President,

6. Nigeria is committed to the hosting of this High Level Conference on Agri – Business and Agro – Industries in Abuja. Adequate preparations are being made for the successful and hitch – free hosting of this very important conference. We take this auspicious opportunity to invite all stakeholders to the conference. We thank the Director – General of UNIDO, his able staff and Member States for the confidence reposed in Nigeria.



Mr. President,

7. Africa must be assisted to overcome the lamentable level of poverty that pervades the continent. The situation has been worsened by the global economic and financial crisis coupled with challenges brought about by climate change. We believe that industrialization of Africa will provide the fastest exit from poverty and other ancillary problems. In the words of Dr. Yumkella himself, "Industrialization is essential for Africa's effective integration into the global economy". UNIDO must assist Africa in charting a new course towards industrialization with a view to creating employment and expand opportunities for the continent's teeming population. There is the urgent need for the organization to expand its projects and capacity building portfolio in Africa. In Nigeria we seek the expansion of UNIDO's projects under the Country Service Programme framework. On our part, Nigeria has provided the enabling environment: appropriate institutional and regulatory Framework, transparency, accountability, democratic institutions, the rule of law, observance of human rights and



protection of local and foreign investments. There are therefore favourable investment opportunities in Nigeria.

Mr. President,

8. The industrialization of Africa and indeed other developing countries requires multi – stakeholders approach. Africa requires the collaborative efforts of UNIDO and other relevant international organizations, as well as efforts and commitment of international financial institutions, sub – regional and regional organizations with a view to integrating it (Africa) into the Global economy through industrialization. May I remind this conference of this year's theme for Africa Industrialization Day established in 1989 by the United Nations General Assembly.

9. The theme, which I consider instructive, is "Industrialization for integration". I therefore solicit the unflinching and enhanced support of international financial institutions and donor agencies for the actualization of this noble objective. There are already credible platforms in Africa through which our development partners can mainstream their development assistance for Africa. In this



regard, we urge the maximization of opportunities provided by the African Union Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development in Africa. There are also similar opportunities embedded in regional and sub – regional organisations in Africa.

10. Finally, Mr. President, African countries are not unmindful of some factors that militate against development in Africa. Such inhibitions as armed conflict, political instability occasioned by lack of democratic governance, poor infrastructure and corruption are being addressed by our governments through national, sub – regional and regional institutions. Nigeria and other African countries will continue to collaborate with UNIDO and other stakeholders to integrate Africa into the world economy.

Thank you.