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UNIDO contributions to achieving the Millennium Development Goals

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Report by the Director-General

Addendum

The present document supplements the information in document IDB.38/14 and provides information on the outcome document and the specific contributions of UNIDO to the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit).

I. High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

1. As reported in document IDB.38/14, the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit) took place in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010. Following a proposal by the United Nations Secretary-General, the General Assembly decided to convene the Summit with the primary objective to accelerate progress towards all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, taking into account the progress made towards the internationally agreed development goals (as outlined in General Assembly resolution 64/184). To this end, the President of the General Assembly appointed two Co-facilitators, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal and

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Ambassador Carsten Staur of Denmark, to lead the intergovernmental negotiating process. In addition to the official preparatory process, a number of related events and reports fed into government deliberations leading to the Summit. The way in which UNIDO contributes to this process was outlined in document IDB.37/4.

2. The MDG Summit comprised of six plenary meetings and six interactive round tables over the course of the three days and resulted in the adoption by Member States of a concise and action-oriented outcome. There were also several side events and other related meetings that took place on the sidelines of the Summit. The contribution that UNIDO made to all aspects of the Summit is outlined in chapter II of this document.

3. The outcome document of the Summit entitled “Keeping the Promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”¹ reaffirms the comments by world leaders to the MDGs and establishes a concrete action agenda for achieving the Goals by 2015. The United Nations is given a strong mandate to continue supporting governments in achieving the MDGs. Based on examples of success and lessons learned over the previous ten years, the outcome document outlines specific steps to be taken by all stakeholders to accelerate progress on each of the eight Goals. It also affirms that, despite setbacks due to the economic and financial crises, remarkable progress has been made in fighting poverty, increasing school enrolment, expanding access to clean water and improving health in many countries, and the Goals remain achievable. In a major push to accelerate progress on women’s and children’s health, a number of Heads of State and Government from developed and developing countries, along with representatives of the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations, pledged over \$40 billion in resources over the next five years to the Secretary-General’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health. In addition, a number of other significant commitments on each of the eight Goals were made by Governments, international organizations and partners, as well as by business representatives at the Summit.

4. The outcome document emphasizes the crucial role of the productive sectors in promoting sustainable development and alleviating poverty. It recommends that developing countries adopt macroeconomic policies that lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, increase productive employment opportunities and promote agricultural and industrial development. Promoting agricultural production, productivity and sustainability, through, inter alia, developing strong agricultural value chains, improving farmers’ market access and developing and disseminating agricultural technology is seen as key to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Trade is also recognized as an engine of growth and development. In addition to a successful Doha trade round outcome, the need to strengthen the trade capacity and international competitiveness of developing countries is emphasized. Furthermore, the role of technology in accelerating the achievement of all the MDGs is highlighted throughout the document. Specifically, the document calls for adequate and predictable financial and high-quality technical support, as well as the development and dissemination of appropriate, affordable and sustainable technology and the transfer of such technologies on mutually agreed terms. It is recognized that climate change poses serious risks and challenges to all countries,

¹ Currently available only as General Assembly draft resolution A/65/L.1.

especially developing countries, and that addressing climate change will be of key importance in safeguarding and advancing progress towards achieving the MDGs. In this connection, the document strongly supports expanding access to affordable energy, increasing energy efficiency and ensuring the sustainability of energy sources and use.

5. The MDG Summit outcome document will serve as a guide for the UNIDO contributions to achieving the MDGs.

II. Summary of the UNIDO contributions at the MDG Summit

6. Whilst in New York for the MDG Summit from 20 to 22 September 2010, the Director-General participated in a panel discussion organized by the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University within the context of the United Nations Studies Program with the theme “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Can We Keep the Promise?” The panel comprised five high-level United Nations representatives, called for renewed urgency in reducing poverty and argued that the MDGs would still be largely achievable despite the setbacks resulting from the global financial and economic crisis, provided that world leaders maintain their commitment to them. Importantly for UNIDO, it was highlighted that universal access to energy is pivotal for sustained economic development and the achievement of the MDGs.

7. On 17 September 2010, the Director-General participated in the High-level Conference on Energy at the United Nations, organized by the World Energy Forum. In his function as Chairman of UN-Energy, he delivered a keynote speech at the opening of the conference. The high-level event focused on accessible, affordable, and sustainable energy supply as a prerequisite to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and sought to create a road map as to how countries, governments, private sector and civil society could effectively work together to achieve sustainable energy access for the benefit of all nations and peoples.

8. At the sidelines of the MDG Summit, UNIDO organized the Third Joint meeting of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change (AGECC)/UN-Energy. At the meeting, reports were presented by the AGECC/UN-Energy Working Groups on their recent activities and discussions took place on possible side events at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled to take place in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. The meeting was also briefed on the recent activities of the newly established Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. The issue of enhancing collaboration between the United Nations and other stakeholders in energy, including private sector corporations through public-private partnership mechanisms, was also discussed at the meeting.

9. Ending energy poverty in the next two decades and the need for a global campaign to promote energy access was uppermost on the agenda of the High-level side event organized jointly by UNIDO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and which was hosted by the United Nations Foundation, on 21 September 2010 in New York. The event brought together world leaders, including the President Mr. Heinz Fischer of Austria, President Mr. Abdoulaye Wade

of Senegal, Prime Minister Mr. Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as well as other officials. All of them voiced their support for such a global campaign and for public-private partnerships, financing, and the development of associated targets, policies and measures. Other notable participants included Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway and Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), and Ms. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, Mr. Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and Mr. Thomas L. Friedman, the renowned New York Times columnist and author of widely acclaimed books on energy and environmental challenges.

10. The speakers emphasized the fact that energy remained the “missing” Millennium Development Goal (MDG). It was noted that almost three billion people in the world rely on traditional solid fuels for cooking and heating, and over one and a half billion have no access to electricity. Access to reliable modern and clean energy services would dramatically reduce poverty, promote gender equality, improve health, and facilitate economic development. Participants noted that the obstacles to global energy access were not technical, and highlighted the lack of a commitment by all parts of society to move energy access up the political and development agenda. They agreed on the need for the next United Nations General Assembly to declare 2012 as the Year for Universal Energy Access. Such a move would herald the start of a global campaign on energy access and add a new vibrancy to this critical issue.

11. During the energy side event, a unique partnership between the United Nations and the International Energy Agency (IEA) provided an opportunity for the early release of a chapter of the 2010 World Energy Outlook entitled: “Energy Poverty: How to Make Modern Energy Access Universal”. The IEA report, produced in conjunction with UNIDO and UNDP, provided new detailed analysis and data on the energy poverty issue. The report stated that the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2015 would be possible only if an additional 395 million people obtained access to electricity and one billion gained access to more modern cooking facilities that minimize harmful smoke.

12. On 21 September 2010, the Director-General also took part in an event hosted by the United States Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Clinton. The Secretary of State announced that the United States of America would provide about \$50 million in seed money over five years for a project known as the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. More than a dozen other partners, including governments, multilateral organizations and corporate sponsors, are to contribute an additional \$10 million or more. Exposure to smoke from traditional cookstoves and open fires causes 1.9 million premature deaths annually, with women and young children being the most affected. UNIDO is currently looking at possible ways of contributing to this initiative, including by promoting technology transfer mechanisms and the establishment of standards and testing facilities to support the manufacturing of cleaner cookstoves in developing countries.

13. While at the Summit, the Director-General also participated in a round table concerning “Addressing emerging issues and evolving approaches”. This was one of the major official events planned for the Summit. The meeting was chaired by President Ms. Tanja Halonen of Finland and President Mr. Danilo Türk of Slovenia

and attended by many ministers from both developed and developing countries, as well as high-level representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the United Nations system. The key themes were climate change, the global financial and economic crisis, food security, policy accountability and the impact of conflict. It was agreed that to achieve global recovery, there is a need for a new development model with environmental sustainability and social inclusion at its centre. In particular, this was necessary to facilitate a shift from high- to low-carbon, resource efficient green growth with green industry recognized as a major engine of growth. The Director-General emphasized that affordable and sustainable energy supplies are imperative to the achievement of all the MDGs, especially in empowering women and reducing poverty. In the current global context, the key is to ensure sustainable recovery and energy access while creating wealth and jobs, particularly for young people, through productive activities. It was also important to ensure that recent discoveries of oil in poorer regions such as in West Africa are used for balanced and inclusive growth.

14. On the last day of the MDG Summit, the United Nations Private Sector Forum chaired by the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon was held. This Forum brought together approximately 300 Heads of State and Government, representatives from the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system to identify effective ways and means to accelerate progress towards reaching the MDGs by 2015, and to generate action towards this target. The Forum also provided a platform for the business community to share the actions they have already taken towards the achievement of the MDGs and for communicating recommendations to governments and the United Nations on how to engage businesses further in support of the achievement of the MDGs. Participants held thematic discussions on poverty and hunger; maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS; access to education through innovative information and communication technology (ICT); innovations for financial inclusion; empowering women and achieving equality; and green economy. The Director-General of UNIDO was a lead discussant on the green economy panel which focused on exploring opportunities for all stakeholders to collaborate in a way that meets global energy and resource needs and spurs sustainable growth, while safeguarding the environment and addressing climate change. Participants highlighted the importance of resource optimization, water and energy efficiency, pollution management, energy- and carbon-pricing policies and access to modern, clean and sustainable energy sources as key issues in achieving green growth. Furthermore, it was observed that poverty reduction is at the heart of green growth, which in turn can only be achieved through industrialization; green industry is therefore fundamental to these efforts.

III. Conclusion

15. The MDG Summit outcome document and the deliberations and ideas generated in the various events attended by the Director-General will guide UNIDO efforts in accelerating progress towards the MDGs through the promotion of sustainable industrial development. As reported in document IDB.38/14, UNIDO recognizes the MDGs as the overarching framework for its activities and believes that a competitive and environmentally sustainable industry is vital in order to

strengthen economic growth, reduce poverty and accelerate achievement of all the MDGs.

IV. Action required of the Board

16. The Board may wish to take note of the information provided in the present document.
