Opening Up, Innovation and Win-Win:
The Development of Global Economic Zones

SPEECH BY

Mr. LI Yong
Director General
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

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Your Excellency Mr. WANG Yang, Vice Premier of China, Your
Excellency Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao
People’s Democratic Republic,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to participate in this 2014 International Investment
Forum in Xiamen. The theme of the Forum is Opening up, Innovation, and

Please allow me first to congratulate the organizer for the outstanding
organization of this event.

UNIDO has been supporting CIFIT for a long time. I am confident that
CIFIT will continue to play its important role in promoting investment and
trade in China and in the world.

Let me first give a piece of information about the UNIDO’s assistance to
the establishment of China’s Special Economic Zones, in the very beginning
of China’s opening up and reform. In 1980, China decided to establish a
number of special economic zones in the provinces of Guangdong and
Fujian.

At request of the Government of China, UNIDO organized a six-week study
tour, in September of that year, to increase the awareness of a team of senior
government officials about investment promotion. The group visited six
countries: Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka.
A UNIDO expert accompanied the group during the trip, offering independent observations and perspectives. At the conclusion of the tour, a debriefing session took place at the International Trade Centre in Geneva, followed by a meeting in Beijing with UNIDO before the Chinese participants prepared their final mission report.

That was the first group sent overseas to investigate special economic zones. Formal reports were submitted to the State Council and later to the National People’s Congress. The legislation prepared by the government was passed and China’s first group of special economic zones including Xiamen were established in the same year. Since then, China has witnessed rapid development in economic zones.

Under the umbrella of economic zones, industrial parks have successfully been used as a testing ground for new reforms, policies, and approaches, to improve the business environment, as demonstrated in many East Asian countries. When these countries had limited resources, industrial parks helped solve business infrastructure problems in particular geographical areas and were used to overcome barriers to firm entry, attract foreign direct investment, foster skilled manpower, and facilitate the growth of local SME clusters.

In the past, UNIDO has engaged in policy advisory and global forum activities with member states in the development of industrial parks. For instance, UNIDO has implemented projects related to industrial parks in
Asia, Africa and Latin America. An industrial park project in Iraq was completed recently.

Now, UNIDO is supporting the development of industrial parks along the land-based Silk Road in North-Western China and Central Asia. Last year we produced pilot guidelines to direct the development of new, green industrial zones along the Silk Road Economic Belt. In cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, UNIDO is planning to provide policy advisory and technical assistance to the Central Asian Countries in the establishment and upgrading their industrial parks.

In the future, UNIDO will continue its efforts to promote the Eco-Industrial Park approach, a new type of industrial park, which is designed on the principles of cleaner production, the circular economy and industrial ecology. I believe that industrial parks and economic zones will continue to play an important role in the coming years in promoting the inclusive and sustainable development of their respective countries, and in the less developed countries in particular. UNIDO is willing to work together with all stakeholders in this endeavour.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to share with you the recent developments at UNIDO. In December last year, UNIDO adopted the Lima Declaration with the title “Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development”.

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To further support its renewed mandate-ISID, UNIDO has planned to convene two global ISID forums this year.

The second global ISID forum will be held on 4th and 5th November. The aim is to pilot the establishment of innovative partnership-based “business models” to implement ISID strategies. To augment and leverage scarce public resources, the forum will also establish a common understanding of how development finance institutions and private investors can contribute. At this forum, UNIDO will highlight the cases of Senegal and Ethiopia, the two selected pilot countries for the development of the ISID programme for country partnerships.

The 2014 International Investment Forum in Xiamen gives UNIDO an important opportunity to share our new vision and approach through the various events which are being organized here. In particular, there are the “Maritime Silk Road Forum”, the UNIDO exhibition on “Promoting Inclusive Investment and Sustainable Technology” and a UNIDO side event on the “Launching of African Investor Survey Report 2013”. We cordially invite you all to attend these events and visit the UNIDO exhibition booths.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNIDO is adapting to a changing world in order to better serve its Member States. The new UNIDO ISID mandate takes into consideration all aspects of inclusive and sustainable industrial and economic development. UNIDO’s new vision and approach is also based on enhancing the collaboration with all stakeholders, in order to achieve common development objectives.
I am pleased to see that many of our development partners, such as UNCTAD, OECD, the World Bank, the IFC, and others, are present at this Fair and are using this platform to establish partnerships with China and other regions of the world.

I am also pleased to see a high turn-out from the private sector. Your presence here highlights the importance and relevance of this event for both the international and the Chinese business community. I hope that we can use this opportunity to forge new links.

Let me conclude by wishing you all the best for a very successful 2014 International Investment Forum in Xiamen, and Happy Mid-Autumn Festival.

Thank you.