

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**



**Statement by**

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**Deputy to the Director General**

**at the**

**International Conference on Fostering Entrepreneurial Youth**

**Vienna**

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Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

### ***Introduction***

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all today at the International Conference on Fostering Entrepreneurial Youth. According to our latest record, there are 125 participants from 59 countries around the world today here in this conference hall, which indicates a very high level of interest in the topic we are going to discuss over the next three days.

The Director General of UNIDO, Mr. LI Yong, had wished to be present today but a long-standing commitment has unfortunately prevented him from joining us. Mr. LI Yong has asked me to convey his best wishes for a successful Conference. And he looks forward to hearing about the results of your three-day gathering.

### ***Potential of Youth***

Entrepreneurship is the foundation of a sustainable and dynamic private sector. A thriving private sector is a precondition for economic growth in any market economy. Entrepreneurship generates employment and wealth but also catalyzes and shapes the diffusion of innovation, technologies, products and services, which is a crucial element of industrial development.

However, in many developing countries, the majority of people live in an agrarian, often subsistence economy. Many young people grow up without opportunities to learn entrepreneurial and industrial attitudes and skills. As a result, young people are often unable to find productive work or start their own business. This leads to poverty with persistent unemployment and underemployment.

Fostering entrepreneurship is not an issue unique to developing countries. Many developed nations are also experiencing a diminishing number of start-up businesses, which is one of the indicators of measuring how dynamic the private sector is. They are also faced with the challenge of having a majority of their youth unable to find jobs after leaving school.

Globally, some 200 million people are currently unemployed, many of them young people. By 2020, some 600 million jobs will need to be created in order to absorb the growing young population. Africa has the youngest population in the world and it is projected that, by 2015, young people will account for over 75 percent of the total population. Young people are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and the current upward global unemployment trend will continue to affect them. Young people face greater labour market barriers due to their lack of work experience, their lack of links to professional networks, and education systems that often do not reflect the needs of the market.

While youth faces enormous challenges, particularly with regard to employment and livelihoods, it also represents an opportunity for the future. This makes it doubly important to invest in youth, making it possible for future generations not only to survive but also to thrive. It is imperative to establish an enabling policy environment now so that children and youth can benefit from investments in education, employment and livelihood creation that will allow them to become productive adults today and in the future.

Today's youth are tomorrow's drivers of entrepreneurial activity in their communities, regions and countries. An increasing number of Governments worldwide recognize the importance of investing in developing entrepreneurial culture among youth, a crucial foundation for any sustainable and dynamic private sector.

## ***Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda***

As a specialized agency of the United Nations system, UNIDO is dedicated to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID). Industry drives innovation and the creation of new technological knowledge, which is vital for job creation, sustainable livelihoods, food security and equitable growth, and, ultimately, for eradicating poverty.

It is for this reason that, at our Organization's General Conference almost a year ago in Lima, Peru, the Member States of UNIDO unanimously adopted the "Lima Declaration: Towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development". This declaration makes it clear: In order to eradicate poverty, and to allow a better life and prosperity for the billions who remain excluded from a dignified human existence, the world needs to grow its industries in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

I have the firm conviction that an accelerated drive towards more inclusive and sustainable patterns of industrial development will be key for achieving higher levels of prosperity for all.

The ISID approach departs from the past models of development. It emphasizes the need to consider the impact of industrial development on economic growth, on communities and society, and on the environment. Inclusive industrial growth is intended to promote shared prosperity for all segments of society, including youth and women, as well as for rural and urban areas. By generating employment and income opportunities, inclusive industrial development will contribute to human dignity as well as social equity and cohesion, allowing the development of stable societies, and the achievement of the many developmental objectives that the international community is seeking to achieve, foremost of which is the eradication of poverty.

But inclusiveness also has another dimension. It also means that all stakeholders should engage actively and cooperatively in the development process. I am convinced that we will only achieve

our development objectives if national governments, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and finance institutions, domestic and foreign business corporations, as well as academia and civil society, act in a coherent and coordinated manner. It is for this reason that UNIDO places great emphasis on a partnership approach to development, which will be also discussed in one of the sessions of the conference, particularly the potential for public and private partnerships in fostering entrepreneurial youth.

As you aware, the report of the OWG, which was created as an inter-governmental deliberation platform for SDGs by the outcome document of Rio+20 in 2012, has just submitted its report on SDGs to the current UN General Assembly. During its one and a half year deliberation, there was an overarching consensus that poverty eradication should be imperative and it can only be achieved through sustainable development. And there seems to be a common understanding that sustainable development can only be achieved through resilient economic growth and sustainable industrial development. Industrialization creates jobs, generates profit and improves productivity. It is only through those dividends that a country can meet many other social goals such as poverty eradication, job creation, gender empowerment, education, health, etc. We are pleased that the report identified ISI among 17 SDGs. Although it will be at the Heads of States Summit in September 2015 that the post-2015 Development Agenda will be adopted officially and there will be another one year of negotiation. We strongly hope that the OWG report will be the basis of any further negotiation for the post 2015 Development Agenda.

In accordance with the Lima Deceleration, we have been also operationalizing ISID, through various activities such as the second ISID Forum that took place 4-5 November, with the presence of UNSG and the Prime Ministers of both Ethiopia and Senegal.

## ***Entrepreneurship and ISID***

Why does entrepreneurship matter for inclusive and sustainable industrial development? Entrepreneurship is an inclusive process that enables the bottom billion, women and men, in rural as well as urban areas, to climb up the wealth ladder. Entrepreneurship also transforms economies and enhances industrial development, inclusively and sustainably, from individual and grass-root levels.

Since 2002, UNIDO has had the honour of jointly working with 11 countries in Asia and Africa, and assisting them in introducing the Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme, ECP. Over one million have studied entrepreneurship in these countries, more than 7,000 entrepreneurship teachers have been trained, and country-specific entrepreneurship curricula were developed for general secondary schools, technical education and vocational training, as well as teacher training.

The private sector - employees, managers, owners of local and international companies - also benefits from a young human resource base, equipped with entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies. A change in the work behaviour of the employees enables them to do a better job than what they would do without learning entrepreneurship. Moreover, a greater availability of entrepreneurs helps to diversify the economy with an efficient, competent and sustainable private sector that, in the long run, results in a more resilient industrial structure of the economy.

UNIDO supports the member states in developing entrepreneurial culture and skills, and technical learning capability, but also supports countries in creating an enabling business environment where entrepreneurial actions are encouraged, valued and rewarded. Without this, entrepreneurs will not be able to optimize their potential in creating wealth, employment and innovation. Governments have a crucial role in influencing such values, visions and incentives through public policies and services they provide to the society and the people.

## *Closing*

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that these three days will provide an excellent platform for policymakers, practitioners, researchers and business representatives to discuss approaches to developing young people's attitudes, skills and knowledge towards an entrepreneurial society. This knowledge exchange is expected to help us further enhance our understanding of the roles of the public and private sectors in nurturing entrepreneurial initiatives and actions for our people of tomorrow, in our pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development.

Taking this opportunity, please allow me to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Japan for their generous support that allowed us to organize such an important event, as a follow up activity to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICAD, an international framework, led by Japan, that provides fundamental and comprehensive policy and guidelines on African development through cooperation between Asia and Africa.

Finally, let me also thank all of our distinguished speakers and panellists for bringing the depth and breadth of their considerable experience and expertise to this Conference.

I wish you all the best for this important Conference.

Thank you very much.