



## AIDE – MEMOIRE

Africa Industrialization Day 2015  
“SMEs for Poverty Eradication and Job Creation for Women and Youth”





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Aide Memoire

1. Background:

The Africa Industrialization Day (AID) is organized every year by UNIDO, in collaboration with the AUC, UNECA, and the support of the UN family. Due to its expertise and long-standing commitment in providing technical cooperation to African governments on industrial issues, UNIDO has been tasked to play a central role in coordinating all worldwide activities pertaining to this global event. Through the organized activities, UNIDO seeks to further stimulate the global debate on Africa's major developmental challenges. This year's theme, **"SMEs for Poverty Eradication and Job Creation for Women and Youth"**, will be discussed during the symposium to be held in Vienna on Monday 23 November 2015 and in several UNIDO field offices and desks. The debate will aim to initiate discussions and generate political and financial commitment towards Africa's industrial development in general, with a special focus on SMEs and marginalized groups as development agents.

As codified in UNGA Resolution 44/237 of 22 December 1989, the Africa Industrialization Day (AID) is celebrated each year on 20 November and allows interactions on strategies related to the sustainable industrial development of Africa, including the evaluation of results as well as the identification of achievements and future challenges.

At the global level, the AID allows for the expression of the international community's commitment to the accelerated economic growth of Africa, through sound structural industrial development. Simultaneously, the AID is an important occasion to interact with major stakeholders on the challenges pertaining to industrialization and poverty eradication in Africa.

The AID is usually celebrated at UNIDO's headquarters, as well as its offices in Geneva, New York, Brussels and in all African field offices and desks. Every year, assistance is provided to the field offices to enable them to organize seminars, exhibitions and other arrangements to mark the special occasion.

All celebrations in the field are organized closely with the respective Ministries of Industry.





## 2. Objectives of the conference:

- Engage in fruitful debates on the topic of the year
- Increase awareness on industrial challenges faced by Africa especially with regard to SME development and youth and women's inclusion.
- Reinforce political commitments for the acceleration of poverty eradication, intra-African trade and Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) across the continent

## 3. Participation:

For the event in Vienna, to take place on 23 November, Vienna-based permanent missions and staff from Vienna-based international organizations will be invited. In addition, academia (students and professors), private sector representatives, UN sister agencies, developmental partners, and donors will be invited.

This year's panel will consist of participants who are directly involved in SME development, and youth and women empowerment across the African region. The participants on this year's panel were chosen for their different background, and current position to offer and contribute to a fruitful debate encompassing major actors from key sectors.

For the symposia in UNIDO field offices, to take place on 20 November, local representatives from international organizations, Government representatives, donors and private sector entities will be invited. Many African field offices largely involve the Ministry of Industry of the country of coverage in the organization of the event too.





**4. Draft Agenda:**

The preliminary agenda is the following. This is subject to change.

**Vienna International Center (VIC), Conference Room 4, 7<sup>th</sup> floor (C-Building)**

15:00	Introduction by Mr. Edme Koffi, Chief Africa Bureau
15:05	Opening remarks by Mr. Li Yong, Director General of UNIDO
15:15	Message from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
15:20	Remarks by H.E. Mr. Tebogo Seokolo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the UN and Vienna-based International Organizations, Chairman of the African Group  <i>Video on Job Creation for Women and Youth</i>
15:35-17:35	<p>PANEL DISCUSSION</p> <p><i>Guest of Honor:</i> H.E. Ms. Sani Mariama Moussa, Minister of Industrial Development of Niger</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hussein H. Zaroug, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the UN</p> <p>Presentation: Progress of the world's women 2015-2016 –Transforming economies, realizing rights; Laura Turquet, UN Women</p> <p>Presentation: SMEs on Poverty Eradication and Job Creation for Women and Youth; Gabriele Ott, UNIDO</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Hanan Gouda, Dean for the Arab Institute for Leadership Development – Egypt</li> <li>• Mr. Cedric Atangana, CEO and Co-Founder of Infinity Space – Cameroon</li> <li>• Ms. Laura Turquet, Manager of UN Women's Flagship Report <i>Progress of the World's Women</i>, UN Women</li> <li>• Ms. Gabriele Ott, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO</li> </ul>
17:40	Cocktail Reception, Cafeteria III, VIC Restaurant





## 5. Theme to be discussed:

Despite the seismic shifts in the global economic sphere over the last decade, Africa has experienced a burgeoning economy and seen significant progresses in its Human Development Indicators. However, these optimistic developments have been hampered by several challenges among which an increasing youth unemployment and a mounting gender disparity. Unemployment and economic disempowerment remain critical obstacles towards Africa's industrialization and economic growth, especially for the vulnerable groups, namely, youth and women.

In order for the African region to transition into a prosperous continent with high quality growth, sound economic and industrial policies should be geared towards providing economic and employment opportunities for all, with a particular emphasis placed on marginalized communities and groups.

More specifically, it is imperative to note that youth and women constitute the largest and the weakest segment of least developed countries' (LDCs) populations. As a continent, Africa harbors the majority of the least developed countries with 34 countries out of the 48 listed as LDCs in 2015. The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) 2011 - 2020 for LDCs has identified youth as a fundamental asset towards graduation. The potential of young generations, if maximized, could have tremendous bearings on society if they are able to fully engage both economically and socially. Consequently, their inclusion in the productive system will assist the region in tackling the overwhelming challenges impeding most required socio-economic transformations.

In addition to the enhancement of youth socio-economic participation, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were determined as vital to achieving better sustainable and prosperous growth. Therefore, operational strategies piloted towards enhancing the capacities of these vulnerable communities are imperative for the overall inclusive and sustainable development of Africa.

As such, the AID's theme of this year is particularly relevant as the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government declared 2015 the Year of Women's Empowerment & Development towards Africa's agenda 2063. Moreover, 2015 marks a significant milestone in development initiatives. It is situated amidst, the African youth Decade Plan of Action (2009-2018) and the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), which were both formulated by the Africa Union Assembly in the years 2009 and 2010 respectively. These initiatives are geared towards accelerating youth and women's empowerment and development. More specifically, the UNIDO symposium will provide an arena for experts to deliberate on concerns associated with SMEs pertaining particularly to women and youth in line with the organization's mandate as delineated in the Lima Declaration 2013, which set the basis of UNIDO's mandate of inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID).





Potential questions to panelists:

- 1- Unemployment, specifically amongst marginalized groups (e.g. youth and women), remains a predominant obstacle to Africa's industrialization and sustainable economic growth. In this regard, which specific actions could be taken by government officials and development agencies in order to address the issue of unemployment on a local and or regional level?
- 2- Africa has increasingly been labeled as the world's youngest continent, with an estimated 200 million youth in Africa representing close to 70 percent of its population aged below 25. What are the implications of such a demographic transition for the African region as well as the global economy? How could Africa use this untapped potential to boost sustainable economic growth?
- 3- Although men have been more actively engaged as economic agents in Africa in comparison to women, they still remain continually disenfranchised and suffer from high rates of unemployment and vulnerable employment. In this regard, what are the main challenges endured by women, which impede their full economic participation? How to create the necessary policies to create an enabling environment for women to fully engage with economic activities and access the job market?
- 4- The private sector generates 9 out of 10 jobs world-wide. What initiatives and policies can be adopted in order to enhance the role of the private sector, especially SMEs, to reduce unemployment in Africa on a local level?
- 5- Access to adequate financial schemes remains a predominant challenge towards SME creation and entrepreneurship development in Africa, especially for youth and women. Which kind of policies and or measures could be designed to address this issue?
- 6- What advice can you give to women and youth that are currently struggling to get their voice heard and to turn their ambitions into reality?

