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# UNIDO General Conference

Sixteenth session

Agenda item 1

## General debate

Vienna, 1 December 2015

Statement by Mr. Thierry Buchs, Head of the Swiss delegation

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Madame President, [Mr. Secretary General], Mr. Director General, Excellences, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election and assure you of our support for reaching a successful outcome of our deliberations. I also want to thank the Director General and the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing the Conference.

The first session of this Conference took place thirty years ago, when UNIDO had been established as a specialized agency. Today, it is more important than ever to emphasize that UNIDO remains part of the United Nations family. The General Assembly has adopted a historic decision on a comprehensive set of inter-related Goals and targets - that is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavor across such a wide-ranging policy agenda. Now comes the time for its implementation. And UNIDO is poised to play an active role in this process.

UNIDO's role is very obvious when it comes to Goal number 9 on inclusive and sustainable industrialization, but there are other industry-related targets in the agenda, particularly under Goals number 6, 7, 8 and 12, where UNIDO can also make a meaningful contribution. The success of such contributions, however, will depend to a large degree on the Organization's ability to liaise and coordinate with other stakeholders, while remaining true to its mandate and aware of its core competences.

Switzerland is very pleased to see that the groundwork for enhanced interagency collaboration has already been laid in the field of science and technology, where UNIDO will integrate the UN Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs. We are confident that in the establishment of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, other agencies will come to appreciate UNIDO's experience with setting up national cleaner production centres. The Interagency Task Team will promote coordination, coherence, and cooperation within the UN system and may thus become a model for similar strategic alliances in different fields.

Madame President,

To promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development is a huge endeavor, but do we have the means for our ambition? Our Organization operates within a tight budgetary framework, with a regular budget of less than 70 million euros and extrabudgetary resources of less than 200 million euros per year. By comparison, the amount at UNIDO's disposal is less than 10% of Switzerland's official development assistance.

Against this background, we welcome the Director General's initiative to leverage and mobilize additional resources from development finance institutions and innovative sources of finance. We agree that a wide range of financing sources needs to be tapped, including private investors that seek social and environmental benefits together with financial returns. The Organization has a good track record in reaching out to the private sector and setting up public-private partnerships, and it can certainly assist countries in designing the right incentives and regulatory frameworks for private investors, making sure that industrialization is inclusive and sustainable.

The mobilization of domestic public resources is another important element to be considered in the light of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. In this context, we are also encouraged to see that UNIDO has seized opportunities to engage with national governments on the highest level and with Ministries of Finance. We note that a limited number of pilot programmes for country partnerships have resulted from such opportunities, and we would like to see robust monitoring and independent evaluation of these pilot programmes precisely because UNIDO's policymaking organs may – depending on the outcome – decide that this approach should be mainstreamed.

Switzerland will pay particular attention to two aspects: Firstly, how programmes for country partnerships relate to established coordination mechanisms, like the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and secondly, whether the amount of staff and financial resources invested by UNIDO into such programmes is commensurate with their outcome.

Madame President,

We would also like to thank the Director-General for having presented an action plan on UNIDO's field policy and network to the Member States. Switzerland understands that this reform is driven by the need to achieve cost savings, and therefore requires difficult choices. We also understand the desire by Member States to maintain country offices where they exist, perhaps in the hope of attracting technical cooperation. But in our view, the Organization's field structure should not determine the allocation of technical cooperation resources; it should be smart and flexible enough to adapt to new and evolving priorities and support the efficient deployment of UNIDO's activities across the world. Against this background, it would be all the more important to strengthen the five remaining regional offices. For instance, some of the functions now attributed to headquarters, like keeping abreast of regional trends, and managing technical cooperation demands and services for countries not covered by country offices, could be assigned to the regional offices. This would also allow for some staff rotation from headquarters to the field, and strengthen the proximity of the Organization to its members' needs and realities. By the same token, and based on the long-standing experiences of Switzerland as a donor working closely with UNIDO, we would like to call for the strengthening of the role and responsibilities of country offices in the sourcing and implementation of technical cooperation, working directly and closely with the PTC division (Programme development and technical cooperation division) at headquarters, so as to enhance the efficiency of the delivery mode of UNIDO's programs and projects.

In concluding, let me reiterate that Switzerland wants to see UNIDO strong and fit for the purpose of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you, Madame President.

