

## Concept Note

### Friends of Industry and Innovation

1. Economic growth, social development and climate action are heavily dependent on investments in infrastructure, sustainable industrial development and technological progress. In the face of a rapidly changing global economic landscape and increasing inequalities, sustained growth must include industrialization that first of all, makes opportunities accessible to all people, and two is supported by innovation and resilient infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.
2. In 2015, the international community decided to include inclusive and sustainable industrialization as a key objective in the 2030 Agenda for Development, in recognition of the crucial role that industrial development plays in economic diversification and structural transformation. SDG 9 - and Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Industrialization in particular - is thus recognized as being closely linked to the achievement of many other goals and is seen as much as an 'enabler' as a goal in its own right.
3. With only 10 years left to deliver on the goals, and faced with the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, progress towards SDG 9 is too slow and more action is needed- especially in a context of rapidly unfolding technological developments, broadly referred to as the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. These technological developments are fundamentally changing the nature of industrial and economic development. The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution holds great promise for creating more productive, interconnected and resource efficient economies. At the same time, it increases the risk of further widening the technological divide.<sup>2</sup> The international community therefore has a special responsibility to ensure that the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution benefits all, and that latecomer countries in terms of manufacturing and innovation, manage to develop the technological capabilities to integrate in a meaningful manner into the global economy and build resilient societies.
4. In September 2019, the UN Secretary General called on all sectors of society to mobilize for a Decade of Action on three levels: global action, local action and people action<sup>3</sup>. Global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, is of particular relevance to International Geneva.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/9\\_Why-it-Matters\\_Goal-9\\_Industry\\_1p.pdf](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/9_Why-it-Matters_Goal-9_Industry_1p.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), 2019. *Industrial Development Report 2020. Industrializing in the digital age*. Vienna; OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), 2017. *The Next Production Revolution: Implications for Governments and Business*. Paris: OECD Publishing;

<sup>3</sup> This appeal assumes even greater relevance in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis. In his report '[Shared responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#)', the UNSG stressed the need to 'build back better' and re-double efforts to achieve the SDGs.

5. Greater leadership in advocating the importance of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization, in mobilizing more resources towards it, and in fostering partnerships for leveraging trade, investment and technology are essential to achieve SDG 9 and to spread the benefits of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Geneva offers real opportunities for such global action- at the global forums and conferences as well as at the numerous intergovernmental meetings on trade, investment, digital technologies and employment. International Geneva also assumes particular relevance for fostering partnerships, within the United Nations Development System (UNDS), as Geneva is considered to be the operational hub of the UN, as well as within the wider Geneva-based 'ecosystem'.

**Objectives:**

Against this background, likeminded UN Member States will form an informal group of "Friends of Industry and Innovation", to:

- i. sensitize the international community on the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrialization, in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, for achieving sustainable development; support SDG 9 with advocacy and outreach in the intergovernmental meetings on trade, investment, technology and employment in Geneva
- ii. promote partnerships for leveraging trade, investment and technology for inclusive and sustainable industrialization; promote greater UN coherence and synergies in economic transformation related matters, in the context of the ongoing UNDS reform;
- iii. engage in regular, open discussions about the most effective strategies and policies for achieving economic transformation through industrialization in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution;

We ask the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to provide secretarial support to the group to facilitate its work as needed.

**Meeting frequency and format:**

Twice a year/as necessary, during working lunches with invited speakers.

**Tentative launch:**

September 2020