



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY !

**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj,  
Permanent Representative of Slovenia to UNIDO  
at the Forty-eighth session of the UNIDO Industrial Development Board  
on UNIDO and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda item 7),  
Vienna, 23 November 2020**

*Mr. President,*

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as the 48th president of the Industrial Development Board. As a vice-president, Slovenia is looking forward to closely cooperate with you in the following year. We also thank the Secretariat of UNIDO for their tireless efforts to secure a smooth conduct of this session, despite the limitations, posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consequences of the pandemic will have long-term effects on our economies, including the industrial sector. Standard business practices will have to be rethought and reformulated to fit new realities. In this regard, we should recognize the opportunity to orient our economic future towards sustainable practices, such as transition to renewable energy sources and circular economy models. This would also contribute to the implementation of the Decade of Action in efforts to achieve the SDGs.

The report of the Director General shows that UNIDO has been very active in this field. We commend it for quickly adapting its technical cooperation activities to the new reality and ensuring that the progress achieved in the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) will continue. DG's report also notes the crucial role of digitalization in minimizing disruptions in business continuity and supply chains. UNIDO continues to assist industries of Member States and to strengthen their contribution to climate neutrality and circular economy by adopting energy and resource efficient manufacturing practices and innovation.

Slovenia shares the noble goal of UNIDO to secure a more sustainable and greener future, supported by digitalization. Just this year we, together with UNIDO, launched a joint project on “Development of an innovation ecosystem and support infrastructure, including a Digital Education and Innovation Centre in Azerbaijan”. The objective of the project is to improve the innovation ecosystem in the Republic of Azerbaijan and to create awareness on Industry 4.0 opportunities and challenges to pursuing Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID).

On the national level, Slovenia has been putting considerable efforts into development and enhancement of the transition to circular economy, which has become an integral part of our strategic development agenda, our climate action as well as our post-Covid green recovery program. Circular Economy was also recognized as one of the main national smart specialization areas for the Multi-annual financial framework 2014 - 2020. We will be sharing our best practices from this field with the interested parties in the scope of UNIDO’s global consultations on circular economy, which started last week.

*Finally Mr. President,*

I would like to assure you of Slovenia’s continued support to the work of UNIDO. While we, the Member States, have mandated it with an extensive set of tasks, it is our duty to ensure it can implement them in full and without limitations. In this connection, we want to encourage all Member States of UNIDO to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. Slovenia also continues the practice of renouncing its share of unutilized balances in order to provide the Organization with funds for additional projects and activities. We encourage other Member States to do the same.

On this note, I wish us all a successful conclusion of the meeting and a healthy and safe end of this extraordinary year.

*Thank you.*