



**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED
BY
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

AT THE 48th SESSION OF THE UNIDO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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**Vienna
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Agenda item 9: Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa

Mr. President,

The Republic of South Africa continues to support UNIDO's Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa. We recognise the need to integrate economies to create scale and size that can help to foster greater competitiveness. The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, covering potentially more than a billion consumers, embodies this support and our strategic framework for delivering on Africa's goals for inclusive and sustainable development to accelerate intra African Trade and boosting Africa's trading position in the global market.

As chair of the African Union, President Ramaphosa has asserted that the successful implementation of the AfCFTA is the pathway to the realisation of our Agenda 2063 and the realisation of the "Africa We Want." Within the AfCFTA economic diversification, beneficiation of our minerals and resources as well as value-addition to seize the opportunities arising from an increasingly open African Continental market is expected. In this regard, South Africa would like to encourage UNIDO to continue working in partnership with African countries to facilitate collaborations and investment led trade strategies. Fifty-four countries signed the Agreement and 30 countries have now ratified it and we expect the start of trading under the AFCFTA early in 2021. We recognise that the majority of the work in bringing the AfCTFA to a success relies on improving the ease of doing business, enhancing cross-border infrastructure, ensuring a stable and professional environment and simplifying rules and reducing red tape.

In our efforts to prepare for the operating of the AfCFTA, South Africa has implemented a seamless electronic registration system for companies, opening of a bank account, securing a web domain name and certification of compliance with local conditions, all accessible from a single portal capable of being completed within hours and not days or months. We call on our global partners to support this initiative and invest on the African continent by working in collaboration in joint ventures with local manufacturers or by bringing foreign direct investment in sectors such as productive manufacturing, agro-processing businesses, in healthcare products, the digital economy and in green technologies. Investment builds factories, mines, roads and power supply. It connects

people through telecoms infrastructure, and provides the liquidity for new entrepreneurs. It is the life-blood of any economy, and with more of it we can create more jobs and decent jobs – and thereby create decent livelihoods for the people on our continent.

We further call upon UN agencies such as UNIDO to support the AfCFTA by continuing to support collaborative technical partnerships through UN agencies, government partners and with private corporations, to support skills development and knowledge transfer by onsite training or secondment programmes, and also supporting research and development and greater innovation on the African continent. We look forward to this exciting path to creating sustainable industrialisation to the home of more than one billion citizens of our integrated world.

Thank you!