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UNIDO and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Report by the Director General

The present document provides information on the contribution of UNIDO to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with General Conference resolutions GC.15/Res.1 and GC.16/Res.2, and in accordance with Programme and Budget Committee conclusion 2016/6 and Industrial Development Board decision IDB.44/Dec.9(e)(i).

I. Overview

1. Multiple shocks are threatening to further reverse progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the world economy. Global economies and women and men around the world are suffering from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of conflicts and wars, rising inflation and slow economic development, tightening monetary and financial conditions, unsustainable debt burdens, and the escalating climate emergency.
2. The report of the Secretary-General entitled “*Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet*” finds that, at the mid-way point on our way to 2030, only 12 per cent of targets for which data is available are on track. Close to half of the targets, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track, and some 30 per cent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.
3. The lack of SDG progress is universal, but it is abundantly clear that developing countries and the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of the collective failure to advance sustainable development.
4. The current situation and recent crises serve as a reminder that all countries and societies depend on the efficient operation of global economic and industrial production systems. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development can directly and

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indirectly contribute to the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development.

5. The 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals will continue to serve as a compass for the international community, including UNIDO, during the remaining years of the Decade of Action. While the general direction is still clear, the Secretary-General urges governments to recommit to accelerated, sustained and transformative action to deliver on the promise of the SDGs.

II. Follow-up and review at the global level

6. The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level. The HLPF 2023, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will be held from 10 to 20 July to conduct an in-depth review of Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17. The HLPF in July will help prepare for the second SDG Summit from 18 to 19 September 2023, under the auspices of the General Assembly.

7. This year's review process, which also takes place at mid-point of the 2030 Agenda, is thus an important occasion to assess progress made on inclusive and sustainable industrial development and highlight the role of SDG 9 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

8. UNIDO as the organization mandated to maintain worldwide industrial statistics, serves as custodian agency for six industry-related indicators under SDG 9, a particularly important role this year. In that function and as a member of the United Nations Statistical Commission, UNIDO supported the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on *Progress towards the SDGs*, the *Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart*, and the *SDG Global Database*.

9. In response to the invitation by the President of ECOSOC, the Industrial Development Board discussed an intergovernmental input document for the HLPF 2023. Following five informal consultations and multiple bilateral meetings under the strong leadership of the President of the fiftieth session of the Board, Member States were not able to agree on a consensus text.

10. As the global thematic review of SDG 9, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and UNIDO organized an expert group meeting on 22 March to take stock of SDG 9 progress. The meeting was organized back-to-back with the 2023 Multilateral Industrial Policy Forum. Participants in the hybrid meeting included experts from academia, industrial associations, think tanks, private sector, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as major groups and other stakeholders representing youth and children, farmers and persons with disabilities. The outcome of the meeting will feed into the preparations for the SDG 9 session of the HLPF.¹

11. At the regional level, the United Nations Regional Commissions, supported by DESA, organized Regional Forums for Sustainable Development to assess the implementation of the reviewed SDGs in the respective regions. Forums took place in late February in Niamey, in mid-March in Beirut, late March in Bangkok, and Geneva, Switzerland, and in April in Santiago. UNIDO provided support or led the preparations of substantive contributions to documents, round tables, side events and plenary sessions on SDG 9.

12. At the national level, 41 countries present voluntary national reviews for the HLPF 2023. Of these, 27 are UNIDO Member States, 2 will present for the first time, 39 for the second time and 1 for the third time. Through its field network, UNIDO

¹ [link to the report will follow once available – for the time being:
<https://sdgs.un.org/events/egmforsdg9>.]

supported the review of progress on SDG 9 through the respective United Nations country teams and with governments directly.

13. The 2023 *Financing for Sustainable Development Report* issued on 5 April 2023, in preparation of the eighth Financing for Development Forum, concludes that the current revival of and new approaches to industrial policies open a window of opportunity for sustainable industrial transformations: to build domestic production to achieve low-carbon transitions, create decent jobs and gender equality, and to promote digitalization along with productivity increases and economic growth. While the number of countries adopting industrial policy measures have more than doubled between 2009 and 2019, this trend is most evident in industrialized countries, which often focus on the green transition. Development finance is not keeping pace with growing SDG financing needs in developing countries. Urgent action is needed to boost all forms of international development cooperation and enhance the international financial architecture.²

14. In particular with the thematic chapter of the 2023 edition focusing on financing sustainable industrial transformation, UNIDO again made a major contribution to the *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*. The linkage to the SDG 9 review provided opportunities for UNIDO to lead or co-lead SDG 9 sessions of the Financing for Development Forum and relevant ECOSOC segments in the run-up to the HLPF.

15. A thematic session on SDG 9 at the 2023 ECOSOC Youth Forum, co-led by UNIDO, advanced discussions on how the potential of youth can be harnessed to turbo-charge SDG 9. Recommendations resulting from the discussions include that governments and the international development community should focus on inclusive policies that support youth in acquiring the necessary skills and accessing the resources needed to participate in and drive sustainable industrialization, innovation and infrastructure.

16. UNIDO also continued its support to the Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum), which also included SDG 9 as one of the focus goals, and used the 2023 Forum as an opportunity to convene partners and highlight UNIDO's work. This included events on "Policy challenges from multi-level perspectives to accelerate the full implementation of STI for SDGs" and on "Enablers for transformative change to sustain people and nature centred world".

17. The Organization will play a key role in the SDG 9 session of the 2023 HLPF on 12 July, building on its expertise, outcomes of the expert group meeting on SDG 9, and contributions to regional sustainable development forums and preceding ECOSOC segments and sessions focused on industry, innovation and infrastructure.

18. In line with decision IDB.50/Dec.6, UNIDO will organize a side event at the margins of the HLPF 2023 on UNIDO efforts towards the attainment of SDG 9 in middle-income countries. In April 2023, at the time of writing, UNIDO also started preparing a side event to advance sustainable energy transitions and looking into events on sustainable supply chain management, as well as artificial intelligence and gender with relevant partners.

19. The outcomes of the HLPF 2023 will serve as inputs and contribution to the second SDG Summit, which is also the second high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the General Assembly, during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly on 18 and 19 September 2023.

20. The Summit will mark the mid-point in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the SDGs. It is meant to highlight high-impact initiatives, innovative policies and unlock commitments from a broad range of stakeholders. The Summit also links to the 2024 Summit of the Future.

² <https://developmentfinance.un.org/fsdr2023>.

III. Our Common Agenda

21. As informed in document [IDB.50/14](#), the Secretary-General released the report entitled “Our Common Agenda” ([A/75/982](#)) as his vision for the future of international cooperation and as a proposal to turbocharge the 2030 Agenda.

22. Preparations are ongoing towards the Summit of the Future in September 2024, which will take place in conjunction with the opening of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly. The Summit is seen as a generational opportunity to reinvigorate global action and strengthen the multilateral system and frameworks that move us into the future we want.

23. The intergovernmental process is led by the President of the General Assembly, who appointed the Permanent Representatives of Germany and Namibia to the United Nations in New York as co-facilitators for the Summit of the Future. Consultations by Member States are currently ongoing in New York, both towards the preparatory ministerial meeting planned for 21 September 2023, and in preparation for the outcome document of the 2024 Summit entitled “A Pact for the Future”.³

24. The ministerial meeting offers the opportunity to agree on specific tracks, modalities and selected key deliverables that could feed into the outcome document. Negotiations on the Pact for the Future are planned for the period from October 2023 to August 2024.

25. In response to the request in General Assembly resolution [76/307](#) for concise and action-oriented recommendations, the Secretary-General is issuing a series of policy briefs issued between March and July 2023, to inform the intergovernmental preparations. UNIDO actively engaged and contributed to key policy briefs, most particularly as a member of the core groups for the policy briefs on the Global Digital Compact and UN 2.0 respectively, and is also represented and engaged in the UNSDG Working Group on Our Common Agenda.

26. The Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future is expected to “outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all”. Led by the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, the related policy brief was published in April. The UNIDO contribution was based on the consultations with Member States at the Development Dialogue on 26 January.

27. UNIDO will continue to support the preparations leading up to the Summit of the Future, as well as the eventual implementation of the Compact through concrete technical cooperation projects and partnerships in the fields of artificial intelligence and global data commons, particularly for smart manufacturing.

28. UNIDO also contributes to the workstream towards a UN 2.0, notably through the example of the UNIDO Innovation Lab, which was presented at a UNIDO side-event at the STI Forum on 2 May, co-organized with Austria, Ethiopia, Germany and the United Nations Global Pulse.

29. The processes outlined above are decisive for the remaining years towards 2030 and for the political consensus beyond. UNIDO thus appreciates the support of Member States and their Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York to emphasize the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrial development for the SDGs, the advancement of Our Common Agenda and current and addressing future global crises.

IV. Action required of the Board

30. The Board may wish to take note of the information contained in the present document.

³ The proposed modalities for the Summit of the Future are contained in draft resolution [76/L.87](#).