

 Permanent
Mission
of Austria

to the United
Nations in Vienna

AUSTRIA
20th General Conference
(27 November – 1 December 2023)
General Debate
State Secretary Susanne KRAUS-WINKLER

Thank you, Madame President,
Director General
Excellencies – Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madame President, let me congratulate you and the all newly elected members of the bureau and assure you of our full support. I also would like to express Austria's gratitude to the last bureau for its valuable work, in particular to His Excellency Ambassador Mohamed Mezghani from Tunisia and his colleagues for their relentless efforts during the often difficult negotiations.

Austria fully supports an effective multilateralism with the UN at its centre. We think that UNIDO's mandate is more important than ever, and let me thank especially Director General Gerd Müller to have given UNIDO a new dynamic to lead the organisation in these challenging times. In order to fulfil this important mandate, also the guidance by member states is crucial. Given the strong tradition of adopting by consensus, close cooperation is needed. We hope that the discussions we are going to have will be based on the commitment to support and guide UNIDO wisely at a crucial point in time.

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement of the European Union, which will be read out during the discussion. We would like to highlight and add the following:

Concerning **Ukraine** we refer to the EU statement and welcome UNIDO's immediate action for the country and the organization's plans to contribute to the reconstruction. In this UNIDO framework, Austria is proud to support the creation of small and medium sized enterprises as well as the economic empowerment of women and youth in Western Ukraine for inclusive and sustainable recovery.

This year's title of this General Conference is "Fair Globalization: Innovative Solutions for the Industry of Tomorrow"

Austria welcomes the UNIDO Operational Strategy for Digital Transformation and welcomes UNIDO's commitment to close the digital divide. At the same time we think that technology development has to remain centred on human interest as UNIDO discussed with representatives of the Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism, the City of Vienna and of the Institute of Electrics and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and is laid out in the Poysdorf Declaration, signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Under the slogan "Progress by Innovation", UNIDO is focusing its work on three priorities: to end hunger, to support sustainable supply chains and to bring forward climate action.

We support the focus on these priorities and are therefore grateful that Armenia has proposed a draft resolution on UNIDO Activities related to Environment, Energy and Circular Economy, referring amongst others to the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum. The Forum has taken place at the beginning of this month and gathered more than 2 300 participants from many different sectors to discuss strategies to favour an energy transition for the benefit of all and leaving no one behind. We encourage UNIDO to bring in some of its results into the discussions at the COP 28 and appreciate DG Müller's personal engagement to promote new technologies to further climate change mitigation, like UNIDO's initiative to promote Green Hydrogen in Industry.

Austria also supports the Global Network of Sustainable Energy Centres and regional centres for renewable energy and energy efficiency. We think they are very positive examples of

regional cooperation to bring forward a transition to sustainable energies and therefore contribute to mitigate climate change.

We further welcome that Bangladesh has proposed a draft resolution on UNIDO Activities related to agribusiness, trade capacity-building and job creation and to support in this way sustainable supply chains – equally important topics. We think it is important to develop better integrated regional and global supply chains and, thereby, facilitate fair participation in the economic profit supporting a prosperous income base, without destroying natural or social environment.

And, of course, Austria supports the initiative on a resolution on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women tabled by Mexico and Norway and welcomes UNIDO's new operational strategy for gender equality and the empowerment of women for the period of 2024 to 2027. As many studies have shown, gender equality and empowerment of women are important drivers to increase GDP and the wealth of all. According to studies, SDG 5 will not be reached in time if we do not implement stronger measures to support gender equality and empowerment of women.

Let me further thank the countries that nominated candidates as External Audits for the period of July 2024 to June 2026.

Madame President, let me thank through you Director General Dr. Gerd Müller. We appreciate his work in leading the Organisation. We have followed the restructuring process and the manifold activities to promote the organisation in order to even better fulfil the mandate. We can only encourage DG Müller and all UNIDO colleagues to continue on this path.

Madam President, as a member state and as the organization's host country, Austria will continue to fully support the Director General and UNIDO in fulfilling its important mandate.

Thank you, Madame President!