



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

20th SESSION OF THE UNIDO GENERAL CONFERENCE

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**Vienna
Check against delivery.**

Madame President,

Let me join others in congratulating you, Ambassador Lepre, on your Chairship of the 20th session of UNIDO's General Conference and extend my best wishes to both you and the Bureau. We are confident that under able leadership, we will have a successful conference and wish to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Africa Group and the Group of 77 and China.

Madame President,

This conference takes place during turbulent times, marked by the ongoing genocidal war waged by the Apartheid regime of Israel against Palestine. The inequalities ably elaborated by the DG, ranging from unfair trade and skewed distribution of resources to the threat imposed by Climate Change.

Madame President,

We express its appreciation to Director General Gerd Muller on his excellent stewardship of UNIDO since his election. My delegation has noted the significant progress made in the implementation of UNIDO's projects and programmes over the last two years, notably, the 17 % increase in the implementation of technical cooperation projects in various areas such as climate change, renewable energy and food security which are all of critical importance to the inclusive sustainable industrial development of the African continent and its broader achievement of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 SDG Agenda.

South Africa is pleased to note the expansion of the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) and country programmes to include more African countries. We acknowledge the value of these partnerships in enhancing industrial productivity, entrepreneurship and

fostering employment opportunities and would like to encourage UNIDO to expand existing networks.

We share the view that inclusive sustainable industrial development contributes to the poverty reduction and shared prosperity of the continent, which can only be fully realised through gender equality and the socio[economic empowerment of both women and youth. We encourage UNIDO to continue incorporating gender mainstreaming and promoting education and skills development for youth in projects conducted through its field offices. In this regard, South Africa wishes to express our appreciation for UNIDO's commitment to aligning its efforts with the industrial plans of Member States and those of the African Union, with specific reference to the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Fortifying production systems, refining skills development, shaping policies, and fostering regional supply chains are indispensable for intra-African trade and regional advancement. This also includes bridging the digital gap through skills development and harnessing the benefits of artificial intelligence in manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

Madame President,

South Africa commends UNIDO for its continued efforts in the implementation of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and other development partners, which is reflective of its commitment for structural transformation and sustainable industrialisation of the African Continent. We encourage UNIDO and our development partners to continue developing strategies that align with the objectives of the IDDA III and those of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to accelerate the continent's industrialisation drive and intra African Trade. We continue to call upon UNIDO to ensure that the IDDA III Secretariat is fully staffed and operational in order to follow up on the various strategies and policies related to IDDA III.

Similarly, we also express our appreciation for the UNIDO Strategy for Africa 2023-2025, which will facilitate the necessary coordination and resource mobilisation for the IDDA III Action Plan. We are encouraged by the Director-General's active engagements with

other important multilateral structures, UN agencies and donors to enhance multi-agency coordination to build technical competence, enhance productivity and expand opportunities for a wider scale of inclusive and sustainable industrial development. We have also taken positive note of the increased contributions to voluntary resources

Madame President,

South Africa currently hosts about 14 ongoing bankable projects in critical areas such as green hydrogen, carbon capture, waste management and entrepreneurship. These projects are in line with our Developmental Agenda and are contributing to enabling the country's forward march to the attainment of our Industrialisation goals. We look forward to scaling up technical cooperation efforts to further enhance the impact and reach of these initiatives not just in our country but our Region and Continent.

Allow me to conclude by wishing the 20th session of this General Conference a great success.

I thank you.

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