



European Union

EU Statement at General Debate

**21st session of the General Conference
United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)**

Riyadh, 23-27 November 2025

President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

President,

We are gathered today in this magnificent venue in Riyadh at the 21st UNIDO General Conference. We commend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's for elevating the General Conference as the Global Industrial Summit. This highlights the importance of our discussions and the actions that will follow.

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the Riyadh Declaration. We commend the collaborative efforts behind this landmark statement, which underscores our shared commitment to advancing Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development.

We congratulate UNIDO Director General Gerd Müller on his reappointment. Under his leadership, we have seen impressive advancements, notably a 29% increase in technical cooperation delivery and a remarkable 102% rise in project funding, as stated in his Annual Report for 2024. We commend these efficiency gains, and we encourage continued efforts.

The EU acknowledges the positive outcome of the 41st session of the Programme and Budget Committee and the 53rd Industrial Development Board concerning the 2026-2027 biennial budget, ensuring a solid financial basis for UNIDO, along with the interim decision allowing budget implementation flexibility.

We also appreciate the development of the Medium-Term Programme Framework for 2026-2029, and encourage further progress with an Integrated Results and Performance Framework, based on SMART indicators

President,

The longstanding partnership between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the European Union has continually deepened and expanded, based on a mutual understanding of the role that industry and the private sector play in creating wealth and quality employment.

This collaboration is strengthened by the Global Gateway strategy and the Team Europe Initiative, showcasing joint efforts - with EU Member States - in promoting sustainable development and achieving SDGs worldwide. The Global Gateway addresses pressing global challenges, from climate change to health systems and food security, aiming to bridge digital divides, enhance national, regional and global supply chains resilience and competitive value chains, and advance circular economies, with private sector support.

With climate action at the forefront of global concerns, the EU underlined the urgency of climate action at COP30 in Belem and therefore strongly support UNIDO's Climate Change Strategy, and action plan. These initiatives are crucial for accelerating the transition to green industries, advancing the Paris Agreement goals, and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Collaborative efforts like the Global Green Industrial Dialogue in Vienna, in which the Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action Kurt Vandenberghe participated, as well as UNIDO's participation in the 2025 EU Industry Days in Poland, will be critical.

Our commitment to decarbonisation is compelling. The EU has shown that our decarbonisation model is also a growth model as demonstrated by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) which has cut over 50% of emission in sectors covered (including power and industry) while ensuring economic growth. It

generated over €250 billion in revenue which we reinvested in the clean transition (including the EU Innovation Fund).

The upcoming Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aims to prevent carbon leakage. Investments in clean energy are substantial, reaching 335 billion EUR by 2025 and generating 1.8 million jobs, supported by over 40 bilateral clean transition partnerships. We also established a task force to support countries on carbon pricing.

A key focus for the European Union is gender equality. We commend UNIDO for ensuring that 69% of its projects contribute to SDG 5. Gender equality is crucial for achieving inclusive societies, spurring innovation, and fostering sustainable development. Increased representation of women in senior management positions and adequate funding for the Division for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment within UNIDO are critical priorities.

President,

Our collaboration with UNIDO remains robust with nearly 60 million EUR in additional funding for 2024, marking a substantial increase from the previous year. In 2025, the EU supports 41 UNIDO on-going projects worth 368 million EUR, essential for delivering on our shared priorities, enhancing SME competitiveness, promoting circular economies and digital technology adoption, expanding renewable energy solutions, and ensuring food security through sustainable supply chains and agribusiness systems.

Furthermore, several EU Member States are among the top funding partners for UNIDO programs, as indicated in the 2024 report, supporting landmark programmes like the Advancing Climate-resilience and Transformation in African Coffee Programme.

The EU's and UNIDO are dedicated to private sector development, evidenced by the recent CAPFISH event in Vienna. This project in Cambodia successfully leveraged private sector funding to bolster the post-harvest fisheries sector, improves regulatory framework and contribute to food safety. The EU's and UNIDO also focus on poverty alleviation and improving livelihoods for disadvantaged women, men and young people as evidenced by the successful

implementation of the PAIDAR program implemented in partnership with the government of Pakistan.

Looking at Africa, the EU celebrates this year a 25-year partnership with the African Union. At the EU-Africa Summit and EU-Africa Business forum in Luanda tomorrow, we aim to further bolster this cooperation, ensuring that our partnership enhances prosperity, peace, human capital development, and environmental sustainability. As Africa's major trading and investment partner, ODA and humanitarian aid provider, the EU is committed to fostering ties based on shared values. The Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package promises at least 150 billion EUR in investments by 2030 to accelerate the green and digital transition.

Notably, the EU support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through the Africa Trade, Competitiveness and Market Access programme, implemented by UNIDO and ITC to advance regional integration and economic development.

We welcomed UNIDO's active participation in the EU-CELAC Summit and the Business Forum earlier this month in Colombia, to explore new partnerships aimed at enhancing economic cooperation and investment in Latin America and the Caribbean, using the EU-LAC Global Gateway Investment Programme as a guiding framework.

We invite you to visit our booth during the Summit to learn about the EU-UNIDO partnership worldwide.

President,

A strengthened UNIDO is vital to effectively support its Member States in addressing global crises that threaten sustainable development. Gross violations of international law undermine the UN system, and in this context, the EU calls on all States to abide by their obligations and ensure the protection of civilians and industrial infrastructures in all conflicts. We support all credible efforts to contribute to a settlement of armed conflicts and wars of aggression and recall with appreciation that only 8 months ago, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was hosting talks on a cease-fire in Ukraine.

The EU commends the Secretary General's leadership in launching the UN80 initiative. The European Union and its Member States believe in the urgency to modernise and improve the multilateral system and its effectiveness at country level - a belief anchored in our unwavering commitment to multilateralism. We expect full engagement by UNIDO in the UN80 reform aiming for increased efficiency and effectiveness and to "Deliver as One" at country level for maximum development impact.

We look forward to deepen cooperation with UNIDO and its Member States to achieve our shared vision of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development.

Thank you.