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for a sustainable future

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003973



Distr.
GENERAL

ID/B/13
11 April 1967

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
First session
New York, 10-28 April 1967

TEXT OF MESSAGE BY SECRETARY-GENERAL, U THANT, TO
FIRST SESSION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

10 April 1967

The first meeting of the Industrial Development Board marks an important milestone in the development work of the United Nations. I deeply regret that the pressures of office have made it necessary for me to be away from Headquarters at this particular time and thereby prevented me from attending personally the opening of this important session. I wish, however, to express on this occasion my conviction that the establishment by the General Assembly of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization as a major addition to the spectrum of international organs and programmes in the economic and social field will give a new and pragmatic dimension to the United Nations development efforts.

The renewed emphasis on industrialization is a further expression of the concern of the international community with closing, or at least bridging, the "development gap". Industrialization is not an aim in itself. It is primarily an instrument, and an essential one, for spearheading economic growth. It should provide a basis for a balanced development of all economic activities, and primarily of the development of the human potential which has remained largely dormant in the less developed areas. Extending the prodigious possibilities opened up by the Industrial Revolution to those two thirds of the world population who have not participated so far in the mounting prosperity of the more industrialized areas will also make a major contribution to improved conditions of political and economic equilibrium throughout the world.

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The creation at this stage of a central machinery to deal with industrial development reflects not only a desire for broadening the scope of the United Nations work in this field, but also a larger preoccupation with the practical problems of development. It is particularly gratifying that, at a time when major donors of foreign aid programmes are showing signs of weariness, direct action in the field of industrial development is gaining wide support. A concrete example of the willingness of the major industrial Powers to share the responsibility for more effective action in this field were the pledges made over and above their regular contributions to UNDP to finance the programme of Special Industrial Services proposed at the twentieth session of the General Assembly. Indeed, it takes a measure of enlightened foresight on the part of the industrially advanced countries to be willing to share their current resources of technology and capital with a view to realizing the enormous benefits that the world as a whole would gain from upgrading the productivity of two thirds of mankind to levels compatible with the immediate possibilities of our technology.

I am sure an atmosphere of optimism and anticipation will pervade the first meeting of the Industrial Development Board. For those who have united their efforts to give tangible expression to the universal desire for intensified and concentrated action in the field of industrial development, this will indeed be a most gratifying occasion. It should also serve as an inspiration to further efforts. While United Nations machinery can play an important role when there is willingness to co-operate in the attainment of common objectives, it would be misleading to view it as a substitute for action by individual countries. Just as the industrially advanced countries have special responsibilities because of the magnitude of their resources and technology, the major effort to accelerate industrialization must come from the developing nations themselves. In the last analysis, the extent to which existing and new opportunities for international co-operation will contribute to the common goals depends on the degree of initiative, purposefulness and sustained interest shown by all member countries.

The time may be ripe now for a concentrated attack on the problems of industrial development, undertaken as a co-operative effort of industrialized and industrializing countries. To lead this effort may be the most important role of the Industrial Development Board. May I express the hope that the crucial needs of mankind in this area will be well served by the Board. In extending my welcome to all members of the Board, I wish to convey to each one of you my best wishes for the success of your first session.





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