

## STATEMENT

**President of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**

**H.E. Miroslav Lajčák**

**17<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference  
of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

*Mr. President,*

*Mr. Director-General,*

*Distinguished Heads of State and Government,*

*Honourable Ministers,*

*Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,*

I am honoured to address this 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. I congratulate you, **Director-General Li**, on your re-appointment.

Industrial development often conjures up images of big factories and heavy machinery. We easily think of production lines and construction sites. This may be. But perhaps, you more than anyone, know that industrial development is more than that. The whole purpose of industrialisation is to deliver better livelihoods and improved standards. In effect, it is about a **decent life for all people**.

The people in communities who can now scale up manufacture of traditional products have felt the benefit of industrial development; small farmers linked into the supply chain for industry can attest to it; young people who craft a future using their culture and creativity

know it. So let me reiterate it today: “people are at the heart of industrial development.”

*Excellencies,*

We stand at a critical juncture on the road to sustainable development. We are moving to reposition the United Nations Development System to ensure that it can deliver on the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We must ensure that the UN system is fit for purpose; that it is suited to support the universal implementation and achievement of the Goals. This is how we will make an **impact on people**.

I would like to share **three main messages** on your theme:

*[Partnering for impact – achieving the SDGs]*

First, we cannot **impact** global development without inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Industrialisation of the past may have earned a bad name. We think of pollution. We think of waste water. We think of labour exploitation. But **when industrialisation is inclusive and sustainable the results are positive**.

It leads to decent jobs and improved livelihoods. It fosters youth employment. It allows resource preservation and environmental protection.

These outcomes propel us towards **eliminating poverty and hunger** and **reducing inequalities**. They help us achieve the ultimate aim of leaving no one behind.

Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is a primary means of **generating income both for people and for countries**. The innovation that powers industrialisation harnesses human creativity for the benefit of all. Young people, in particular, can play a vital role as innovators. I will be convening an event on **Young People, Education and Preventing Radicalisation in May 2018**. I hope it will demonstrate how including youth in industrialisation can be a channel for sustainability.

Economic structural transformation, particularly in Africa and least developed countries (LDCs), needs to be placed at the core of SDG implementation. This will no doubt be a focus in the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade of Africa (IDDA III). UNIDO will be indispensable to **supporting countries to foster growth and development**. I count on you to accelerate your efforts especially in Least Developed Countries.

However, we must **all** quicken the pace of SDG implementation in order to achieve our goal by 2030. **This is not the time for more business as usual**. We must have an **impact**. And this impact must be felt by people.

Second, **to succeed we need partnerships**.

Governments by themselves cannot achieve the SDGs. At the same time, entrepreneurs cannot simply focus on their bottom line. **Neither of these models prove sustainable**. Another model that is being dismantled is related to the movement of goods. The past industrial model of commodities moving northward and goods moving southward no longer holds. Innovation and globalisation have created a new complex reality.

Not only are goods moving. **More than ever before, people are on the move.** Industrial development can play a critical role in helping to channel the positive impact of migration. At the same time, it can also help to bring people more opportunities in their home countries, so they move out of choice rather than out of force. Our challenges transcend borders, and so too must our solutions.

Next year we embark on negotiation of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.** I hope you will ensure that these elements are duly considered in those negotiations. We must ensure that the Global Compact is practical and effective for the people we serve.

So, industrialisation has changed and evolved over the past decades. Through its direct operations, and throughout the supply chain, **new actors and trends have emerged.** We must adapt ourselves to match. This is why the SDGs envisage a revitalised global partnership. **Without it we will fail.**

I commend your innovative **model of multi-stakeholder partnership** seen in the “Programme for Country Partnership (PCP)”. It serves as a useful tool to link the private sector with countries. By building on this, **we can facilitate the necessary partnerships for inclusive and sustainable industrialisation.**

This can promote trade-related capacity building, technology transfer, finance for development, and private sector involvement.

My third message is that **multilateralism remains the best approach to confront shared challenges and achieve joint success.**

In this modern era, **countries cannot face challenges alone. And so there is no solution that can be pursued alone.** If it is the effects of climate change, the solution requires us all. If it is fostering economic growth and transformation, our systems are interlinked. If it is promoting peace and preventing conflict, our individual decisions affect each other.

Yes, we each have our national interests. And yes, we all have policy priorities. But let us have **dialogue** about where those interests converge. And let us **understand** where priorities differ.

UNIDO should therefore serve as a forum to address our common industrial challenges. And it must also be a space **to generate solutions for mutual benefit.** This is the very essence of what the United Nations is about. **We must position the multilateral system to better serve our people and deliver on their aspirations.**

*Excellencies, dear colleagues,*

We are in a time when multilateralism is being challenged. Your participation in this General Conference reaffirms the relevance of UNIDO's work to your governments and the people on the ground.

We must recommit to multilateralism and collaborate in partnerships. The future brings challenges and opportunities. **Now more than ever, the global community must resolve to face that future together.**