



# AFGHANISTAN

## STATEMENT

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United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

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Madam President, distinguished Heads of Delegations, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, a very good morning to you all!

Madam President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election as the President of the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the UNIDO General Conference, and I also wish to congratulate other members of the bureau on their election. We are confident that under your Presidency we will have a very successful session. I also take this opportunity to convey our special thanks to the outgoing President and bureau for their excellent work. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Secretariat for the organization of this conference.

Afghanistan is fully associated with the statements made by the Asia-Pacific Group and the Group of 77 and China, but we would like to make a few additional points in our national capacity:

On behalf of the people and Government of Afghanistan, and particularly the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, I would like to express my gratitude to Director General Li Yong for his strong leadership in restructuring UNIDO and for all his efforts in perfectly managing the organization. The Director General's tireless efforts in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) and his proactive engagement towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are commendable. We wholeheartedly congratulate Director General Li Yong for his reappointment for a second four-year term and we pledge our continued support.

As discussed during last week's LDC Ministerial Conference, we believe that partnerships will be essential to overcome the building blocks that impede the economic growth and inclusive and sustainable industrial development of LDCs. The Vienna Programme of Action provides a solid framework to achieve ISID and to reduce poverty.

Afghanistan is fully dedicated to regional and international cooperation - pillars of our foreign policy, and in line with the commitments within the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. As a market economy, it is our goal to provide further opportunities for the private sector, to complement our work with UNIDO and other international organizations on the ground. Innovations, job creation, foreign direct investments, increase of trade volume, infrastructure, vulnerability to natural disaster, demographic challenges, urbanization and migration are all essential aspects to be considered when shaping policies to alleviate poverty in our country and in fellow LDCs.

However, Afghanistan's economy has experienced a good rate of economic growth in the last decade, but for more than fifteen years, Afghanistan's economy has been highly dependent on international aid and with the withdrawal of international forces and decrease in international support, our economy is now faced with a lower economic growth rate, accompanied with high unemployment, negative balance of trade and a very low level of industrial development. We believe that international support through a collective, integrated approach – and regional and international partnerships, on an equal footing, can help countries like Afghanistan to advance from such a status and move forward to a stable and balanced economy.

Understanding that peace and security are pre-requisites to achieve steady growth and to attract foreign direct investments, we remain fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 SDGs; the Government has started streamlining the SDGs into our national development strategies. However, international support and assistance will be critical for countries like Afghanistan to achieve the SDGs. Let me here also refer to the ongoing decline in nominal terms of Official Development Assistance to LDCs and LLDCs; we would appreciate if internationally agreed targets were indeed met.

As we all know that industrial development is a key factor in achieving real economic growth and development, it is also a key priority for the Afghan government. We have started revising our industrial development agenda and we have also started working on a policy on industrial parks. All efforts have been put in place to create an enabling environment for businesses and international investments. However, we will further need the support of international organizations and in particular UNIDO's support for many more years.

We strongly believe in equal distribution of support to all UNIDO member countries, but we also hold the view that there should be a mechanism through which LDCs could be prioritized when it comes to UNIDO's development initiatives and the goes for the cooperation with other international organizations working in this area.

In closing, let me state that we are now two years into the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and we believe that it will be vital to expedite our work pace and I wish to express my hope that this General Conference will generate innovative ideas to push our 2030 agenda, including the fair integration of LDCs in the global value chain, and unleash synergies to forge new partnerships towards the achievement of the SDGs in 2030.

Thank you!