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Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release

The Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa: From political commitment to actions on the ground

NEW YORK, 21 September 2017 – African leaders, UN officials, and representatives of international finance institutions and of the private sector met today at the United Nations Headquarters to reaffirm their commitment to a broad-based international partnership to industrialize Africa in a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable manner. Unemployment and poverty are serious concerns for the continent, where more than 70 percent of the working age population is unemployed or has no job security, prompting the UN to declare 2016-2025 as the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III).

The President of Zambia, Edgar Lungu, said, “My government is proud to be associated to this event and values the role played by organizations such as UNIDO and other government partners which seek to work closely with Africa to promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the continent.”

He added: “Over the past two decades, the African continent has witnessed significant changes in policy orientation with more emphasis placed on building productive capacities in order to take advantage of opportunities emerging from the global economy. Many African countries have restructured their economies and have embraced liberal economics and trade policies to support development strategies. However, these reforms have come with their own challenges, including the influx of imported commodities and unfortunately closure of industries with consequential job losses.”

During today’s meeting, African leaders and development partners reiterated the importance of industrialization to eradicate poverty and to ensure that Africa’s fast-growing population yields its demographic dividend.

Ethiopia’s Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, said, “The lack of skills is the major problem in Africa. With an integrated industrial strategy, African states will hopefully mobilize funds, build the capacity of local employment and promote small, medium enterprises with domestic development projects.”

The African Union’s Commissioner for Trade and Industry, Albert M. Muchanga, said, “Let me stress that, in line with the theme of this event - from political commitment to action on the ground - and the underlying principle of inclusiveness, it is my expectation that resources mobilized under the Third Industrial Development Decade will be deployed

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so as to significantly show benefits accruing to the ordinary Africans on the ground through decent employment, and access to high-quality, safe and affordable manufactured goods that are made in Africa, among other direct and tangible benefits.” The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which is tasked with leading the implementation of IDDA III, proposed to implement its new innovative approach to bring about the necessary structural transformation. The approach is based on a country-owned model known as the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) that leverages financial and non-financial resources, promotes regional integration and mobilizes co-operation among Africa’s development partners.

UNIDO Director General, LI Yong, said, “It is high time to move the IDDA III agenda steadily forward in order to foster inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Africa. Today’s presence of high-level participants from the public and private sectors, development financial institutions, the United Nations system, and bilateral and multilateral institutions confirms that Africa’s industrialization is of global importance.” A joint communique was agreed by leaders of UNIDO, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the Office of the UN Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) acknowledged that the implementation of the ambitious goals of the Decade will require the mobilization and deployment of significant amounts of resources and expressed their support for scaling-up the PCP in the context of IDDA III.

Amadou Hott, AfDB Vice-President, Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth, said, “The African Development Bank recently adopted an ambitious ‘Industrialize Africa’ strategy, developed together with UNIDO and UNECA, which aims at more than doubling industrial GDP of the continent within the next decade. We strongly believe that partnering with governments, the private sector, regional organizations and other development partners is key to address the major bottlenecks in the area of industrialization for a more prosperous Africa.”

The World Bank Group also announced its strong support for the implementation of the Decade.

Participants agreed on the importance of strengthening private sector engagement, in view of its fundamental role in driving growth, creating jobs, generating income and wealth, and contributing to fiscal revenue.

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