

Opening of the session  
Monday 10 May 2010

Statement by the President of the thirty-seventh session His Excellency, Mr. Helmut Böck (Austria)

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to state that my election as President of the Industrial Development Board is an honour for myself and also for my country. In being elected to this position, I would like to thank delegates for their expression of confidence and their belief in my ability to carry out my duties in this role.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the other newly elected members of the Bureau. I look forward to working with them and I know that given their dedication, commitment and cooperation, together we will all do our best to fulfil the responsibilities that have been entrusted to us. Please rest assured that we will try and ensure that the session runs as smoothly as possible.

At this session, the Board will deal with a wide range of issues that UNIDO is currently engaged in. The Annual Report 2009, taking stock of the Organisation's achievements during the last year, demonstrates that the positive trend in the volume of funding for technical cooperation activities continued in 2009; this reflects a growing appreciation of as well as an increasing demand for the Organisation's services. The total of net technical cooperation project and programme approvals rose almost 20% and amounted to over 183 Mio USD,

UNIDO with its emphasis on competitive and environmentally sustainable industries has an important role to play in accelerating economic growth, thereby reducing poverty and helping to achieve the MDGs. This session can serve as a useful opportunity to identify and evaluate the means through which UNIDO can contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. UNIDO's efforts in this regard go to the core of UNIDO objectives and I look forward to an open and constructive discussion on these items.

Interagency cooperation and coherence is crucial to ensure that global efforts have the highest possible impact in tackling the world's global development challenges. UNIDO has been actively engaged in endeavours to promote system-wide coherence and has made considerable efforts to deepen its relationship within the United Nations System at the policy and programme level. The active role UNIDO took as the host of the undg Advisory Group and of the recent Chief Executive Board Meeting also demonstrated its commitment to advance system-wide coherence and the "Delivering as One" approach in the field.

Energy is another issue that is becoming increasingly important to the Organization. The Director-General recently returned from New York, where he participated in the launch of the energy report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change. This is closely related to the positive contribution that UNIDO is already making to ensure that greater use is made of cleaner and greener sources of energy in developing countries. Given that many people are interested in the energy aspect of UNIDO's work, I understand that copies of this report are being distributed. For the information of Permanent

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Missions, I would also like to take this opportunity to inform that the Vienna presentation of this report is scheduled to take place next week on 19 May.

Similar to the energy issue, another theme that runs like a continuous thread not only through UNIDO activities but also through the side events at this session, relates to technology transfer. In this context, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), as a special guest to this session. We are looking forward to the discussion involving Mr. Gurry, which is scheduled for this afternoon on the subjects of innovation, technology transfer and intellectual property. Two other side-events including one on agri-business scheduled for Tuesday and one on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) projects in India scheduled for Wednesday will also reflect the common theme of technology transfer.

Another important agenda item includes a preliminary discussion of the ways and means to enhance UNIDO's field representation. 2009 saw a progressive decentralisation with great levels of delegated authority and autonomy for UNIDO's field activities. These efforts demonstrate the increasing importance UNIDO is ascribing to field presence. The last five years UNIDO has been working to expand its field network and to reinforce already existing field offices. The percentage of professional staff in the field increased by 45% offering various forms of field presence in over 50 countries.

The change management initiative also aims at improving information sharing between headquarters and field staff to increase coherence at the country level and to improve the delivery of technical cooperation. The documentation that we have before us for this session also includes a helpful conference room paper relating to the programme of change and organizational renewal, also known as the change management initiative. This latter subject is particularly important as the Director-General seeks to enhance the effectiveness of UNIDO's activities and given the increasing volume of its services and technical assistance. In this context, I am sure that many Member States will be interested in the additional information presented in that document.

UNIDO's efforts in implementing this comprehensive reform in a fast and cost-efficient manner are appreciated. By the end of June the business process re-engineering should already be completed. This will prepare the ground for the successful selection and implementation of the new IT system, building on the lessons learnt from other UN organisations' reform exercises.

UNIDO has striven towards a transparent and integrative approach in this matter by keeping the Member States informed and up to date on the status of the reform initiative. Useful Secretariat briefings for Member States were already held in the course of this year and should be continued. The Secretariat is undertaking comprehensive efforts to communicate change management internally. UNIDO's focus on keeping its staff engaged in the change management exercise through town hall briefings, internal meetings, conduction of surveys and the installation of an informative change management website, is also seen as essential for the success of this exercise.

In conclusion, I wish the Board every success in its deliberations of all issues at this session.