

[Check Against Delivery]

Opening Statement by H.E. Ambassador CHO Hyun
President of the Thirty-Ninth Session of the UNIDO IDB
Vienna, 22 June 2011

Ambassador Böck, Director-General Dr. Yumkella, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Delegates and Guests,

It is a special honor to address you today as the President of the 39th Session of the UNIDO Industrial Development Board (IDB). I appreciate your confidence in electing me to this position. I pledge to do my best to fulfill my duty as President. Taking this opportunity, I would like to welcome and congratulate the other officers of the Bureau who have just been elected. My thanks also go out to the staff of the UNIDO Secretariat for their thorough preparations for this meeting. I look forward to working with all of you, and will count on your support to ensure that this will be a productive session.

Let me also express my special appreciation to the outgoing President, H.E. Ambassador Böck of Austria, and Director-General Dr. Yumkella. Together, they have not only discharged the Organization's mandate under trying circumstances, but have increased its relevance in tackling the development challenges of the 21st century.

As noted in the 2010 Annual Report, environment and energy-related issues continue to be at the forefront of the global agenda. The Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) this week is a case in point. It brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to take an integrated look at the global energy challenges of the 21st century. Achieving energy access while reducing greenhouse gases, for instance, might seem to have the same odds of success as squaring the circle. However, I share the belief that both can be pursued in mutually reinforcing ways. Forward-looking initiatives such as VEF are critical to moving such issues to the top of the development agenda. And UNIDO can play a leading role by striking a balance between the two.

UNIDO has been equally active in other thematic areas of poverty reduction and trade capacity-building. In my own lifetime, I have witnessed the potential for these to lift a country from poverty and put it on a path towards sustainable economic growth. Indeed, a coordinated and integrated approach to UNIDO's three-fold mandate is vital to achieving progress during a time of change in the global development landscape.

With a view to stimulating discussion on the future of UNIDO during these trying times, I would like to pose three questions:

- First, what challenges and opportunities lie ahead of us?
- Second, what can and should be done to increase the relevance of UNIDO in the development community? To this I might add: Is the malaise sometimes associated with UNIDO a cause or symptom of the withdrawal of Member States?
- Finally, how might UNIDO more clearly differentiate itself from other international organizations?

I do not have any easy answers. But I hope we will consider possible solutions over the coming days. Looking forward, we should do what we can to ensure that the principles of “Growth with Quality” and “Delivering as One” in the new UNIDO mission statement live up their promise. The future of the Organization depends on its achieving concrete benefits that result in better delivery to recipients’ needs consistent with donors’ and Member States’ expectations.

Against this backdrop, one of the leading items on our agenda at this session will be the Programme and budgets for 2012–2013. The lingering effects of the global financial crisis, increasing demand for UNIDO’s services and other issues have made it difficult to formulate a budget. Nevertheless, I believe the hard work by the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC) and the Secretariat has resulted in a general consensus. Regarding the outstanding details, I hope that a spirit of compromise and cooperation will prevail. I hope we can strike a balance that takes into account the fiscal pressures Member States are facing and the need to reinforce the Organization’s capacities and activities.

With these remarks, I would like to wish the Board interactive deliberations and a productive session.

Thank you. /END/