

Statement by the Secretary General at the first ACP-UNIDO Day: Symposium on Boosting ACP Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization, 24 October 2017, Brussels

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**Mr. Director- General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen**

I am indeed happy to welcome our good friend, Director General, H.E Mr. Li Yong to ACP House and am particularly pleased that so many have shown appreciation of the historic importance of this first ACP-UNIDO day by joining us for an interactive dialogue on the theme: "Boosting ACP Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization through job creation, value chains and productive investments."

This is indeed a golden opportunity to draw upon the far-reaching and forward-looking initiatives being taken by UNIDO to advance the industrial development of ACP member states.

Today the focus is on the implementation of the new ACP priorities related to industrialization and private sector development as well as climate change/ environment and energy.

Specifically, the meeting will help identify successful approaches in ACP countries and discuss their possible replicability and scalability to support ACP priorities and capacity in partnership with UNIDO and other stakeholders such as the Regional Economic Communities and the private sector

Our dialogue will also lead to joint conclusions that will serve as framework to guide subsequent industrial development interventions in ACP Countries. It is worth to be noted that the ACP and UNIDO will launch the joint brochure, entitled: "UNIDO and the ACP cooperation report: Investing in ACP Sustainable Prosperity". A report presenting UNIDO's activities and best practices in ACP countries.

May I also acknowledge with gratitude the efforts of UNIDO to support ACP Countries, particularly over the last 5 years, with a special focus on agro-industries for job creation and poverty eradication through competitive and environmentally friendly industries.

Indeed, in the 3 strategic policy pillars which the ACP Council of Ministers approved at its last session in May this year (2017), industrialization is closely linked to trade, investment and services in Pillar 1. Also, Science & Technology, research & Innovation, antecedent factors and drivers of industrialization, are major aspects of our Pillar 2 on Development Cooperation.

In the context of the current symposium, it is useful to highlight two principles that underlie the approach of the ACP Group that supports UNIDO's Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID).

Firstly, the eradication of poverty in the ACP countries is not primarily the receipt of aid but the structural transformation of their economies so that value addition and equitable integration into global value chains become systemic and coherent. Secondly, in this process that unleashes human potential and optimizes sustainable use of natural resources, access to affordable, efficient and sustainable energy is a pivotal factor, so clearly stated in SDG 7.

This also reinforces the necessary linkages for other SDGs - such as Health to enable productivity and safety in the workplace with decent jobs; education and skills for research & innovation and of course, to ensure Gender Equality is maintained across the industrial sectors. (SDG 5). The scope for inclusive development is very realistic.

Through the industrialization process, people have increasingly access to more qualified jobs and higher income, reaching progressively the middle-class status. Such a progress can particularly be obtained through moving-up the value chains. Research demonstrate that there is a direct correlation between industrialization and the well-being of people measured in terms of higher access to education and health services, gender equality and life expectancy, among other human development benefits.

In the last 25 years, countries that have prioritized industrialization for job creation and social progress have experienced a spectacular trajectory of prosperity moving from agrarians to emerging industrial economies. As an illustration, the East Asia region has reduced the number of poor from almost 1 billion in 1990 to less than 70 million nowadays

To make a meaningful contribution to attainment of the SDGs ACP intends to play a significant role through capacity-building and institutional strengthening.

Excellencies, Distinguished invited guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

From the inception of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States in 1975, a principal goal of this alliance of developing countries has been to attain the highest levels of prosperity through trade and industry. This aspiration remains central today and for the future.

The close cooperation between UNIDO and ACP countries over the last 40 years has been very fruitful. It has helped the ACP member countries implement industrial strategies and policies and assisted them to add value to their products with new knowledge and technologies; supported ACP enterprises to export safe, high-value products with the establishment of performing quality systems and contributed to sustainable development through cleaner and resource efficient production and energy systems.

With the growing demographic trends in most ACP countries, more substantial and strategic investments are now necessary to accelerate and scale-up the modernization of their economies and create the millions of job opportunities that ACP youth and women are looking for.

To do this, the conditions for a sustainable industrialization of ACP Countries will certainly rely on small and medium enterprises (SME), which are true value-adding creators, and are expanding all around the globe: they need very little investments to flourish but yield relatively high returns and generate several jobs compared to Multinationals. In order to respond to the rapid growth of population and the challenge of job creation for Youths, many ACP countries have adopted Industrialization master plans (PDI), many of them with the technical assistance of UNIDO. These master plans should help ACP's economies expand by stimulating industrial growth and by enabling the countries build for themselves, a people-centred, inclusive industrial portfolio.

An additional area for ACP-UNIDO collaboration, possibly rests on the need for "Blueing" the industrialization of developing countries so as to harness new frontiers for sustainable development of marine and maritime resources.

Of great significance in this regard is the ACP Fisheries Mechanism and the recent Declaration of Ministers responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture at their meeting the Bahamas just a month ago in September.

This brings us to exploring a link with what the ACP is doing with UNCTAD and FAO on the blue economy. The scope for interagency cooperation is certainly very promising by which the ACP, with these UN agencies, will join forces for greater impact at global, continental and regional levels.

Opportunities are plentiful for creative thinking and so it is expected that the Symposium today will lead to concrete proposals in which our ACP-UNIDO engagement will bring more tangible benefits to member states in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific.

**Excellencies,
Dear Friends,**

UNIDO and ACP have sound achievements on which to build and can continue to work together within their respective mandates and programmes to promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

The ACP Group will spare no effort to see a deeper and stronger partnership flourish in the years ahead. We need effort and imagination, and courage, too, so that tomorrow we could transform constraints being faced today, into assets to promote job creation and productive investments.

Thank you very much.

**Patrick I. Gomes
ACP Secretary General**

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