

20 November 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Julian Robert Hunte,
President of the 58th Session of the General Assembly,
on the Occasion of Africa Industrialization Day**

Today, the United Nations family observes "Africa Industrialization Day", and in this collective spirit, renews our commitment to supporting and promoting the sustainable industrial development efforts of the African continent. The theme for this year's Africa Industrialization Day is "Accelerating Africa's Integration in the Global Economy through Effective Industrialisation and Market Access".

In recent years, the global economy has been undergoing radical transformation. The worldwide changes set in motion in the 1990's bear centrally on: Rapid technical change: a paradigm shift in new technology, new skills, organizations and networking needs; Globalisation: the rapid rise in trade/investment, integrated production systems, new rules of economic activity, technological mobility and skills; and Liberalization: exposure to intense market competition for all partners, with competitiveness now requiring technology and skills.

The combined effect of the above three factors has led to significant increase in open markets and efficient enterprises, and in turn, to increased competition in markets around the world.

Patterns of domestic interaction between economic agents, markets and institutions are weak in developing countries - particularly in Africa which accounts for two thirds of the world LDCs - preventing them from drawing effectively on international trade and investment flows.

The 'NEPAD' programme, recently established by African countries themselves, is a clear demonstration of their commitment to alleviate poverty, combat marginalisation, build global partnerships for investment and technology promotion, diversify the export base and gain access to international markets. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the NEPAD programme in its resolution 57/297.

The Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI) is now working closely with the NEPAD Secretariat to develop programmes jointly with the Africa Union, (AU), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNIDO, in line with the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

This collaboration and cooperation between the Ministers, regional organizations and United Nations agencies has led to an undertaking to adopt a regional programme approach, defining the sectoral and sub-regional priorities of the continent and highlighting the constraints, opportunities

and challenges in building the productive capacity of the sub-region, which would contribute to gaining a larger share of the world trade through increased market access.

The countries of the African continent have together taken due note of policy and infrastructure support needed to enable its enterprises - specifically its manufacturing units - to gain market access through:

- Development of productive capacity - to Compete;
- Enhance capacity to meet standards - to Conform; and
- To connect to markets - Connectivity.

The activities envisaged would include the integration of domestic enterprises with comparative advantage into global value chains; the development of horizontal, vertical and regional SME networks; and, the strengthening of professional and technical associations (information technology, standardization) for market asymmetries. These steps will contribute towards industrialization, raise productivity, create employment, diversify the export base and generate income for the people of the continent.

The strategy for industrialization and market access is critical, considering that LDCs have neither surplus capacity of exportable products nor production capacity to take immediate advantage of new trade opportunities. This point was highlighted in the statement of the United Nations Secretary-General. UNIDO is to be commended for its continued commitment to address these issues and to promote Africa's integration into the global economy.

On this, Africa Industrialization Day, let us renew our commitment to work in global partnership for sustainable industrial development in Africa to promote Africa's integration into the global economy.

Thank you.