

20 November 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,  
President of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
on the Occasion of the "Africa Industrialization Day"**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today the United Nations family observes "Africa Industrialization Day" with the collective spirit of supporting and promoting the industrial development and integration efforts of the continent. The celebration is also an occasion for African leaders and stakeholders to reflect on progress made and to renew their efforts towards achieving sustainable industrial development on the continent. This year's theme, "*Industrialization for Integration*", calls our attention to the key role of industrialization as a necessary condition for meaningful integration into the global economy.

In terms of the global economy, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have enjoyed robust economic growth in recent years, but the food and fuel price shocks of 2007-2008 that preceded the current global financial and economic crisis have dampened the continent's growth prospects. The latter has greatly compounded the policy challenges confronting the region as it strives to consolidate its economic gains and increase its share in the global economy, especially in relation to its contribution to the Gross World Product and global manufacturing output.

This situation calls for the intensification of efforts to address the various challenges that engulf the continent's prospects for industrialization. We need to build stronger infrastructure, improve the environment for private sector development, provide more training for industrial skills and technological capabilities, strengthen support for institutions and instruments, increase financing for industrial investments and forge closer regional integration and industrial complementarity.

We have to work on all these factors to make Africa an attractive location for industrial production. It is therefore imperative for Africa to act swiftly. In this regard, the newly developed African Union (AU) Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA) is a step in the right direction. Adopted by the AU Heads of State Summit in January 2008, it is the latest initiative with far-reaching consequences agreed by the African leaders, since the Industrial Development Decade of Africa (IDDA 1 and 2) programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, and the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization (AAI) of 2003.

The Action Plan to be implemented at the national, regional and continental levels outlines a clear, prioritized set of programmes, projects and activities necessary to stimulate a competitive and sustainable industrial development process. It envisages an emerging Africa, whose level and patterns of industrialization makes it competitive with the rest of the world.

However, for such an initiative to succeed, concerted efforts of all stakeholders are required. Henceforth, the role of regional integration, as one of the pillars for enhancing Africa's competitiveness and thereby more meaningful integration into the global economy is crucial. Regional integration brings numerous benefits, such as increased production competitiveness through economies of scale and scope, increased trade opportunities through larger markets, increased opportunities for larger investments and increased bargaining power.

It is clear that industrialization will reinforce Africa's role in the global economy and make a valuable contribution to the alleviation of poverty. It raises productivity, creates employment, reduces exposure to risk, enhances the income-generating assets of the poor, and helps to diversify exports. Regional integration on the other hand holds the key to opening the portal for Africa's industrialization. This two-pronged strategy will assist the continent to overcome the multitude of barriers to development and enhance its productive and trade competitiveness. It is therefore imperative for all of us to remain committed to the efforts for Africa's industrialization as a necessary tool for improving the continent's integration within the global economy.

For these reasons the discussion today by the Panel and the dialogue with participants is important to shed light on the various options for the future. I wish the Panel success and commend UNIDO and its partners for this initiative.