



**Remarks**

**by**

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**Under-Secretary-General  
High Representative**

**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries  
and Small Island Developing States**

**at the event**

**“Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016-2025):  
From political commitment to actions on the ground”**

**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
Thursday 21 September 2017**

**Delegates Dining Room, West Terrace, UNHQ**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends

I thank you for the opportunity to be with you. Allow me to briefly share (given our time limits ) some thoughts for our action.

39 African countries count among the LDCs, LLDCs or SIDS. My Office is determined to redouble our efforts to collaborate with you and support your efforts in relevant ways. Today, I issue a call for more partnership, concerted and accelerated action and I want to use an expression of my dear colleague, Mr. Li Yong, the UNIDO Director General:

#### WE MUST DO - WE CAN DO

The effective and efficient implementation of this third decade is critical to meeting Goal 9 of our shared blueprint for building inclusive, sustainable and fair globalisation also known as the SDGs!

Goal 9 stresses the importance of industrialization in achieving the much-needed structural transformation for long-term inclusive and sustainable development in developing countries.

Industrialization lies at the core of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries, and the SAMOA Pathway.

Empirical evidence shows that wherever industrialization has occurred, it has been a reliable force in steering economic diversification, and has contributed to developing, strengthening and upholding the framework conditions for competitive economic growth and development.

When accompanied by a judicious mix of socio-economic policies including a strong focus on gender policies and the environment, industrialisation has the potential to lead to more equitable and sustainable patterns of growth.

In the context of Africa, this takes on significant added meaning given the patterns of growth of the population.

More than half of Africa's 1.2 billion-strong population is under the age of 19, and almost one in five are between 15 and 24 years old. In short, 12 million new workers join the labour force every year!

So, young people will need health and the tools and skills to take their lives into their own hands and industrialization is the key to ensuring that the continent's fast-growing population yields that demographic dividend we all talk about.

I could mention many more aspects why we urgently must engage in the "must and can do" But time is limited, so I focus today on two points.

First, INFRASTRUCTURE.

I refer to comprehensive infrastructure development - we all know what a key transformative driver infrastructure development is in industrialisation.

Enhancing infrastructure, especially in energy and ICT, is a precondition for achieving structural transformation. ICT more than ever is a determinant as we no longer talk about the kind of industrialisation of past centuries! In this regard, we commend the African Development Banks' AFRICA 50 Infrastructure Fund initiative.

The 16 Landlocked Developing Countries in Africa are disadvantaged by high trade and transport costs. These are challenges needing accelerated investment in adequate infrastructure. This in turn should be a key element to assist the countries in overcoming lack of economic diversification and facilitate their structural transformation.

The six Small Island Developing States in Africa face the classical challenges of geographic remoteness, narrow economic base and distance from major markets. Improved transport links together with strong national policies and creation of industrial parks could be a means to successfully contribute to their economic growth.

**Second**, how do I then see OHRLLS support your efforts.

OHRLLS has organized regional meetings for the 33 African LDCs, on securing finance for sustainable energy, and on the effective deployment and use of broadband.

Tomorrow, at our Ministerial Meeting of the LDCs, we will move ahead with the Technology Bank for LDCs as we sign the host country agreement between the United Nations and Turkey. It is my sincere hope that this initiative for which we seek the active partnership of the combined UN system capacities and its partners, will provide value-added to your domestic strives.

In this regard, I will spare no effort and look forward to deepening our already excellent partnership with UNIDO to further raise awareness of the industrialization agenda and SDG 9.

I must thank and congratulate UNIDO for the exemplary work done thus far in developing and operationalizing the IDDA III Programme, and the assurance of my Office's full partnership in the years ahead.

OHRLLS staff has also worked on transit, transport and trade facilitation. This remains critical for boosting intra-African trade and accelerating industrialization.

It is not you that I have to tell that this will require mobilizing financial resources, and providing technical cooperation.

Allow me to quote from Secretary-General Guterres' remarks this week at the HL Panel on Financing: "Today's financial system manages 300 trillion in assets not fit for purpose. Innovation in leveraging resources is needed. (end of quote )

Indeed, innovation and partnerships is the operating code here!

Financing, innovation and technical support that responds to domestic is urgently needed for establishing effective industrial policy instruments, and focusing on supporting SMEs and their integration into global and regional value chains.

We also need broader-based, more inclusive and country-owned processes that leverage financial and non-financial resources, promote regional integration, and mobilize co-operation among Africa's development partners.

All this, in turn, requires capacity- building and knowledge and information sharing.

Last but not least, you have mandated OHRLLS to monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Vienna Programme of Action, and - jointly with UNDESA - the SAMOA Pathway. All these include aspects related to industrialization and infrastructure development.

Jointly, we may wish to see to it that these efforts can contribute to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework of the IDDA III programme.

So let us DO because WE CAN SO.

OHRLLS pledges to be your partner and support you in relevant and efficient ways including in your global negotiation efforts and in covering the inter-governmental deliberations on IDDA III.

Let us do -

I thank you.

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