



WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT 2018

INVESTMENT AND NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICIES



UNITED NATIONS

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UNCTAD



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PREFACE

Global flows of foreign direct investment fell by 23 per cent in 2017. Cross-border investment in developed and transition economies dropped sharply, while growth was near zero in developing economies. With only a very modest recovery predicted for 2018, this negative trend is a long-term concern for policymakers worldwide, especially for developing countries, where international investment is indispensable for sustainable industrial development.

This troubling global investment picture underscores the importance of a conducive global investment environment, characterized by open, transparent and non-discriminatory investment policies. The theme chapter of the report shows that over 100 countries have adopted industrial development strategies in recent years. New types of industrial policies have emerged, responding to the opportunities and challenges associated with a new industrial revolution. The report presents options for investment policy tools in this new environment.

I commend this year's *World Investment Report* as a timely contribution to an important debate in the international investment and development community.



António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

FOREWORD

We are at the dawn of a fourth industrial revolution, propelled by frontier technologies and robotization advances that make production better, cheaper and faster than ever before. This new industrial revolution offers enormous opportunities for economic growth and sustainable development with potential benefits on a scale that is difficult to imagine. New technologies promise possibilities of industrial upgrading and leapfrogging. Cheaper transportation and communication, coupled with more efficient logistics, can also help developing countries better link to global value chains. Some of the most advanced emerging economies are already on the verge of becoming global technological leaders in a number of industries.

Yet, the new economic age and the accelerating pace of technological innovation could also result in serious economic disruption and more inequality. Existing investment patterns, for instance, might go through profound and far-reaching changes, in terms of both flows and content. Last year's *World Investment Report* highlighted the emerging structural impact of the digital economy on foreign direct investment.

In this context, developing countries, and least developed countries in particular, face considerable challenges. They range from structural constraints, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure and scarce access to finance, to strategic issues. Offshoring and relocation towards destinations offering cheaper domestic labour become less relevant in a world of increasingly automated manufacturing. At the same time, improving living conditions requires creating jobs, which in turn still relies heavily on manufacturing. Developing countries with small markets face additional pressure on their investment policies as companies increasingly look for investment locations offering the best conditions to deliver new and high-quality products rapidly, close to the customer and through flexible production processes.

Challenges are particularly pronounced in Africa. Despite a period of strong economic growth, the level of economic transformation has been low. The share of manufacturing in the GDP of African countries is small, and it has further declined or stagnated over the past decade. However, manufacturing has the potential of creating a large number of jobs in the formal sector and therefore raising living conditions.

Confronted with an altering global economic landscape and deep structural reconfiguration, governments around the globe have invigorated their industrial policies in recent years. There is a growing consensus that structural transformation does not occur by itself, but rather requires a proactive policy that facilitates a transition towards new sectors and activities with higher productivity and more value added, while fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

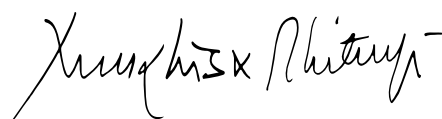
As they pursue multifaceted objectives, new industrial policies have become more complex and intertwined, wielding multiple instruments, from trade to education. Central to these industrial policies is foreign investment. Investment builds and upgrades industries. It connects to international markets. It also drives essential innovation and competitiveness. All in all, the current debate is less about whether governments should intervene, but rather how.

Industrial policies and accompanying investment policies need to revolve around a clearly articulated vision but, at the same time, they have to contain practical and detailed recommendations, a clear timeline for action and a division of responsibilities among the public and private sectors.

Against this background, the *World Investment Report 2018* aims to provide a better understanding of the interaction between new industrial policies and investment policies. It provides an overview of industrial policy models – based on an inventory of industrial policies adopted by more than 100 countries over the last decade – and the role of investment policies within each model. The Report illustrates how investment policy instruments are used differently across various models and suggests ways to improve the impact of industrial policy through more effective and efficient investment policies. Finally, the Report offers recommendations to update existing investment policy instruments, including investment incentives, special economic zones, investment facilitation and foreign investment screening mechanisms.

Building from this Report, UNCTAD will host a discussion of the interface between industrial and investment policies at its 6th World Investment Forum, which will take place in Geneva on 22–26 October 2018.

Together, let us work towards finding solutions to ensure that economic change does not create new hardships, but benefits that are widely shared and lead to a better life for all.



Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

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