

Around the world in 50 years

Snapshots of UNIDO's history in five regions



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United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

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Table of contents

3 Foreword

5 Africa region

15 Arab region

**23 Asia and the
Pacific region**

**33 Europe and
Central Asia region**

**41 Latin America and
Caribbean region**

Foreword



The 50th anniversary of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization provides an opportunity to reflect on the past. It is also an opportunity to chart a new path for a sustainable future.

Looking back, we recall that, on 17 November 1966, UNIDO was established as a special organ of the United

Nations General Assembly. UNIDO was created to assist, promote and accelerate the industrialization of developing countries, with a particular emphasis on manufacturing.

Over the past five decades, UNIDO has been operating in over 170 countries. Our Organization has provided its Member States with analytical and policy advisory services to help them shape appropriate industrial strategies and policies. Together with the governments of our Member States and other partners, the Organization has implemented tens of thousands of technical cooperation projects. This publication summarizes UNIDO's long history of cooperation with countries spread across five regions and features snapshots from selected countries to illustrate the extent and impact of this cooperation.

These were decades when the world underwent some incredible changes. As the global context changed, so too did UNIDO.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, UNIDO focused on technology transfer to increase agricultural production, and on economic self-sufficiency through industrialization. The Organization helped start industries in many countries. It supported new industries in other countries that had already begun to industrialize.

In the 1980s, UNIDO focused more on promoting investment and export-led growth. At the same time, there was a greater focus on South-South cooperation and the environment. In the 1990s, UNIDO developed stronger co-operation with the private sector and diversified its funding sources.

In the 21st century, the Organization is actively tackling some of the most outstanding pressing challenges of our time - such as mass youth unemployment, widening inequality, and the threat posed by climate change.

During the many changes our world has undergone over the last 50 years, UNIDO has continued to be effective, innovative and relevant.

Today, as never before, we are fully committed to the job we started five decades ago. Today, we have a clear mandate and a direct responsibility for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Inclusive and sustainable industrialization will help us deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am confident that together - with the continued support of our Member States and donors - we will realize our dream of a sustainable future.

UNIDO Director General
 Li Yong



Africa region

The African continent is one with many challenges but it presents even more opportunities. As the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is changing its approach to fit Africa's needs at the current time.

The African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 calls for the optimization of the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans. It aims to harness the continent's comparative advantages, such as its people, natural resources, and its position and repositioning in the world, to effect equitable and people-centered social, economic and technological transformation and the eradication of poverty. Industrialization is fundamental to this transformation agenda.

UNIDO's mandate is inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID). The Organization is aware of the fact that Africa's growth must be sustainable in order to effect change, promote prosperity and reduce poverty. It also recognizes that the industrial and economic growth taking place in Africa must be sustainable in order to avoid a relapse. UNIDO's ISID mandate falls directly in line with the AU's Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the AU's Agenda 2063 and its 10 year implementation plan.

Africa became the first of UNIDO's five regions to benefit from ISID. The year 2014 saw the selection of Ethiopia and Senegal as the first pilot countries for implementation of the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP): a



partnership formula aligned with the national industrial priorities and development plans of the beneficiary countries. The PCP aims to scale up partnerships for technical cooperation and to leverage additional resources by setting up national coordination and funds mobilization mechanisms for partnership management and implementation.

In Ethiopia, the PCP brings together development partners, UN agencies, development finance institutions and the private sector – under the ownership of the national government – to help achieve the goals set out in the country's Industrial Development Strategy and Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). The PCP focuses on three light manufacturing sectors, namely: agro-food processing; textiles and apparel; and leather and leather products.

These sectors were chosen due to their prospects for job creation, strong linkages to the agricultural sector, high export potential and capacities to attract private sector investment.

For the same reasons, the PCP for Senegal focuses on three main areas: industrial policy development; the establishment of agro-poles for agricultural value chains; and the operationalization of existing industrial parks and the development of new ones.

Through strategies such as Inclusive Development and Entrepreneurship for All, the Vocational Training Programme, the Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme and the Productive Work for Youth Project, UNIDO provides services that are geared to increase young Africans' employability and provide them with the necessary tools to create and develop sustainable enterprises, and ultimately improve their livelihoods.

UNIDO realizes the importance of industry as a catalyst for economic and social growth. Its projects in Africa cover different areas of intervention, including but not limited to, industrial policies and strategies, environment, energy, agro-industries and agri-business development, trade capacity building, policy advice and gender mainstreaming. UNIDO and the AU Commission have formulated the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), a strategy which aims to mobilize both financial and non-financial resources and increase Africa's competitiveness with the rest of the world.

As agriculture is an important part of African industrial development, the Accelerated Agri-business and Agro-industries development initiative (3ADI) was put into action by UNIDO in cooperation with the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development). 3ADI supports an investment programme that will significantly increase the proportion of agricultural produce in Africa that is transformed into differentiated high-value products.

On the regional level, UNIDO is providing technical cooperation to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), starting with the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) and the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS). For example, the West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP) facilitates the regional integration of quality goods to make them market-compliant. As a result of this programme, regional and national quality policies have been adopted, a regional quality infrastructure scheme established, and regional standards adopted. In order to further support the region and deepen regional integration, the West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP) was established in 2015. UNIDO also facilitated the development of the first regional energy centre, the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) in Cabo Verde. ECREEE has inspired the expansion of similar centres in other regions such as SADCREE, EACREE, as well as centres in the Pacific and the Himalayas.

Since its inception 50 years ago, UNIDO has stood by Africa and continues to support the continent on its path towards becoming a prosperous region, devoid of poverty.

Ethiopia

The “Asian Tigers” - Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan - achieved remarkable economic success in the three decades running up to the 1990s which earned them the status of role models for aspiring nations, including those in Africa. More recently, some ten nations – Angola, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and Rwanda – have shown signs of being on the path to similar economic success, recording growth rates of between 4 to 17 per cent in the last two decades or so.

What seemed like a mere purring of one of the lions now appears to be quickly transforming into a loud roar. Ethiopia has consistently recorded double digit growth since the early 2000s, and is aiming for a twofold increase in the contribution of manufacturing to its economic growth. “We thank UNIDO for its technical support to Ethiopia for many years and we count on your continued partnership with us to achieve our goal of becoming a sub-regional manufacturing hub and attaining the status of a middle-income economy by 2025”, declared the Minister of Industry, Ahmed Abtew, echoing the words of Ethiopia’s Prime Minister, on a number of occasions.

and vocational education training, ensure compliance with various international standards, promote cleaner production technologies that protect the environment, and create jobs, especially for women and youth.

One strategy, developed with the support of UNIDO and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, focuses on the agro-industry sector, aiming to increase competitiveness, exports and investments, as well as employment and equity in the sector by establishing Integrated Agro-industrial Parks.

Some other examples of UNIDO’s widely acknowledged contribution to Ethiopia’s ongoing transformation include the development of such institutions as the Leather Industry Development Institute (LIDI), the facilitation of technology transfer and capacity building for off-grid renewable energy generation, and the production of high-quality edible oil from an indigenous oil seed. The LIDI today provides, among other things, technical training in the design and manufacture of leather products. It also equips laboratories to conduct tests on various leather products, and advises investors interested in engaging in this sub-sector. Thanks to UNIDO’s continued support, the Government will soon establish a unique ‘leather city’ in a new and modern industrial district in Modjo.

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