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UNIDO major conferences

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Report by the Secretariat

In accordance with rules 14 and 16, the Director-General proposed the inclusion of this supplementary item on the provisional agenda, in order to provide additional information on UNIDO major conferences and the outcomes of these events, particularly as they relate to the Organization's thematic priorities.

I. Introduction

1. The present document outlines a number of major conferences organized under UNIDO's convening role in the years 2008 and 2009. Global forum activities of this type play a particularly important role in guiding the Organization's work and providing it with a diversity of innovative options and opportunities for developing its support services for Member States through its technical cooperation and capacity-building, analytical and advisory, and normative functions. Such major conferences also serve to foster action-oriented partnerships with other components of the United Nations system, with the wider international development system, and with the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders.

2. To this end, UNIDO plans its programme of conferences strategically, focusing on identifying and providing concrete solutions to key global and regional challenges. The years 2008 and 2009 saw a strong emphasis on renewable energy and green industries, with major conferences in all regions seeking ways to realize the developmental potential of these issues. Agro-related industries and trade

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capacity-building, and United Nations system-wide coherence, were also the subject of major events conducted as part of the Organization's convening role during this period.

II. Major conferences in 2008 and 2009

High-Level Dialogue on United Nations System-wide Coherence: Next Steps (4-5 March 2008, Vienna, Austria)

3. UNIDO organized and hosted a high-level dialogue on the subject of United Nations system-wide coherence from 4 to 5 March 2008 at its Headquarters in Vienna. The main objective was to provide inputs to intergovernmental discussion on United Nations system-wide coherence and the "Delivering as One" initiative through a focus on development aspects of efforts toward coherence. The dialogue sought to identify the main issues and challenges, as well as means of moving forward. It also aimed to provide a forum for organizations of the United Nations system to discuss concrete ways of enhancing their support to the coherence process and to the "Delivering as One" initiative.

4. More than 300 participants attended the meeting, including the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and the Co-Chairs of the United Nations General Assembly Consultations on System-wide Coherence, high-level representatives of UNIDO Member States, including from donor countries and the eight "Delivering as One" pilot countries, as well as senior officials from 16 United Nations system organizations, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO).

5. Six sessions were held as part of the dialogue: session 1 – Intergovernmental process on system-wide coherence: Progress and next steps; session 2 – Perspectives on advancing United Nations system-wide coherence; session 3 – Ensuring a comprehensive and strategically focused United Nations system response to national development priorities; session 4 – Funding the pilots for coherence; session 5 – Empowering the Resident Coordinator; and session 6 – Harmonizing business models and practices.

6. The dialogue contributed to advancing the ongoing process of system-wide coherence, and the Co-Chairs expressed appreciation both at the conclusion of the meeting and in their report to the General Assembly of 21 July 2008, for the input it provided.

Global Agro-Industrial Forum (8-11 April 2008, New Delhi, India)

7. Although UNIDO employs a thematic rather than a sectoral approach to its activities, it continues to support the development of the agro-industrial sector as a key lever toward meeting objectives across the Organization's three thematic priorities of poverty reduction through industrial development, trade capacity-building and environment and energy. To this end, UNIDO worked in partnership with the Government of India, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to organize the Global Agro-Industrial Forum.

8. The key aim of the Forum, which was attended by more than 500 senior representatives from Member States, technical and financial institutions, the agro-industry sector and civil society, was to emphasize the crucial importance of the development of competitive agro-industries in order to achieve food security and to secure economic growth. The Forum focused on the challenges facing agro-industry as well as trends, patterns and developmental impacts. Further panels and round table discussions were concerned with the creation of environments for competitive agro-industries, technologies shaping the future, business models for small farmers and small and medium enterprises, public-private sector cooperation and global citizenship and responsibility.

9. A number of tangible results flowed from the Forum. These included: (a) the publication, in cooperation with FAO and IFAD, of *Agro-industries for Development*, a text that now serves as a major reference guide; (b) the formulation and initiation of customized programmes for technical cooperation toward the development of agro-industries in the various developing regions; (c) the preparation, jointly with FAO, of a financial facility for promoting agri-business in Africa with public and private windows. This will be presented at the High-level Conference on the Development of Agribusiness and Agro-industries in Africa, to be held in Abuja between 8 and 10 March 2010.

International Conference on Renewable Energy in Africa (16-18 April 2008, Dakar, Senegal)

10. Energy is both the key driver of industry and growth and a strong indicator of human development. Renewable sources of energy in particular have the potential to provide much greater access to energy in developing countries, as well as adding substantially to energy security and helping to combat climate change. In 2008 and 2009, UNIDO organized a series of major events which together sought to put this potential to the test. The first such meeting, the International Conference on Renewable Energy in Africa, was organized together with the Government of Senegal, the African Union (AU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It brought together over 500 participants, including high-level representatives and experts in energy and industry from African countries; representatives from the African Union Commission and African Regional Economic Communities; and representatives from United Nations agencies, bilateral organizations, the private sector, as well as regional and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

11. The Conference aimed to provide leadership and commitment to a common strategy for market-based scaling up of renewable energy in Africa. The major objectives were to assess the potential of renewable energy in addressing Africa's energy challenges; identify policy and regulatory options and new policy actions to stimulate broader market-based dissemination of renewable energy; and to identify capacity needs for renewable energy market enablers and players.

12. This three-day meeting consisted of plenary and parallel sessions as well as a ministerial segment. Recommendations from these sessions were consolidated into a Plan of Action on Scaling up Renewables in Africa, which was endorsed in the Dakar Declaration on Scaling Up Renewables in Africa. The Declaration was adopted during the ministerial segment and notes that the Conference participants, inter alia: (a) agree to an African continental target for governments, with support

from development partners, to scale up annual renewable energy investments to \$10 billion between 2009-2014; (b) adopt a Plan of Action consisting of five key programme dimensions; (c) call upon African Governments, their national development partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to support implementation of the Plan of Action with adequate resources; and (d) recommend that the AU, UNIDO and other relevant development partners establish a ministerial-level policy advocacy group, to be supported by a coordination unit.

Global Renewable Energy Forum (18-21 May 2008, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil)

13. The second major conference held in 2008 by UNIDO on the subject of renewable energy took place in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, and was jointly organized with the Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Eletrobrás corporation and the Itaipú Binacional corporation. The objective of the Forum was to build on the achievements of the conference held in Dakar in April by promoting dialogue on strengthening interregional bonds, and to set up joint activities between countries and regions with the aim of reducing poverty and enhancing energy security through the use of renewable energy sources. The Forum also aimed to foster business and commercial relationships at the intra- and interregional level, and promote the development of renewable energy sources and related infrastructure in Latin America and in the Caribbean.

14. Over 1500 participants from a wide range of backgrounds attended the Forum, including high-level representatives and experts in energy and industry from Latin American, African and other countries, as well as representatives from the United Nations system, bilateral organizations, the private sector, academia and regional and international NGOs. The Forum consisted of three plenary sessions, two debates and seven round tables, as well as site visits to the Itaipú hydropower station, a local sewage treatment facility and a technology park.

15. Among the tangible outcomes of the event was the development of bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding between UNIDO and a number of participating countries and institutions concerning cooperation in the field of renewable energy. In particular, UNIDO and the Itaipú Binacional corporation agreed to work on an alliance that would not only harness the corporation's experience in renewable energy but also promote renewable energy technologies worldwide and establish links between the Latin American and African regions to share experiences and knowledge.

Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries (19-20 November 2008, Siem Reap, Cambodia)

16. UNIDO regularly organizes the Conference of Ministers of Industry and Trade of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which brings together Governments from up to 49 of the world's poorest countries to discuss issues related to the productive sectors and international trade. Following a recommendation made at the 2007 LDC Ministerial Conference in Vienna, the 2008 Conference focused on the Aid for Trade initiative, a package of incentives designed to help overcome the structural and resource constraints of LDCs to allow them to take advantage of the benefits of international trade, as well as on the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).

17. The primary objective of the Conference, which was hosted by the Government of Cambodia and co-organized with the World Trade Organization, was to consider how Aid for Trade could be used by development partners to complement the efforts of LDCs to build effective and sustainable productive capacities. Taking into account the lessons learned from the eight pilot programmes developed by UNIDO to build supply-side capacities in Benin, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and Yemen, the Conference considered the constraints facing LDCs that could be addressed through Aid for Trade and EIF support measures.

18. The Conference was an important additional step in the broader, multi-level process through which UNIDO, in collaboration with other actors involved in the Aid for Trade and EIF processes, will continue the dialogue on how best to use these approaches to build supply-side capacities in LDCs. As a further outcome, through the Siem Reap Ministerial Declaration of LDCs, Ministers highlighted the expected impact of the economic crisis on LDCs and the urgency to promote balanced and expeditious development of their economies, and called on development partners to appreciate the role of productive capacities as enabling factors to make economies benefit from the existing opportunities provided by the international trading system. The Conference also called for the conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, and called for the continuation of active inter-agency dialogue. It was intended that these key recommendations would be taken forward in the December 2009 LDC Ministerial Conference, which focuses on the impact of the economic crisis on LDCs' productive capacities and trade prospects.

International Conference on Sharing Innovative Agribusiness Solutions: From Farms to Markets, Providing Know-how and Finance (26-27 November 2008, Cairo, Egypt)

19. Complementing the Global Agro-industrial Forum held in New Delhi in April, the Conference sought to link the agro-industry sector with one of UNIDO's main thematic aims, to build trade capacity in developing countries. In 2004, UNIDO together with the Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry, launched the Egyptian Traceability Centre for Agro-Industrial Exports (ETRACE) which has to date helped more than 45,000 farms and 90 packing houses to meet the international food quality, safety and traceability standards that bring these products to export markets. Inspired by this success, UNIDO organized this meeting in close cooperation with the Government of Egypt and the SEKEM initiative and with support and co-financing from FAO, the Italian Development Cooperation, and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs as well as from local sponsors.

20. Over 400 agribusiness stakeholders took part in the Conference including representatives of public and private technical and financial institutions, international organizations, donors, NGOs and academia. The aim of the Conference was to propose concrete solutions for agro-industry in the context of the global fuel, food and financial crises. The Conference focused on four main topics: (a) supply/value chains, market access and linkages; (b) compliance with standards and conformity assessment; (c) technology and value addition; and (d) innovative forms of financing. Participants submitted more than 120 innovative solutions, which were assessed by a team of high-level international experts prior to the

Conference. Over 60 especially promising solutions – that have already been successfully implemented and have high potential to be replicated in other developing countries – were showcased during the Conference.

21. Further clear results from the Conference included the consolidation of new partnerships for the promotion of agro-related industries for development, including strengthened cooperation between UNIDO and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) as well as a strategic partnership between UNIDO and Michigan State University in the context of the Global Food Safety Initiative. To build on the Conference's success, an agribusiness solutions exchange platform is being developed by UNIDO to replicate the Conference's structure, thereby focusing on the continuous identification, screening, validation and dissemination of innovative and successful agribusiness solutions, which could be potentially scaled-up or transferred to other regions or countries.

**Bahrain Forum: Clean Technologies for Economic Development
(2-4 February 2009, Manama, Bahrain)**

22. As part of UNIDO's wider activities in promoting green industry, the Bahrain Forum, which was organized by UNIDO in cooperation with the Government of Bahrain and the Kuwait Finance House banking corporation, aimed to facilitate the access of Governments to clean technologies, and to promote sustainable development, especially in the countries of the subregion. Over 300 participants attended, including high-level policymakers and representatives of the private sector, international and regional organizations, NGOs and academia.

23. The key issues discussed, and agreed to in the Manama Declaration "Zeroing Industrial Wastes and Emissions through Cleaner and Resource Efficient Technologies and Products", were the urgent need to halt the inefficient extraction and use of natural resources in industrial production processes and to minimize resulting wastes including emissions, as a basis for achieving sustainable industrial development of nations and communities. Water resource management, renewable energy, eco-compatible production, resources efficiency and the promotion of investments were central to the debate.

**Vienna Energy Conference – Towards an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020
(22-24 June 2009, Vienna, Austria)**

24. Recognizing that energy is central to meeting the major global challenges in the century ahead, including poverty reduction, climate change, food security and shared economic prosperity, UNIDO convened this Conference in Vienna as part of a series of related major energy- and green industry- themed dialogues which aimed to bring together policymakers, private sector and civil society representatives to identify specific courses of action on energy and development, and on the move to a sustainable, low-carbon future. The Conference also sought to bring an energy perspective to preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2009.

25. The Conference, which was co-organized with the Government of Austria and the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), brought together more than 700 participants. In addition to a high-level panel on an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020, five plenary sessions and six parallel sessions

covered specific topics including energy strategies to combat climate change, financing energy in times of crisis, renewable energy, energy efficiency in industry, and energy access for productive uses.

26. Concrete recommendations emerging from the Conference included (a) the creation of Energy Development Goals, a 20-year plan for energy access; (b) the establishment of clear, sectoral, energy efficiency targets at the country and regional levels; (c) accelerated research and development into energy; (d) the diffusion of energy technologies; (e) the strengthening of UN-Energy, the United Nations system's inter-agency coordination mechanism on energy issues; and (f) an expert support structure for UN-Energy in the shape of the Global Energy Assessment, currently a voluntary international network of individuals and agencies, coordinated by IIASA.

International Conference on Green Industry in Asia (9-11 September, Manila, Philippines)

27. While rapid economic growth in the Asia and Pacific region has lifted millions out of poverty over the past decades, it has also led to increased consumption of resources and generation of waste. Dramatic increases in demand for energy, water and materials have contributed to natural resource depletion, environmental degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions, putting at risk the social and economic gains made by countries in the region. UNIDO's main aims in convening the Conference were to map a pathway to sustain manufacturing growth in Asia in the light of environmental and economic challenges, and to move discussions on green industry from the intangible to the real, by identifying key technologies, business opportunities and public policy strategies. The Conference was part of a suite of energy- and green industry-related dialogues organized by UNIDO during the years 2008 and 2009 that aimed to find concrete solutions to pressing global challenges.

28. The Conference was co-organized by the Government of the Philippines, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and was attended by more than 1,200 participants, including senior policymakers, private sector representatives, academic and research institutions, and international and regional organizations. In addition to a high-level plenary session, two days of technical sessions focused on (a) cleaner production, and how knowledge, technology and finance can move Asian industry toward greater resource efficiency and low-carbon pathways of growth; (b) eco-friendly products and environmental services, and how knowledge, technology and finance can build up the necessary environmental services sector in Asia, as well as the ability to design, develop and market eco-friendly products; (c) growth and competitiveness, and how Asian firms can become more competitive in international trade with increased resource efficiency as well as how they can participate in the new global value chains in the environmental services sector.

29. The major outcome of the Conference was the adoption, following Ministerial-level deliberations, of the Manila Declaration on Green Industry in Asia and Framework of Action, which together confirm the resolve of Governments in the region to reduce the resource intensity and carbon emissions of industries in Asia, and outline the steps needed to develop green industry in Asia.

30. There were also a number of important follow-up activities arising from the event. Among these, UNIDO will undertake studies in certain related areas including green industry policy guidelines and benchmarking on resource efficiency. In addition, at the cooperation meetings following the event, the Government of the Philippines along with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNIDO will periodically review progress; set up working groups involving academia, research centres and industrial associations; establish a network of green industries, universities and research centres for technological innovations; organize national and regional forums; and establish a regional expert group to help promote the sharing of knowledge, expertise and know-how on green industry.

**Global Renewable Energy Forum – Scaling Up Renewable Energy
(7-9 October 2009, León, Mexico)**

31. Building on the work of the Global Renewable Energy Forum held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, in May 2008, the main objective of the Forum was to provide a platform for proactive dialogue to strengthen interregional cooperation and encourage innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at scaling up renewable energy in Latin America and worldwide. The event also examined renewable technologies as a key means toward energy security, poverty reduction and the attainment of a post-carbon society.

32. The Forum was organized by UNIDO in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy of Mexico and saw more than 3000 people take part, including high-level representatives from governments, international organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector.

33. Over the course of two-and-a-half days, nine plenary sessions and three parallel sessions were held, all of which were moderated discussion panels with keynote speakers. Plenary sessions were convened on the following themes: energy poverty, economic and financial crisis, and climate change; renewable energy and energy transition; renewable energy potential; renewable energy and the access agenda; biofuels; investments in renewables; and innovative policy and institutional frameworks. The parallel sessions focused on new technologies, renewable energy for industrial applications, and energy efficiency.

34. A number of clear recommendations arose from the Forum, among which are: (a) the establishment of a global access fund to target chronic problems of access to energy; (b) the development of sustainability guidelines and standards for biofuels; (c) to secure support for the work of the new International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA); (d) to strengthen regional research capacities through networks; and (e) to establish partnerships between UN-Energy and industry.

III. Action required of the Conference

35. The Conference may wish to take note of the information provided in the present document.
