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**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up  
to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and  
summits in the economic, social and related fields**

### **Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025)**

#### **Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [70/293](#).

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\* [A/80/150](#).



*Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [70/293](#), in which the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization was requested to submit a report on progress made in the implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025).

## I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an update on the progress made by local and international partners in implementing the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025) during the period from July 2024 to June 2025. It contains an overview of completed, ongoing and planned projects, along with a summary of specific activities, initiatives and events conducted in pursuit of the industrialization agenda for Africa. The report also serves to highlight collaborative efforts between local and international partners, especially in areas where the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other United Nations agencies are involved. Key insights from the independent strategic evaluation of the Decade conducted in 2024, which served to assess achievements, gaps and lessons learned, have been incorporated into the report. As the Decade concludes in July 2025, insights and recommendations on the way forward are provided.

### A. Status of industrial development in Africa

2. Industrial development in Africa showed modest progress amid persistent structural challenges. Manufacturing contributed 10.3 per cent to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024. Growth in agroprocessing, fertilizers, light manufacturing and energy transition minerals reflected slight improvements in diversification. Nevertheless, over 60 per cent of output remains concentrated in low-value sectors, such as food, beverages, textiles and clothing. The continent's share of global manufacturing value added remained at 2 per cent and its global GDP contribution at 3 per cent.

3. Efforts to boost domestic value addition in resource-rich sectors gained policy traction, as more countries developed industrial strategies focused on processing critical minerals and agricultural commodities. Despite such progress, links between extractive industries and manufacturing remained limited. For instance, while Africa accounted for more than 30 per cent of global cobalt output in 2024, that output was used in less than 1 per cent of global battery production. Agro-industrial value chains showed incremental growth in regions where investment, infrastructure and enabling policies were aligned, but sector-wide productivity remained uneven and constrained by gaps in skills, financing and technology.

4. In addition, there were improvements in industrial infrastructure and regional integration. Under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, more than 76 regional priority infrastructure projects, including on energy corridors, transport networks, and information and communications technology backbone systems, were being implemented in 2025. Despite those developments, trade costs in Africa remained 50 per cent higher than the global average, and only 48 per cent of the population had reliable access to electricity. Nevertheless, there was progress in trade facilitation under the African Continental Free Trade Area, including an increase in the number of countries participating in the Guided Trade Initiative and steps taken towards the operationalization of the adjustment fund.

5. Macroeconomic conditions were mixed. The continent's GDP was estimated to have been around 4.0 per cent in 2024, up from 3.3 per cent in 2023, making it the second-fastest growing region globally. Inflation declined from 18.5 per cent to 16.1 per cent, although it was still above the global average. While 21 countries are expected to grow by over 5 per cent in 2025, growth continues to be driven by consumption and extractive industries. Sustained investment in infrastructure, technology and skills is needed to translate growth into industrial transformation.

## **B. New developments in industry in Africa and the global economy**

6. The industrial sector of Africa became more diversified in 2024, driven by green technologies, digital innovation and value chain restructuring. Renewable energy development remained a priority; approximately 2.4 GW of new solar capacity were added, bringing the share of renewables in Africa to nearly 15 per cent of total energy capacity. Industry 4.0 technologies gained traction, with 12 per cent of manufacturing firms adopting digital tools to boost productivity. The continent's deposits of lithium, cobalt, copper and rare earth minerals attracted strategic investments, thereby reinforcing its role in global green supply chains. However, despite producing over 30 per cent of global cobalt, local value addition remains below 5 per cent. In parallel, the Internet penetration rate reached 44 per cent, fostering growth in e-commerce and technology-enabled manufacturing. As a result, digital tools have significantly enhanced efficiency in agroprocessing and light manufacturing, which together contribute to over 60 per cent of the output of Africa.

7. Globally, industrial transformation accelerated through clean energy, digitalization and automation. In 2024, global spending on artificial intelligence exceeded \$300 billion, with manufacturing being a key sector in the development and application of artificial intelligence. China, the United States of America and the European Union invested over \$250 billion in sectors such as solar power, hydrogen generation, electric vehicles and batteries. The adoption of artificial intelligence and automation technologies increased by 15 per cent compared with the previous year, thereby boosting productivity and creating jobs, including in emerging economies through technology and knowledge transfer.

## **II. Progress in the implementation of key priorities in the Third Decade**

### **A. Agribusiness and rural development**

8. UNIDO led multiple agribusiness initiatives across Africa. In Liberia, a European Union-funded project valued at €7 million served to enhance food safety systems and boost local trade capacities. In the Sudan, a €12.5 million portfolio of projects – funded by Canada, Italy, Japan and the European Union – strengthened priority value chains, improved food security and supported recovery efforts, including a women-led agribusiness initiative valued at \$6 million and €5.5 million for agro-value chains. In Ethiopia, under a livestock project funded by China (\$3.6 million), institutional and disease control capacity was built; an additional \$5.2 million supported livestock modernization, the training of more than 500 experts and the certification of 25 meat inspectors. In Somalia, a €13 million programme led to the creation of 1,500 jobs, support for 450 agrifood businesses and the installation of a solar desalination plant. In Kenya, under an agroprocessing project valued at \$328,000, an additional \$624,000 was mobilized for gender-responsive blue economy activities.

9. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Integrated Agribusiness Hub Programme, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (€10 million), the Visa Foundation (\$3.5 million) and IFAD (\$3.5 million), created 21,857 direct jobs and 10,895 indirect jobs in nine countries, namely Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan and Zambia. In Algeria, through a partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), IFAD linked 7,090 young people to

employment; of those, 6,630 secured wage-based jobs, while some also transitioned to self-employment, resulting in 2,008 self-employed individuals.

10. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) implemented a \$76 million emergency project on wheat production in the Sudan to tackle food insecurity and support agricultural transformation. WFP also advanced post-harvest loss reduction across Africa. In Malawi, 23,380 farmers received training and 171,225 hermetic bags for grain storage. In Mozambique, post-harvest losses fell from 36 per cent to 14 per cent, which led to savings of \$447,000. In the United Republic of Tanzania, five warehouses were rehabilitated and 278,113 farmers were trained in post-harvest loss reduction. In Egypt, post-harvest losses were reduced in 75 villages through improved market access. Through collaboration with the African Export-Import Bank, \$2.5 million was secured to integrate smallholders into export value chains in Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

11. The World Trade Organization (WTO) implemented the Swedish-funded “Grow-2” project, valued at 79 million Swedish kronor, to promote economic diversification and rural development in Liberia by strengthening cocoa, cassava and horticulture value chains. During the reporting period, 8,075 farmers including 2,580 cocoa farmers, were trained in good agricultural and climate-smart practices in preparation for organic certification through improved traceability and control systems. Project partners sold 500 tons of organic cocoa internationally for the first time, 619 cassava farmers were trained through six farmer field schools and a nursery aimed at multiplying cassava crop production was established.

12. The United Nations Capital Development Fund advanced agro-industrial development through its initiative aimed at strengthening agricultural resilience through agro-industrial transformation. In Uganda, a programme valued at €11.5 million served to provide technical assistance and catalyse \$2 million in loans to small and medium-sized enterprises. In Nigeria, a \$2.5 million loan supported the expansion of the processing capacity of a therapeutic food supplement manufacturer. In Benin, the Fund partnered with WFP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to guarantee \$450,000 for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises that supply school feeding programmes and for youth-led agribusiness. The United Nations Capital Development Fund continued to implement the Food Security Accelerator Programme with the Africa Adaptation Initiative in order to promote resilient food systems in the least developed countries.

13. UNIDO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Organization for Migration implemented a \$1.3 million programme on circular agrifood systems in Kenya, with a view to improving livelihoods by addressing food insecurity, post-harvest losses, climate resilience and market linkages. Key results include a reduction in post-harvest losses of banana crops from 46 per cent to 15 per cent in pilot counties. Livestock waste was repurposed into bioenergy and organic fertilizer, and solar-biogas systems were introduced to enhance sustainability and reduce reliance on traditional fuels.

## **B. Trade capacity-building**

14. UNIDO continued to collaborate with the African Union and the International Trade Centre under the €200 million Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access programme, managing a portfolio of €129.7 million to strengthen intra-African and Africa-European Union trade. Implementation has begun across the continental components, through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) while the components relating to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

(COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are nearing launch. The SADC component is expected to be inaugurated during the 2025 Africa Industrialization Week in Madagascar. Complementing those efforts, UNIDO advanced trade capacity-building at the national level. In the United Republic of Tanzania, 988 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises received training and several laboratories were upgraded as part of a €7 million project on quality standards. In Kenya, 500 farmers were trained and two processing units were installed under a \$2 million project. European Union-funded projects supported micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and value chains in the Comoros (€3.87 million), Egypt (€8.1 million), Senegal (€2.25 million) and Sierra Leone (€4.6 million).

15. The World Bank Group continued to implement projects in support of trade capacity-building across Africa. During the reporting period, a total investment portfolio of \$16 billion in over 90 regional projects, with a focus on strengthening trade infrastructure, digital connectivity and the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises into value chains, was ongoing. Key initiatives include a \$250 million support programme under the African Continental Free Trade Area to improve customs and trade logistics. In addition, under the Digital Economy for Africa initiative, the Group has committed approximately \$25 billion up to 2030 to support digital infrastructure, platforms, finance, businesses and skills development across the continent. The Group also approved the Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Programme, a \$266.5 million initiative across the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania, to expand access to affordable broadband and build a single digital market. Transport and logistics upgrades received over \$2.6 billion, enabling the enhancement of trade corridors and ports.

16. The World Intellectual Property Organization provided support in the area of trade-related intellectual property through projects aimed at strengthening value chains. In Madagascar, 50 pink peppercorn producers in Bongolava were assisted in developing and registering a collective trademark. In addition, national authorities received support to formulate a national intellectual property strategy intended to integrate intellectual property into key economic sectors. In Ghana, the second phase of a project on the geographical indication of Kente cloth involved the engagement of over 120 stakeholders through five workshops in the Ashanti and Volta Regions. Under the project, support was provided for the development of technical specifications for geographical indications and collective trademarks to ensure alignment with international intellectual property standards; and for the creation of a national intellectual property association to enhance branding and commercialization.

17. WTO, in collaboration with UNIDO and other partners, renewed the cotton partnership initiative during the Aid for Trade Global Review in 2024. The initiative is aimed at catalysing \$12 billion in investment across West and Central Africa, targeting value addition in cotton processing and job creation for women and young people. WTO also launched the Digital Trade for Africa project with the World Bank in order to boost digitally delivered services and promote a supportive regulatory environment. In March 2025, WTO launched the Tariff and Trade Data portal, which contains data on tariffs, trade flows and market access for approximately 40 African countries, helping stakeholders to identify export opportunities and monitor trade trends.

### **C. Entrepreneurship and skills development**

18. UNIDO advanced youth entrepreneurship and vocational training across Africa. In Mozambique, 1,483 young people were trained in sectors such as fishing and construction, with most receiving starter kits for self-employment. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 12 technical and vocational education and training centres

were upgraded as part of an €8 million project on employment and education and a \$6.9 million initiative on such centres, benefiting over 3,000 students. In Ghana, through a \$6 million Learning and Knowledge Development Facility project, 1,200 young people were trained and four vocational centres were established. The Learning and Knowledge Development Facility Forum, held in Zambia, gathered more than 300 stakeholders, generating 14 project ideas on critical raw materials. In Uganda, 800 young people were trained and 300 jobs were created under a \$4 million project. In Ethiopia, a \$3.12 million project served to enhance agro-industrial training and link students with industrial parks.

19. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the Funguo Innovation Programme in the United Republic of Tanzania, supported over 2,100 start-ups and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by awarding catalytic grants to 61 ventures and creating 5,000 jobs. Under its Youth Ignite fellowship programme, student innovators at 10 universities were assisted through training and seed funding. Together with the African Union Commission, UNDP supported the Enterprise Africa Network fellowship programme, as part of which 50 entrepreneurs from 30 countries were supported in 2025. To boost innovation and research, UNDP also launched 14 University Innovation Pods across Africa, which received \$3 million in funding from the Government of Rwanda under the Timbuktoo Africa Innovation Fund.

20. The African Development Bank funded the €24 million Morabeza innovation project in Cabo Verde in order to support the country's shift from a tourism-dependent economy to a regional hub for digital innovation and entrepreneurship. The project is aimed at positioning digital technology as a driver of private sector productivity, competitiveness and job creation, particularly for women and young people. It is focused on attracting innovation-driven enterprises and "digital nomads", strengthening the ecosystems of local micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in order to accelerate technology adoption, and improving coordination and monitoring through digital platforms.

21. WFP, UNFPA and the United Nations Capital Development Fund provided a \$450,000 loan guarantee to Alidé, a local financial institution in Benin, to support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises that supply the national home-grown school feeding programme and to foster youth entrepreneurship in regions affected by insecurity. As part of the initiative, de-risking tools were used to enable local lenders to serve underserved, high-potential entrepreneurs, thereby enhancing industrial financing opportunities. WFP also supported public-private partnerships in order to incubate micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and youth-led enterprises, thereby contributing to local economic development and strengthening inclusive value chains.

22. ILO supported skills development and industry-led employment initiatives in 28 African countries. In Malawi, it piloted training for informal sector workers and certified 78 workers. In Ethiopia, over 9,000 workers benefited from improved conditions. In Zambia, ILO backed a gender-inclusive, sustainable mining strategy. Through the joint ILO-UNIDO initiative on skills for sustainable industrial transformation in Africa, ILO advanced training systems, supported Africa Skills Week and the Learning and Knowledge Development Facility forum, and contributed to the WTO-led cotton partnership. Key results included the development of sector-specific skills frameworks to guide the work of national skills bodies in seven countries, skills assessments in nine countries and apprenticeship reforms in seven countries. ILO also assisted in updating the African continental technical and vocational education and training strategy (2025–2034).

## D. Industrial policy and statistics

23. UNIDO advanced industrial policymaking and ecosystem development across Africa through targeted partnerships. In collaboration with the Republic of Korea, UNIDO conducted industrial policy laboratories in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, in which 120 stakeholders from governments, academia and regional bodies participated; the findings were captured in the June 2025 issue of the UNIDO industrial policy research and statistics newsletter. In Egypt, under the €8 million trade, industry, growth and rapid market access project funded by the European Union, UNIDO delivered five policy workshops for 120 participants and established a policy support unit within the Ministry of Industry. Following the presentation in Nairobi of the 2024 special economic zones survey, UNIDO signed a memorandum of understanding with the Africa Economic Zones Organization to guide future programming and regional industrial strategies on special economic zones.

24. The African Development Bank financed a project on industrial development and the resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises in Guinea through a €14.5 million loan under its Transition Support Facility. Launched in mid-2024, the three-year project is aimed at strengthening institutional capacity for industrial planning, the resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the promotion of green industry through the provision of support for public-private partnership infrastructure, metrology and innovation, industrial property development and project coordination. AfDB also supported Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia in developing or updating industrial policies to define strategic reforms and public investment priorities aimed at boosting competitiveness and attracting private investment in key value chains.

25. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) launched a three-year project valued at \$535,000 under the seventeenth tranche of the Development Account to promote green industrialization in Africa. The project is aimed at strengthening green economy policies by integrating energy transition strategies with green technologies and industrial policy frameworks. Key interventions include: developing policy instruments; organizing high-level policy dialogues; conducting targeted research; and building the capacity of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to scale up green value chains and adopt sustainable industrial practices, thereby supporting the continent's broader green growth agenda.

26. The Technology Executive Committee of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and UNIDO published a policy brief on integrating hard-to-abate industries into nationally determined contributions, using the cement sector of the Congo as a case study. In the brief, the need to embed industrial transformation in national climate strategies is underscored, and details are provided on how tools such as technology road maps, fiscal incentives and regulatory frameworks can drive low-carbon solutions. The case of the Congo highlights how aligning industrial and climate policies can lead to the modernization of production systems, enhance domestic value addition and improve access to international finance.

27. ECCAS, with support from ECA, developed a protocol on cooperation in the field of industrial development and a master plan for the industrialization of Central Africa. Both were adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in October 2024, in Malabo. The master plan contains an outline of priority sectors, investment needs and governance mechanisms to accelerate industrial development and regional value chains. Together, the instruments provide a coherent framework to guide the structural transformation of Central Africa and the integration of industry into regional economic planning.



## **E. Special economic zones and industrial parks**

28. UNIDO, through 17.7 million Swiss francs in funding from Switzerland, implemented the second phase of the Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme to promote circular economy and transform industrial zones into eco-industrial parks. In South Africa, six parks received technical support, resulting in annual savings of 7,279 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, 6,386 MWh of energy, 22,320 GJ of fossil fuel and \$2.37 million. In Morocco, six parks were assessed under the international eco-industrial park framework. Technopole d'Oujda, a major industrial hub, was selected for in-depth planning. Over 60 stakeholders engaged in workshops and a policy review supported the scale-up of national eco-industrial parks from 2026. In the United Republic of Tanzania, policy analysis, stakeholder mapping and park assessments were conducted to build national capacity and readiness for eco-industrial park adoption across key institutions and industrial authorities.

29. ECA secured a \$1.5 million grant from the African Export-Import Bank to implement a multi-year programme (2025–2027) focused on de-risking investment and strengthening regional value chains. The programme includes: (a) technical support on standards and norms for successful special economic zones, including study tours and diagnostics for at least five member States; and (b) the development of integrated regional value chains in sectors such as battery electric vehicles, automotives, leather, textiles and services. It serves to promote micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises participation, cross-border special economic zones, skills development, and research and development collaboration, thereby supporting Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the African Continental Free Trade Area priorities. Early results include baseline assessments in three countries and a policy harmonization road map for key corridors.

30. The World Bank Group, through the Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation project, which has a budget of \$225 million, continued to provide technical assistance focused on entrepreneurship, financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and links with agro-industrial value chains. Its focus is on blended finance, entrepreneurship and linking small and medium-sized enterprises to competitive value chains and markets. In addition, in early 2025, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) announced a \$50 million equity investment in the Lagos Free Zone in Nigeria, aimed at crowding in anchor firms and catalysing investment for deep-sea port logistics. Those efforts complement broader support for special economic zones and industrial clusters by the World Bank Group.

31. UNDP facilitated feasibility studies for industrial projects within designated special economic zones in the United Republic of Tanzania under the Finance 4 Development Project. The initiative covered 30 local government projects, 13 on the mainland and 17 in Zanzibar, valued at a combined \$100 million. Sectors covered include construction, agroprocessing and education, which are being developed under various investment models, including public-private partnerships and joint ventures, with the aim of enhancing value chains and market access.

## **F. Pharmaceutical industries**

32. UNIDO continued to advance local pharmaceutical production, with a focus on innovation, efficiency and scale. In Senegal, it implemented a \$893,869 project funded by Germany aimed at strengthening local vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturing. The project serves to support domestic companies, promote locally made products and facilitate partnerships. At the African Medicines Manufacturing Trade Exhibition and Conference in the United Republic of Tanzania, UNIDO

launched its lean local active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing approach, combining Lean Six Sigma and circular economy principles to boost efficiency in the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients. UNIDO also introduced the Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting tool, which enables companies to design bankable proposals, secure financing and scale up sustainable pharmaceutical manufacturing operations.

33. In November 2024, AfDB approved a \$15 million loan to support the VaxSen project, led by the Pasteur Institute in Dakar, to establish a vaccine manufacturing facility in Diamniadio, Senegal. With an annual capacity of 300 million doses, the facility will significantly reduce the reliance on imported vaccines in Africa, which is currently above 99 per cent. The project serves to contribute to achieving the African Union target of achieving 60 per cent local vaccine production by 2040 (Vision 2040) and to reinforce pandemic preparedness. Furthermore, AfDB mobilized \$12 million to improve access to technology and innovation, strengthen pharmaceutical ecosystems, promote good manufacturing practices and support integration with WTO trade-related intellectual property frameworks.

34. The World Health Organization (WHO), in partnership with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, under the Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing, supported 10 countries in strengthening regulatory systems, adopting good manufacturing practices and creating industrial incentives. More than 5,000 specialists were trained in biomanufacturing and regulatory science, and 850 professionals participated in workshops on good manufacturing practices and vaccine pre-qualification. Ten technology transfer agreements were signed, and annual vaccine production in Africa reached 61 million doses. The programme also contributed to the launch of the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator, a \$1 billion mechanism to mobilize investment for local production, marking a strategic shift towards health sovereignty, reduced import dependency and sustainable pharmaceutical manufacturing, in alignment with Agenda 2063.

35. COMESA continued to implement \$6.639 million project on support towards regional pharmaceutical sector development, supported by the African Development Fund, to enhance the region's pharmaceutical ecosystem. The project is focused on strengthening the institutional capacities of regulatory bodies, quality control systems and research institutions. Key activities include operationalizing the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa, advancing the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization programme and building regulatory and institutional infrastructure. The project is also aimed at supporting the training of stakeholders and trans-regional research, thereby laying the groundwork for a stronger, more integrated and more competitive pharmaceutical industry in East and Southern Africa.

## **G. Renewable energy and energy efficiency**

36. UNIDO launched the second phase of the Energy Efficiency for Sustainable Livelihoods in Africa programme in early 2025, with €9 million from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, which is targeted at 15 countries in East, West and Southern Africa. Under the programme, policy reform was supported, over 500 professionals were trained and 20 technology demonstrations were conducted in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Under the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres, UNIDO helped to establish the Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Central Africa in Angola and co-organized the 2025 SADC Sustainable Energy Week in Botswana. UNIDO also contributed to the harmonization of solar energy standards across West and East Africa through a €1 million project on solar resource centres. UNIDO also launched a €7 million clean

cooking programme, secured €19 million for energy efficiency, led a €23 million decarbonization initiative and implemented projects worth €4.8 million in Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal and Tunisia.

37. The United Nations Capital Development Fund advanced renewable energy and energy efficiency through catalytic finance and de-risking tools. In Madagascar, it led a \$4 million de-risking facility within an \$8.7 million clean energy programme together with UNIDO and UNDP, which supported 59 early-stage enterprises, including ventures led by women and young people, through concessional loans and credit guarantees. In the United Republic of Tanzania, under the CookFund programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by the Fund in collaboration with FAO and UNIDO, \$991,391 was awarded to 29 enterprises, enabling clean cooking access for 510,000 people and creating 1,094 jobs, 53.5 per cent of which were held by women. In West Africa, the Fund provided support for the \$350 million Fellou-Sounga hydropower project through seed financing.

38. With the support of Norway and Switzerland, ILO piloted the “SCORE4Climate” training for small and medium-sized enterprises in Tunisia and Zambia to promote clean production and circular practices. Under the initiative, 1,403 staff (of whom 42 per cent were women) from 24 such enterprises were trained. Results included the formalization of energy-reduction processes by 15 firms, the monitoring of resource use by 33 firms and the tracking of energy savings by 24 firms. Gender inclusion was mainstreamed; women made up 41 per cent of new trainers and 45 per cent of certified trainers. Mixed-gender teams were formed in 83 per cent of firms; on average, each applied at least one gender-responsive practice.

39. The World Bank Group continued to support the goal of connecting 250 million people in Africa to electricity by 2030. In East and Southern Africa, 100 million people are being targeted through grid expansion, utility reform and power trade under the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation programme. The electricity access project in Ethiopia has connected over 8 million people to electricity, while an “electric highway” and new interconnectors (Malawi-Zambia and United Republic of Tanzania-Zambia) are being built under regional projects. In West and Central Africa, 17.5 million people will be connected to electricity through the distributed access through renewable energy scale-up project in Nigeria, and renewable energy is being expanded in Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo under a project on regional emergency solar power intervention.

## **H. Environment and climate change**

40. UNIDO implemented a \$13.7 million project under the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol in Egypt, under which more than 30 refrigeration and air conditioning enterprises were converted from using hydrofluorocarbons to climate-friendly refrigerants, 1,387 individuals were trained, a biorefinery was opened and green finance instruments were promoted. In Madagascar, under the planetGOLD project, funded by the Global Environment Facility, 600 miners were integrated into the formal economy, 4,000 miners were trained, a target was set to reduce the use of mercury by 5 tons, a composting plant was launched with a view to cutting 1,700 tons of greenhouse gases and 4,200 ha were rehabilitated. In South Africa, 1,600 refrigeration and air conditioning technicians were trained, leading to savings of \$2.3 million and 7,279 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Algeria achieved 67.5 per cent of hydrochlorofluorocarbons phase-out targets, converting 40 per cent of the domestic air conditioning units to climate-friendly refrigerants. Through the Green Forward Industry project, funded by the European Union, 250 small and medium-sized enterprises in North Africa were supported.

Under the £65 million Accelerate-to-Demonstrate Facility, funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 5 pilot projects were launched in Africa, with the aim of cutting emissions by 20 per cent. In Zambia, through a mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining project, 159 miners were trained, the use of mercury was reduced by 256 kg, and new policies were supported.

41. The secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, through its Technology Executive Committee, advanced climate technology development and transfer. In partnership with UNIDO, it released a policy brief on artificial intelligence for climate action in the least developed countries and small island developing States. At the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Committee organized the Technology Day on Transformative Industry session on decarbonizing steel and cement industries, together with UNIDO, Japan and the Climate Technology Centre and Network. It published success stories resulting from the technology action plans of Ghana and Liberia and launched the Artificial Intelligence Innovation Grand Challenge, spotlighting open-source solutions from five African countries. Through the Global Innovation Hub, and in collaboration with UNIDO, the secretariat of the Framework Convention has also led high-level sessions at recent Conferences of the Parties to foster clean technology ecosystems and industrial decarbonization.

42. UNDP advanced environmental sustainability and inclusive industrial development across Africa. In Benin, a \$10.3 million climate project served to improve agricultural practices in an area of 5,161 ha, restore 325 ha of forest and support secure land access for 5,816 people, including 2,660 women and 1,922 young people. Under a \$5.2 million initiative on iodized salt production, 818 jobs were created, including for 275 women and 643 young people. In Chad, a solar mini-grid powers 750 households (about 4,500 people) and local processing units. In Mozambique, a \$13.5 million project is enabling the establishment of a low-interest credit line and technical support to help small and medium-sized enterprises to adopt renewable energy. UNDP trained 126 energy professionals under the new national energy efficiency strategy in the United Republic of Tanzania.

## **I. Information and communications technology**

43. UNIDO advanced digital and sustainable industrialization across Africa. In the United Republic of Tanzania, it launched a blockchain knowledge hub, aligned with the national development plan, together with partners. In Ethiopia, UNIDO, the China International Development Cooperation Agency and the Ministry of Industry agreed to establish a centre of excellence for artificial intelligence and digital innovation. UNIDO also partnered with the Alliance for Industry 4.0 and Smart Manufacturing in Africa to drive digital transformation in Africa. The €6 million Employment4Youth project, funded by Germany, supported artificial intelligence pilot projects and training. In Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia, 117 participants were trained by a range of partners in digital skills and 110 small and medium-sized enterprises were supported in adopting digital and sustainable industrial practices. In the Sudan, through a \$3.2 million project on clean technology innovation, climate solutions were scaled up. In Cabo Verde, a \$1.06 million project served to promote electric mobility in artisanal fishing, with pilot schemes planned for 2025. Such efforts contribute to ensuring low-carbon growth and skills development.

44. The African Development Bank approved a \$160 million loan in January 2025 to support Axian Telecom in expanding digital access and financial inclusion in nine African countries. The loan will accelerate the modernization and roll-out of fourth- and fifth-generation (4G and 5G) networks and drive digital innovation, thereby

enabling broader regional operations. In addition, AfDB approved a \$2.5 million grant to boost financial literacy and credit access for 34,000 women-led businesses in Madagascar, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania, reinforcing inclusive economic growth and advancing the digital and financial ecosystems in those countries.

45. IFAD advanced digital transformation to empower smallholder farmers in Africa and beyond. In Nigeria, under a \$1.2 million project, an artificial intelligence-based digital assistant, “Farmerchat”, was launched, reaching 10,000 smallholders and providing advice in local languages. The lessons learned will support the scaling-up of the tool in other countries. In Lagos, IFAD piloted artificial intelligence-powered digital farmer registries for better data-sharing and policy-targeting. In the United Republic of Tanzania, under the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, IFAD partnered with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and FAO to boost agricultural efficiency through data integration, the scaling-up of agricultural technology and digital literacy, benefiting about 15,000 farmers and strengthening the digital agricultural ecosystem.

46. COMESA continued to coordinate the Inclusive Digitalization in Eastern and Southern Africa programme, a \$2.48 billion initiative funded by the International Development Association and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Approved in June 2024 and launched in April 2025, the project is aimed at supporting 15 countries: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. As part of the first phase, \$780 million was allocated to Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Malawi, and \$10 million to COMESA for regional coordination. The programme serves to address digital barriers and is aimed at enhancing infrastructure, harmonizing policies and promoting inclusive digital adoption towards the creation of a regional digital free trade area.

## **J. Outreach, global forums and advocacy initiatives**

47. UNIDO hosted several key global forums to advocate for industrialization in Africa. In November 2024, it hosted the World Without Hunger Conference in Addis Ababa with FAO, which it supported as a technical partner, alongside the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia. The three-day event attracted over 1,500 participants and featured technical sessions, an investment forum and a high-level political dialogue focused on food security, agribusiness and climate resilience. The conference culminated in the adoption of the Addis Ababa Call to Action for a World Without Hunger and generated pledges exceeding €11 million, including support for women-led agriculture and sesame crop development. UNIDO called for \$50 billion in global investment over the next decade to eradicate hunger and announced the launch of a China-Africa-UNIDO centre of excellence in Addis Ababa, aimed at fostering innovation, South-South cooperation and sustainable food systems.

48. UNIDO, the African Union Commission, ECA, AfDB, the African Export-Import Bank, the Africa Business Council and Deloitte organized the final high-level event on the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa on the margins of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly and the Summit of the Future, on 25 September 2024 in New York. At the event, attended by over 150 participants, including Heads of Government and Ministers, the progress made by Africa in sustainable industrialization was presented, challenges were discussed, and actions were proposed for building on the Decade’s achievements and lessons learned and

ensuring alignment with Agenda 2063 and the Pact for the Future. The event also set the stage for a Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

49. In December 2024, the African Union and UNIDO held the first extraordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Minerals in Addis Ababa, which led to the adoption of a ministerial declaration in which calls were made for the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to adopt a resolution on a Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa. Building on the successes of the Third Decade, the session underscored the need for continued industrialization, economic growth and sustainable development. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to aligning efforts with the long-term goals of Africa, enhancing partnerships and finalizing industrial development strategies.

50. In January 2025, the World Bank Group, the African Union and AfDB hosted the Mission 300 Africa Energy Summit, held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. Thirty African Heads of State endorsed the Dar es Salaam Energy Declaration, committing to accelerate access to affordable and sustainable electricity. Mission 300 aims to connect 300 million Africans to electricity by 2030, including 250 million through support from the World Bank Group and 50 million through support from AfDB. At the Summit, partners pledged \$50 billion in energy financing. The World Bank Group, in partnership with IFC, also hosted over 1,000 financial leaders at the Africa Financial Industry Summit, held in Casablanca, Morocco, in December 2024, which was focused on finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, domestic capital markets and long-term investments.

51. The African Union launched the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035, alongside the adoption of the Kampala Declaration, during a high-level event in Johannesburg, South Africa, in May 2025. The strategy builds on the Maputo and Malabo declarations, adopted in 2003 and 2014, and sets ambitious targets to transform agrifood systems in Africa. The Kampala Declaration is aimed at mobilizing \$100 billion, increasing agrifood output by 45 per cent, tripling intra-African trade in agricultural goods and halving post-harvest losses. It prioritizes climate adaptation, resilience, food safety and inclusive growth, and is closely aligned with the programming of WFP and other development partners.

## **K. Partnerships and resource mobilization**

52. UNIDO continued to implement Programmes for Country Partnership across Africa, aligning industrial priorities with coordinated investments. In Ethiopia, it supported circular textile production (\$28 million), honey value chains (€1.8 million) and four integrated agro-industrial parks. In Senegal, as part of the first phase of the Programme for Country Partnership, over \$1.15 billion was mobilized for 27 agro-poles and platforms, and, during the second phase (2025–2029), territorial industrialization will be deepened. In Morocco, the Programme for Country Partnership advanced in automotive sector monitoring, green hydrogen and circular economy solutions. UNIDO also launched a Programme for Country Partnership in Nigeria in 2024, the agreement for which was formally signed in April 2025. The \$174.6 million budget for the Programme in Nigeria includes \$149.6 million to be mobilized from partners and \$25 million pledged by the Government; \$1.28 million has been disbursed. Planned activities include the creation of economic zones and industrial parks, as well activities related to agro-value chains, enterprise development, trade capacity, industrial policy and sustainable energy.

53. The African Development Bank continued to crowd in development and commercial capital for industrial transformation across Africa. In 2024, it approved a

\$150 million loan to the National Industrial and Mining Company of Mauritania, unlocking co-financing to double rail capacity, enhance mining exports and integrate renewable energy. Through a €15 million equity investment in the Mediterranean Capital IV fund, AfDB is mobilizing over €350 million to scale up mid-cap enterprises in North and West Africa, with a strong industrial and manufacturing focus. Such operations exemplify the catalytic role of AfDB in resource mobilization and reflect its commitment to financing industrial competitiveness, value chain integration and sustainable private sector growth.

54. In January 2025, the COMESA Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Fertilizer Development Center to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability in Africa. Key actions include strengthening fertilizer supply chains, supporting agricultural policy and research and increasing smallholder farmers' access to quality fertilizers in 21 States members of COMESA. Furthermore, in August 2024, COMESA signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Institute for Sustainable Development to promote sustainable economic growth through collaboration on responsible agricultural investment, sustainable industrialization and climate change support.

55. The United Nations Capital Development Fund supported the issuance of the Tanga Water Infrastructure Green Bond in the United Republic of Tanzania, the first-ever subnational bond in East Africa, through which \$20.8 million in domestic capital was unlocked. The initiative demonstrated the catalytic impact of blended finance to support infrastructure that is crucial for industrial development and urban resilience. In the Gambia, the Fund supported the Gambia River Basin Development Organization in mobilizing funds for basin-wide initiatives to promote the sustainable and equitable use of transboundary water resources for energy, agriculture and economic development.

## **L. South-South and triangular cooperation**

56. UNIDO continued to advance South-South and triangular cooperation in several ways. In February 2025, UNIDO and the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency hosted the SADC Sustainable Energy Week in Botswana under the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres programme, bringing together 600 stakeholders from 15 member States. Pilot projects on solar mini-grids and clean cooking were launched and a regional commitment to harmonize energy policies by 2026 was secured. In May 2025, UNIDO partnered with the Government of Morocco, ILO, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to host Green Nexus Week in Rabat, where over 200 participants explored the topics of circular economy, biodiversity and green finance, and reinforced South-South and triangular cooperation as a driver of the continent's green transition.

57. In the lead-up to the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in August 2025, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation prepared five illustrative case studies highlighting the role of South-South cooperation in addressing development challenges in landlocked developing countries. Two studies were focused on countries in Africa: Ethiopia, highlighting structural transformation through science, technology and innovation; and Rwanda, emphasizing trade facilitation and regional integration. To strengthen implementation, the Office, in collaboration with the Development Coordination Office and the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, launched a self-paced e-learning course for United Nations

staff, developed by the United Nations System Staff College, with support from UNFPA, the Pan American Health Organization, WFP and FAO.

58. The African Union, through the African Peer Review Mechanism, hosted the Third Africa High-Level Forum on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Freetown in May 2025, on the theme “The role of the global South in reshaping the new international order”. The Forum brought together 1,000 participants, including policymakers, development partners and young people. Support was provided by the Islamic Development Bank, AfDB, the Saudi Fund for Development and the German Agency for International Cooperation. There was an emphasis on partnerships, peer learning and investment in resilient food systems and climate-smart agriculture. The Forum concluded with the adoption of the Freetown Declaration, in which calls were made for stronger integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into national frameworks and increased resource mobilization for the implementation of Agenda 2063.

## **M. Integration of women and young people into industrial development**

59. In Nigeria, UNIDO launched the Industry 4.0 to Foster Youth Employment initiative, which has a budget of \$5 million and is focused on leveraging digital tools to enhance compliance with food safety standards. Under the project, 1,000 young people were trained in digital skills and partnerships with local industries were facilitated. In Uganda, a project on youth employment through skills development, with funding of \$4 million, was aimed at improving the employability of young people through targeted technical and vocational training programmes. In Kenya, UNIDO launched a project on youth digital innovation for green growth in 2025, which is focused on equipping young people with digital and entrepreneurial skills to support green industrialization. It includes training in digital manufacturing, circular economy practices and start-up incubation in order to support youth-led innovation in sustainable industries and enhance employment opportunities.

60. The African Development Bank implemented a \$79 million youth employment project in Angola to boost youth employability and entrepreneurship in the agriculture and transport sectors. Under the project, economic diversification and poverty reduction are supported by equipping young people with relevant skills and opportunities. A key component of the project is the development of a digital innovation ecosystem, designed to expand access to entrepreneurship, particularly in climate-smart agriculture and sustainable transport value chains. The aim of the project is to create long-term employment pathways and strengthen the capacity of Angola for inclusive green economic growth.

61. UNFPA, in partnership with the West African Health Organization, launched a new phase of the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend initiative in December 2024. Supported by a \$365 million investment from the World Bank, the new phase is aimed at empowering over 2 million adolescent girls across the Sahel region. The programme prioritizes enhancing access to education, reproductive health services and economic opportunities, while actively addressing entrenched gender norms that perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence and inequality. Building on the achievements of the previous phase, the initiative represents a strategic regional collaboration involving ECOWAS and ECCAS and is aimed at fostering sustainable development, resilience and demographic dividend realization in West and Central Africa.



### III. Lessons learned from the strategic evaluation of the Third Decade

62. An independent strategic evaluation of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, conducted in 2024 with inputs from national authorities, regional organizations, United Nations agencies, financial institutions and private sector partners, found that the initiative played a catalytic role in elevating industrialization on the continent's development agenda, mobilizing over \$5 billion in programmatic support and fostering alignment between global and continental priorities.

63. However, the evaluation also identified some challenges:

- (a) Fragmented national implementation due to limited institutional capacity and weak coordination mechanisms;
- (b) Insufficient financing, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises and climate-smart industrial infrastructure;
- (c) Weak integration of industrial development in national development strategies and the African Continental Free Trade Area implementation plans;
- (d) Inadequate data and monitoring systems to track progress.

### IV. Looking ahead towards a Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa

64. Building on the momentum of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, and taking into account key milestones, including the ministerial declaration of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Minerals (December 2024), decision 1280 (XLVI) of the African Union Executive Council (February 2025) and General Assembly resolution [79/222](#), UNIDO and the African Union have initiated the process towards proclaiming a Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa. Aligned with the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063 and the Pact for the Future, the Fourth Decade would be shaped through broad consultation with Member States to reflect shared priorities for the industrial development of Africa. In that regard, a draft resolution is expected to be submitted for consideration during the eightieth session of the General Assembly.

### V. Conclusions and recommendations

#### The industrialization of Africa: achievements and persistent challenges

65. Since its launch in 2016, the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa has advanced the industrialization of Africa under Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has mobilized high-level political commitment, supported over 730 projects, strengthened regional coordination and delivered tangible impact in priority areas, such as agribusiness, clean energy, pharmaceuticals and digital innovation.

66. Despite those achievements, structural barriers continue to constrain industrial transformation in Africa. Industry's share of GDP declined from 25 per cent in 2007 to 21 per cent in 2023. Manufacturing employment stagnated at 15 to 16 per cent and industrial exports remain concentrated in low-value sectors. GDP per capita rose marginally, from \$2,009 to \$2,027. The least developed countries saw their growth drop from 6.1 per cent at the beginning of the Decade to 3.1 per cent in 2023.

67. Nevertheless, the resilience and potential of the continent's industrial sector remain strong. In 2024–2025, Africa outpaced global GDP growth averages and manufacturing value added grew by 7 per cent in North, West and East Africa. There is an urgency to consolidate gains and accelerate transformation under a new, forward-looking framework.

68. Sustainable industrialization requires support for both large enterprises and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. Large firms drive innovation and exports in capital-intensive sectors, while micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises – accounting for over 80 per cent of enterprises in Africa – are key to jobs and regional value chains. Governments must foster investment, enterprise growth and industrial clustering to unlock the continent's full industrial potential.

### **Strategic recommendations: unlocking the industrial future of Africa**

69. To consolidate the gains of the Third Decade and inform the design and implementation of a Fourth Decade in view of accelerating the inclusive industrial transformation of Africa, the following strategic recommendations are proposed for consideration by Member States and partners:

(a) **Scale up investment in integrated infrastructure.** Africa must scale up investment in transport, energy, water and digital systems to expand industrial parks and special economic zones, logistics networks and regional value chains;

(b) **Accelerate renewable energy and green manufacturing.** Leveraging clean technologies, including decentralized energy, green hydrogen and battery production, should power low-carbon industrialization across the continent;

(c) **Build human capital and industrial skills.** Education and training systems must be aligned with industrial labour market demands, with expanded science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes and vocational programmes in areas such as green skills and Industry 4.0 for women and young people;

(d) **Deepen regional integration and African Continental Free Trade Area implementation.** Harmonizing standards, investing in cross-border special economic zones and promoting coordinated industrial policies across regional economic communities will deepen intra-African trade and regional cooperation;

(e) **Support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and foster inclusive industrial ecosystems.** Expand access to finance, services and markets for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, with dedicated clusters and targeted support for women- and youth-led enterprises;

(f) **Promote digital transformation and innovation.** Investing in digital infrastructure, data systems, artificial intelligence, innovation hubs and smart manufacturing is essential to strengthen industrial productivity and resilience;

(g) **Mobilize strategic partnerships and diversified finance.** Strengthening the network of support for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa, expanding blended finance, public-private partnerships and South-South cooperation, and aligning global aid with the industrial policies of Africa could unlock investment and drive technology and skills transfer;

(h) **Strengthen data, monitoring and policy coherence.** Institutionalizing the Africa Industry Index and African Industry Observatory to track progress, inform policy and foster accountability will improve policymaking and ensure that it is backed by robust industrial statistics;

(i) **Ensure African Union and Member State leadership.** Embed leadership for the Fourth Decade in African Union governance structures and ensure that member States lead implementation through appropriate national coordination mechanisms and aligned development strategies;

(j) **Secure the adoption by the General Assembly of a Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa and ensure that it has high-level political support.** Endorse the proclamation of a Fourth Decade through a dedicated resolution at the eightieth session of the General Assembly, supported by joint African Union-United Nations advocacy.

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