

20 November 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,  
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,  
on Africa Industrialization Day**

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to remind you that tomorrow is Africa Industrialization Day, which the General Assembly observed since 1990. As no plenary meeting is scheduled tomorrow, I now would like to make a brief statement to commemorate 2001 Africa Industrialization Day.

For last ten years, we have observed this Day in order to mobilize the commitment and resources of the international community in support of the industrialization of Africa.

I think it is very appropriate that “the challenges of Africa’s industrialization for the new Millennium” has been chosen as the theme of this year’s observance. The new Millennium is being shaped by the rapid process of globalization driven by information and communication technologies. Globalization provides us with both opportunities for economic development and, at the same time, challenges which include, inter-alia, marginalization of developing countries. In particular, many African countries are among the most vulnerable to such marginalization due to lack of capacity and resources, persistent poverty, rampant HIV/AIDs, and chronic conflicts.

Africa, therefore, offers the most pressing and difficult challenges to the international community. At the Millennium Summit last year, world leaders resolved to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa. As President of the General Assembly, I likewise accord high priority to issues of special concern to Africa.

Industrialization is a necessary stage along the path of development. In the era of globalization and liberalization, diversifying economies and enhancing competitiveness are generally recognized as essential steps to promote the sustained economic growth. Competitiveness of African enterprises heavily depends on their technological innovation, absorption and management capability. Access to developed markets is also a prerequisite of sustainable development of Africa. In this regard, donors and developed countries are urged to provide adequate resources and technical assistance to African countries as well as beneficial treatment for African products in order to enhance the industrial capacity and market access of African producers.

At the same time, the concepts of ownership and partnership should be seen as integral to national development and industrialization. African and other developing countries need to forge partnerships that will enable them to attract needed capital, technology, and expertise from both

within and beyond their borders. This, in turn, requires creating investor-friendly business environments to stimulate macroeconomic growth, to expand markets, to develop human capital and to enhance technological capacity. In this regard, I wish to commend the historic initiative of African leaders in proclaiming the “New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)”. I believe the NEPAD frankly addresses the stark realities of African development and holds out great promise of success. Its great strength lies in its comprehensive approach encompassing peace, security, good governance, and economic development issues – all of which are central to successful industrialization. As such, it deserves the full support of the international community.

I sincerely hope that the United Nations system, which includes UNIDO with a mandate to promote sustainable industrial development, among others, will continue to work more closely to mobilize resources and expertise in support of the African-led endeavors.

On this Africa Industrialization Day, I invite all of you to join the ongoing efforts to assist African countries to adapt their industrial policies to changing global conditions and to create a supportive environment for sustainable development.