

20 November 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,  
President of the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
on the “Africa Industrialization Day”**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mobilizing the commitment of the international community to the industrialization of Africa is key for fostering economic growth on the continent. I thank all those who participate in the celebration of the “Africa Industrialization Day” and give voice and act to promote this important aim. I commend the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the African countries for their efforts in this respect.

Two months ago exactly, world leaders convened in New York to assess the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Reports prepared for this event show that, after ten years, at a time when the world is recovering from the economic and financial crisis, the picture is mixed. Poverty has declined in overall terms, but the realization of the Millennium Development Goals is off track in some regions, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa.

At the High-level Summit, world leaders clearly committed to keep the promise made in 2000 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and to redouble efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The international community thus sent a strong signal to the African continent and to the millions who live in poverty. This is very positive.

We know from experience, however, that if want the reduction of poverty to last, greater attention has to be given to economic growth and job creation. Africa is lagging behind in this respect. Its manufacturing sector is underdeveloped. Agriculture and mining activities are still the backbone of most African countries’ economies. Yet, most agricultural produce and minerals are exported in commodity form, after very limited transformation, if any.

There is a significant potential to be leveraged. The theme of this year’s Africa Industrialization Day “Competitive Industries for the Development of Africa” is therefore very relevant.

In this context, the Plan of Action for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), which has been developed by the African Union, in collaboration with UNIDO and other development partners, provides a roadmap. It outlines a feasible and ambitious way forward for achieving industrial transformation in Africa. This is a step in the right direction.

Private sector development on the African continent, however, should not be limited to manufacturing. The business climate has to be favorable to the development of activities and jobs in the service sector as well. Services are indeed a major source of value addition. For economic growth to be broadly based, opportunities for developing service activities have to be fully exploited.

Governments have to create a legal framework and put in place institutions that are conducive to private sector development. The adoption of sound economic policies and of national and regional strategies for mobilizing financial resources and attracting investment is needed. Efforts must also be made to increase the provision of infrastructure.

Manufacturing and service activities, in Africa and in the rest of the world, have to be environmentally sustainable. We have to step up efforts to reconcile economic growth and environmental concerns by moving towards a green economy. There is a need for greater innovation to develop affordable low-carbon technologies. There is a need to mobilize more financial resources, and to accelerate technology transfer and capacity building.

It is on this note that I call all stakeholders to act together to support private sector development in Africa and ensure that it becomes an engine for sustainable development of the continent.