

SOUTH AFRICA
Intergovernmental Planning Meeting - CSD15 Theme: Industrial Development

New York 1 March 2007

Introduction

The developing world, including South Africa, is beginning to develop and implement robust industrial development strategies as a key element of our National Sustainable Development Strategy. The goal is simple: to achieve a level of sustainable economic growth which reduces and ultimately eliminates extreme poverty and improves the quality of life for all. Our focus is to create full time employment; and to bridge the gap between the modern developed country economies and the marginalized developing country economies. In this context, the use of bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade arrangements and policies targeting increased exports and attracting foreign direct investment is a central instrument facilitating an industrial policy aimed at diversification our economies beyond the current traditional commodities and non-tradable goods base through value addition; industrial intensification processes and significantly move towards knowledge economies

Key challenges

For many developing countries, industrial development is a key element of our broader sustainable development strategy. The key challenges we face include the current employment of uncompetitive, inefficient production technologies and methods, skills shortages, weak transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure, services and systems creating high input costs and limited access to advanced technologies. Additional external challenges include increasingly competitive global trade and challenges in accessing markets, and tariff escalation and trade barriers, including non-tariff barriers. The combination of these factors hinder the adoption of cleaner technologies and cleaner production practices which are central to achieving the Sustainable Development goals outlined in Agenda 21 and the JPOI.

Key Considerations for the Policy Session

The following key considerations are suggested for the CSD 15 policy session

- Continued commitment to a fair and equitable global trade regime including calling for the successful finalisation of the WTO Doha Round of negotiations.
- Supporting developing countries to plan, formulate and build effective economic and industrial development strategies and associated technical infrastructure such as effective standard setting and conformity assessment services, regulatory, financial support instruments and the capacity of monitoring institutions. (The successful achievement of these may include a focused international programme involving contributions from the International Standards Organisation (ISO), International Electrical Commission (IEC), International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) etc)
- Supporting efforts towards the regional industrial integration programmes being undertaken among developing countries, particularly on the African continent within the NEPAD framework.

- Improving the integration of best practice and new and advanced technologies to make production and consumption patterns more efficient.
- Developing the small business and industrial sectors with a particular focus on access to capital, support for the access to best available technology, best industrial production and process capacity building, entrepreneurial training, assistance with marketing and the development of cooperatives.
- Supporting programmes and efforts to accelerate high-impact investment in developing countries to enhance sustainable industrial development
- Capacity building and training programmes with particular attention to women, the poor and vulnerable groups
- Promoting and supporting the building of capacity to grow South-South trade
- Facilitating exchange of information and best practice on efforts to accelerate industrial development
- Support programmes to improve and strengthen supporting transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure, systems and services.
- Enhancing the role of women and other vulnerable groups in economic decision making, ensuring access to finance and significant participation in industry
- Strengthening partnerships aimed at implementing sustainable industrial development
- Promoting “aid for trade” to assist developing countries to diversify their industrial sectors and exports

Conclusion

To conclude action is needed to accelerate the development of the 10 year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production. In addition, efforts are needed to accelerate high impact investment in developing countries that enhances sustainable industrial development, contributes to the objectives of sustainable development, and maintains the integrity of the natural resource base over the long term. This should include mechanisms to address the incremental costs for cleaner technology, support for south-south trade, and promoting exchange of information and best practice on efforts to accelerate sustainable industrial development