



UNIDO inputs to the 2023 SG report Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

15 May 2023

Gender equality

1. There is a need to emphasize more strongly the role of equal participation of all genders in green industry and circular economy as a sustainable means to lift women out of poverty. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. UNIDO research suggests that green industry sector attracts more women entrepreneurs than other sectors.¹ Green industries thus constitute an important and sustainable lever to lift women out of poverty.
2. With the aim to empower more women to take leadership roles in green industries, UNIDO and UN-Women jointly sensitized policymakers in Cambodia, Peru, Senegal and South Africa on the need to consider women front and center in green industrial policies and provided them with the necessary knowledge and tools to reformulate such policies in a gender-transformative way.
3. To address the gender-specific challenges in accessing finance of women entrepreneurs, UNIDO developed a free and publicly accessible online training on the benefits of investing through a gender lens, and provided training on gender-lens investing.
4. UNIDO provided training to industrial policy stakeholders from 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean on developing and implementing gender-transformative policies and programmes and facilitated the establishment of the Latin American Network for Industrial Development with Equality that works to increase income opportunities for women in industry.
5. From 2017 to 2022, UNIDO supported young entrepreneurs in Tunisia to launch 819 new start-ups (45 per cent led by women) and expand their businesses, thereby creating 6,025 full-time equivalent jobs in Tunisia's economically disadvantaged regions.
6. In Afghanistan, UNIDO, together with the Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Herat, IOM, UNHCR and UNAMA, provided quick-impact entrepreneurship development and technical skills training to internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities in Herat province, the province with the highest number of displaced people and returnees. Despite its successes, the gains achieved are at risk due to new restrictions imposed on women's participation in the academic and economic sectors by the Taliban government. This highlights the difficulty of creating sustainable change for vulnerable populations, particularly women, in post-conflict or crisis-affected countries.

Suggested recommendation:

Increase investment in gender-transformative green industry, in order to strengthen efforts to relieve women out of poverty while at the same time tackling the climate crisis in a way that ensures that no one is left behind.

Structural transformation

7. UNIDO facilitates structural transformation, rural development and economic growth by increasing the capacities of local industries for value addition, economic diversification, and export promotion, as well as supports the creation of decent jobs in industry and industry-related services.

¹ UNIDO, GIZ (2021). [Policy Assessment for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry: Synthesis Report of the Country Assessments in Cambodia, Peru, Senegal and South Africa.](#)

8. UNIDO further supports rural economic development by promoting investment in agri-food and allied industries in regions of high agricultural productivity, creating employment opportunities for agrarian communities in the agribusiness sector, facilitating smallholder farmers' access to markets and services. For instance, UNIDO supports MSMEs and the creation of new jobs for young people in the vicinity of the agro-food parks and the associated rural transformation centers or agropoles.
9. As the lead implementing agency for the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025), UNIDO, together with more than 30 United Nations agencies, coordinated the acceleration of the Decade's implementation through various projects and programmes.

Suggested recommendation:

Implement inclusive economic policies that promote sustainable growth to reduce poverty and inequality. Such policies include promoting economic diversification, industrialization and the structural transformation of the economy, and investing in sustainable green economies and oceans economies²

Data and technology

10. Recent technological developments provide opportunities to reform innovation ecosystem to make them more inclusive and cater towards poverty eradication goals. Rural and urban poor could particularly benefit from targeted support, such as innovation labs and shared service facilities in an open innovation approach.
11. Simple digital solutions like mobile payment technologies, digital literacy programmes, and AI and big data applications can also be harnessed to promote inclusion and economic activity. National strategies can support the identification of priority sectors and areas of intervention. UNIDO, for example, supported the Government of Jordan to craft a national artificial intelligence strategy which employs a holistic approach, making it more inclusive and ensuring all stakeholders work towards the same goal.
12. Access to technology remains decisive for poverty eradication. Absorption capacity in many countries is however inadequate, due to a combination of shortages in skills, legal frameworks, business environment, and finance. Support to technology development, by organizations such as UNIDO, can yield quick economic gains and employment opportunities. For example, UNIDO projects in Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia, fostered youth employment and poverty reduction by bridging the technology and labour-market skills gap.
13. The digitalization of labour markets and the introduction of digital marketing tools offer novel opportunities for employment and market access. They enable connections beyond geographic barriers, facilitate efficient resource matchmaking, foster collaborations, and expand employment and income generation opportunities globally. They also improve market access for operators in sectors like agro-industry, contributing to value addition and income generation.
14. UNIDO helps boost industrial modernization, digital transformation and innovation by building the capacities of local industries and SMEs, including in the agri-food sector, to generate higher value added and enable them to compete in global value chains. Efforts have been made to reduce inequalities in marginalized communities through, among others, inclusive policy dialogues involving women, girls and youth at all levels.

Addressing climate change

15. Addressing the climate challenge, which affects the poorest most, will not be possible without the transformation of industry, from major polluters to leading providers of innovative climate solutions. UNIDO helps its Member States fulfil their commitments to multilateral climate change and environmental agreements and to create climate-neutral and circular economies, where companies reduce waste and reuse existing materials and products as long as possible.
16. Small hydropower (SHP) is one of the renewable energies used by UNIDO to help developing countries overcome poverty and achieve sustainable development. UNIDO offers useful resources, such as the *World Small Hydropower Development Report* and *Small Hydropower Technical Guidelines*. Technical

² Formulation of report A/77/176 para 86 (a)

cooperation projects help countries unlock SHP's potential. For example, UNIDO supports countries like Burundi, China, Madagascar and Nigeria, demonstrating how SHP can contribute to poverty alleviation and economic growth. These projects also support post-COVID recovery by boosting local industries and strengthening community resilience. SHP projects reduce dependence on fossil fuels, which helps meet climate targets and improve climate resilience. UNIDO's promotion of clean and sustainable energy sources leads to economic growth, job creation, and community empowerment.

17. Green hydrogen has a great potential for the energy transition towards climate change mitigation. With their rich renewable energy potential, developing countries are uniquely positioned to become key producers of green hydrogen and benefit from climate-resilient economic development.
18. UNIDO's Global Programme on Green Hydrogen in Industry aims to accelerate the global application of green hydrogen through policy dialogue, knowledge products, standards, roadmaps and joint development of projects. UNIDO continues to collaborate with public and private sectors, financial organizations, and academia to ensure input from all stakeholders and along the green hydrogen value chain.

Food and sustainable agriculture

19. To further support the food systems transformation agenda, UNIDO and FAO are collaborating under the joint Agrifood Systems Transformation Accelerator (ASTA), launched in March 2023, a global programme designed to help countries make their food systems more inclusive, sustainable and resilient by fostering partnerships and generating private-sector investments. ASTA is especially relevant for LDCs, where multiple bottlenecks often hinder urgently needed transformations of agrifood systems and where integrated solutions based on inter-ministerial and public-private sector collaborations are essential.

Financing development efforts

20. Post-pandemic recovery presents challenges in financing rural development and balancing investments to build resilient livelihoods. Government strategies, such as those supported by UNIDO, play a crucial role in ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach towards these challenges. National governments are confronted with a shrinking fiscal space to finance rural development in the post-pandemic recovery, especially as they have to balance investments to reduce poverty and build resilient livelihoods in both rural and urban areas.
21. The *2023 Financing for Sustainable Development Report: Financing Sustainable Transformation*, launched in April 2023, recognizes that industrialization and structural transformation have been historic engines of growth, job creation and technological advancement. The report warns of a lasting sustainable development divide and calls on the international community to align financing with sustainable development by combining three sets of actions. First, scale up development cooperation and SDG investment. Second, strengthen the international financial architecture. Third, accelerate national sustainable industrial transformations.

Suggested recommendation:

Scale up public and private investments for inclusive and sustainable industrial development, while ensuring that industrial development policies and investments reduce enhance resilience and protect the climate and environment.³

³ In line with the outcome of the Financing for Sustainable Development Forum 2023 (E/FFDF/2023/L.1, para 13)