

UNIDO and UNEP Launch the Green Industry Platform

Summary

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The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently launched a new global initiative – the Green Industry Platform – in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Green Industry Platform provides a unique forum in which businesses, governments, international and civil society organizations will work together at the highest levels to help introduce and strengthen economically viable, environmentally sound and socially conscious practices throughout the global manufacturing process.

The Platform forms a voluntary membership framework through which participants undertake concrete actions to improve resource efficiency, strengthen waste management, reduce and eliminate toxic materials, employ energy efficiency practices and renewable energy, adopt a lifetime approach to product manufacture as well as put into a practice a number of measures which support the “greening” of existing industries and the creation of new “green” industries.

The Green Industry Platform has received high-level support from various quarters, including the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility and the International Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner for the Environment, highly endorsed the Platform commenting that it has the potential to be one of the most important concrete results emerging from Rio+20.

Of the approximately 100 signatories to the Platform so far, slightly more than half are businesses. These range in size from small- and medium-sized enterprises such as Cambodian Modern Rattan, to global multinational companies like Total S.A. Representatives from member businesses such as Broad Group, Microsoft Corporation and Novozymes A/S also took part in the Rio launch of the Platform. Speaking from Rio, Microsoft’s Chief Environmental Strategist, Rob Bernard, echoed the general tone of participating businesses in declaring that he was honored to “work with political and business leaders to help achieve a shared vision for bringing the principles of sustainability into manufacturing and industry.”

While the Green Industry Platform is signing up new members every day, several key milestones still lie ahead. The Platform’s Advisory Board is set to be selected in the coming weeks. Keeping in line with the Platform’s multi-stakeholder aspect, the board will consist of an equitable geographic and sectoral selection of government ministers, business CEOs and heads of international and civil society organizations.

The main activities which the Platform’s members are likely to be geared towards are greening the supply chain, establishing national roadmaps for green industry, propagating best practices,

running cleantech programs, undertaking various capacity-building exercises and contributing to international fora with research and expertise.

The Green Industry Platform is, in the words of UNIDO'S Director General Kandeh K. Yumkella, not only "exemplary of the public-private partnerships that are needed to scale up and mainstream the greening of industrial development", but also of the way the United Nations is seeking to conduct business with private sector stakeholders. By introducing green industrial practices on a global scale, the Green Industry Platform aims to change the way business operate to be more in line with social, environmental and development goals.

Additional information on the Green Industry Platform can be found at:

www.unido.org/giplatform.

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