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## **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ARKEBE OQUBAY FOR DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNIDO**

**June 21, 2021**

The world is facing a series of challenges that threatens to undermine global stability and reverse the progress that has been made towards combating poverty and inequality. The global Covid-19 health crisis has had severe economic and social repercussions and increased the number of people facing hunger; climate change is occurring much faster than anticipated, triggering water shortages and damaging vital ecosystems; pollution is contributing to health problems in several parts of the world; and the economic and technological gap between the haves and the have-nots is causing rising social strains and fuelling potential conflicts.

Against the backdrop of these interlocking challenges, revitalizing the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is becoming increasingly urgent, given its role in the promotion of industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization, and environmental sustainability.

Dr Arkebe Oqubay is one of the African Scholars and practitioners who inspired our thinking about industrial development at African Union. His work in the development of Ethiopia's national network of eco-industrial parks and special economic zones is phenomenal. I had the opportunity to experience it first hand as Chairperson of the AU Commission.

I believe that Dr Arkebe Oqubay has the leadership qualities to address these difficult challenges, reinvigorate UNIDO, and formulate a new vision with the revival of industry, jobs, and gender-balanced sustainable development at its heart. His goal is to accelerate technological transformation to promote inclusive growth and sustainable industrialization, while enhancing technological learning, technology transfer, and innovation, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, women, and young people. To build a better future as we recover from the Covid pandemic, he aims to reshape industrial development, build in resistance to future shocks, and mobilize additional resources through policy dialogue. That is why the African Union has endorsed his candidature for the post of UNIDO Director General.

For the past 30 years, Dr Arkebe has established an impressive record across the African continent, with bold leadership and ambitious transformation that has delivered lasting change at the heart of his work. As founding Chair of the Board of the Industrial Parks Development Corporation, Dr Arkebe led the development of Ethiopia's national network of eco-industrial parks and special economic zones. As Mayor of Addis Ababa, he transformed the city into a vibrant, investment-friendly political and diplomatic hub. And if he becomes the new Director General of UNIDO, Dr Arkebe will lead and deliver a program of revitalization giving fresh purpose to the agency and spurring on a new spirit of green industrial growth with tangible results across the developing world.

Any approach to calming the aftershocks of the pandemic must also resolve urgent shortcomings in our sustainable development agenda. In this context, it is vital that UNIDO vigorously pursues its core mission as an enabler of lasting and transformational economic growth.

That is why I believe that Dr Arkebe has the leadership qualities that are needed to achieve equitable and sustainable global industrialization amidst all these challenges. Dr Arkebe stands alone as the candidate with a track record of a global change maker leading, participating in, and delivering productive investment and meaningful change in the developing world.

I endorse him as the next Director General of UNIDO.



**DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, MP**  
**MINISTER**