

UN forum opens in Bahrain with focus on entrepreneurship for sustainable development

31 October 2017 – A United Nations forum opened today in Manama, Bahrain, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation for the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Convened under the theme of *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through entrepreneurship and innovation*, the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum ([WEIF](#)) 2017 seeks to leverage entrepreneurship and creative thinking to strengthen sustainable development around the world.

‘Inclusive and sustainable industrial development will continue to be a key driver of progress as we support [UN] Member States in this essential work,’ said UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, via a video message, to the World Forum.

‘I commend you for focusing this year’s forum on the [SDGs](#).’

Recalling the establishment of UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)’s first Investment and Technology Promotion Office ([ITPO-Bahrain](#)) in Manama, in 1996, Mr. Guterres noted that, over the years, the so-called Bahrain model has created more than 16,000 jobs and raised more than \$2 billion in investment.

‘Today, in 52 countries, it continues to advance entrepreneurship and change lives for the better,’ he added.

Organized by UNIDO in partnership with the Government of Bahrain, the World Forum is expected to draw more than 1,000 entrepreneurs; representatives of micro, small and medium enterprises; as well as financial institutions to build and foster partnerships and share best practices in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Also speaking at the opening, Hiroshi Kuniyoshi, the UNIDO Deputy Director General and Managing Director of External Relations and Field Representation, highlighted the importance of global partnerships for sustainable development.

‘Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, and promoting impact investment [...] is more important today than ever before, as we all work together worldwide towards achieving the 2030 Agenda,’ he said, adding:

‘The role of impact investment and innovation is further highlighted by the SDGs, and especially [Goal 9](#), which seeks to ‘build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation’.’

In his remarks, Mr. Kuniyoshi highlighted UNIDO's collaboration with Bahrain on programmes promoting investment and economic empowerment of youth and women through entrepreneurship development and support systems.

Further, recalling the [Manama Declaration](#), adopted at the First International Entrepreneurs Investment Forum, in 2015, the senior UNIDO official called for a coordinated and inclusive approach in promoting entrepreneurship involving all stakeholders, including civil society and academia.

The opening session also saw the designation of Adnan Kassar, a prominent business leader from Lebanon, as the Honorary Chairman of the UN Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance.

On today's agenda at the World Forum are keynote addresses by business leaders, a plenary session on the Maritime-Continental Silk Road, a side event on private sector engagement for SDGs in Bahrain, and bilateral meetings.

UN News is on location in Manama, Bahrain, covering the Forum and its associated events. Follow [@UN_News_Centre](#) and [@UNNewsArabic](#) to stay updated on news and highlights from WEIF 2017.