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“Achieving SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) in line with the 2030 United Nations agenda.”



Committee: UNIDO

Agenda Item: Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization in Developing Countries

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Introduction

Industrialization is a crucial factor in a country's economic development. Sufficiently organized industries can heighten and stabilize the flow of the economy and sectors. Industrialization has a positive impact on education, individual and national income, and the overall quality of life. It also results in the formation of social classes and urbanization. While all of the stated effects are mostly demanded and useful, some may also suffer from industrialization. In developing countries, industrialization, when not done properly, can cause social inequality, environmental degradation, and cultural disruption. While the main aim of industrialization is to hone existing industries, it can act as a double-edged sword and can have both advantages and disadvantages.

Definition of Significant Terms

Industrialization

The process of developing industries in a country

Industry

The companies and activities involved in the process of producing goods for sale, especially in a factory or special area

Developing Country

A country with little industrial and economic activity, and where people generally have low incomes

Sustainable Industrialization

Balancing economic growth with environmental protection and social equity in industrial development

Detailed Background of the Issue

The Beginning of Industrialization

The history of industrialization begins in Great Britain named as the Industrial Revolution. The revolution was a major mechanization and innovation that commenced during the mid 18th and early 19th centuries and later on spread throughout the globe. The revolution was highly focused on the exploitation of coal and iron; the revolution introduced novel ways of working, . living, and, not surprisingly, transformed societies. It created a brand-new hierarchy. The bourgeoisie was still extremely wealthy, gaining its wealth from factories. They controlled capital, factories, and machines. A new class started to emerge, named the middle class. The rich, factory owners,

needed skilled individuals that administrated their factories. The middle class was mostly managers, teachers, and engineers. The social hierarchy needed a buffer between the rich and the poor, and that was the middle class. Lastly, the lower class was established. The lower class took the place of peasants and servants before the Industrial Revolution. After the revolution, the peasantry was removed, and the lower class contained factory workers and miners. While their labor was extremely hard and needed, their wages were severely low.

Current Status of Industrialization

Beginning in the 19th century, the world economy was divided into two: industrial economies and agricultural economies. Colonies and the non-colonised remained agrarian. In contrast, the West and Japan created an increasing demand for primary products from developing countries. Thus, developing countries had an economy that flowed with agriculture and primary resources, while developed countries had an industrialized economy that demanded resources for production. Developing countries were the suppliers, and developed countries were the buyers. This resulted in the colonial division of labour. The industrial economies exported their manufactured goods and items to the developing countries. And with this, industrialization became compatible with wealth, political power, dominance, technological, and leadership. Later on, developing countries had hesitant and scarce moves towards industrialization. Towards the end of the 19th century, Latin American and large Asian countries began their expansion towards industrialization and found their pace. However, they were still dependent on agriculture and mining predominantly.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 9

Sustainable Development Goal 9 is a key actor in sustainable industrialization. This goal aims to build resilient infrastructure, aid innovation, and foster sustainable industrialization. Economic growth and development are gained when resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialization, and innovation are in place. Social development, economic growth, and climate action are highly dependent topics on investments in infrastructure, technological progress, and sustainable industrial development. In our current global economic state, sustained growth should first include industrialization, as it is the primary source that makes opportunities accessible to all people. This is highly imperative as inequalities are increasing in our modern world.

Infrastructure and Financing Constraints

Developing countries continue to face persistent infrastructure deficits that significantly constrain industrial development. According to World Bank research, limited access to reliable electricity, inadequate transport networks, and weak telecommunications infrastructure raise production costs and reduce industrial competitiveness. These shortcomings disproportionately affect smaller firms and rural regions, reinforcing economic concentration in major urban centers. The study further highlights that poor infrastructure quality not only restricts industrial output but also undermines private investment and long-term productivity growth, making infrastructure development a central prerequisite for sustainable industrialization.

(Briceño-Garmendia et al., World Bank, 2008)

Green Industrialization

The green industrialization offers a revolutionary paradigm for the developing world to break the usual mold of being a natural resource-based exporter and become a crucial part of the world's value chain for the production of batteries and green iron. The developing world has its own natural mineral resources and renewable energy assets that would enable a synergy with the world-scale acceleration of the carbonization agenda and therefore facilitate the building of true partnerships. However, the way this would be achieved has its own daunting challenges, which would include the natural protective nature that the European industries have and the complex issue of navigating the changes in the policies of the companies at E-TRADE. The line that has to be carefully strung through this transition phase would be the line that avoids being a mere internationalization of the industrial shift and the world-wide have with the green tech outcome.

COP26 Climate Action Conference

At the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26), in November 2021, in Glasgow, there was a reaffirmation of the increasing nexus between climate action and economic development, in relation to industrial policies. This conference highlighted actions to accelerate global efforts to address climate change through the enhancement of country climate action, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and a transformation towards a low-carbon economic structure. For developing countries, COP26 emphasized a complex situation in which

industrialization is pursued under more rigorous expectations in connection with environmental factors, especially in view of their current dependence on carbon Industries and a lack of access to clean technologies. At the conference, there was a focus on climate finance, in which there was a reaffirmation through renewed efforts to mobilize financial resources to support mitigation actions in developing countries. Moreover, there was an emphasis on capacity building in sustainable industrialization, with an increasing discussion on equity, fairness, historical responsibility, and common but differentiated responsibilities between the developed and developing countries.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
1760	The Industrial Revolution began in Western Europe, particularly in Britain, marked by the transition from agrarian economies to mechanized manufacturing. The introduction of steam power, textile machinery, and factory-based production significantly increased productivity but also led to urban overcrowding, poor labor conditions, and environmental pollution. This period established industrialization as a central driver of economic development.
1975	Establishment of UNIDO as a Specialized UN Agency. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization became a specialized agency of the UN, with the mandate to promote industrial development in developing countries. This marked the first coordinated international effort to support industrialization through technical assistance and policy guidance.

1992	Held in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development introduced the concept of sustainable development into global policy. It established that economic growth, including industrialization, must be balanced with environmental protection.
2015	The UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, establishing 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This agenda formally linked industrialization with sustainability and inclusivity at a global level.
2015	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure explicitly committed UN member states to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, with Target 9.2 focusing on increasing industry's share of employment and GDP in developing and least developed countries.
2021	COP26 reinforced commitments to reduce emissions, increasing pressure on developing countries to pursue low-carbon industrialization while raising debates on climate finance and differentiated responsibilities.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

China

China represents the largest manufacturing economy globally and a key participant in the value chains. Its passage through stages of low technology or green manufacturing industries relevant to the current industrial evolution in developing nations contributes to its significance. China's massive overseas investments and financial outlays in infrastructure have a direct impact on the development of various regions in developing nations.

USA

Being one of the world's leaders in terms of economic development, the USA has a great influence in establishing global industrial standards, innovations, and policies concerning climate change. Influence in international financial bodies and global trade regimes has far-reaching effects on investment availability and financing opportunities for developing nations.

India

India symbolizes the difficulties that arise due to the presence of large economies during the process of industrialization, with special emphasis on the creation of jobs and maintaining sustainable development. The presence of a large workforce in India makes it important to emphasize inclusive growth in the manufacturing arena.

Germany

Germany is a global leader in advanced manufacturing and green industrial technologies. It is particularly relevant due to its advocacy for environmentally sustainable production and its role in supporting industrial development abroad through technical cooperation, development assistance, and private sector partnerships.

Japan

The relevance of Japan can be attributed to its focus on innovation in industry, energy efficiency, and technology transfer. Via development aid schemes and cooperation in industry, Japan partners with developing countries in ensuring that they adopt sustainable industry programs, thus making it a vital participant in debates on inclusive industrialization.

UNIDO

UNIDO is the specialized United Nations agency mandated to promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development. It provides policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity-building to developing countries while acting as the key driver in the implementation of Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNDP

UNDP contributes indirectly to sustainable industrialization through the above interventions: strengthening governance, innovation ecosystems, and development financing frameworks. Work on poverty reduction, institutional capacity-building, and climate-aligned development makes it a key contributor in enabling inclusive industrial growth.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

International efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization have been shaped by a series of United Nations resolutions, frameworks, and agreements that link economic development with social inclusion and environmental responsibility. A major milestone was the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, which established 17 Sustainable Development Goals and formally recognized industrialization as a key driver of development. Within this framework, Sustainable Development Goal 9 explicitly commits member states to building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, with particular emphasis on increasing industry's contribution to employment and GDP in developing and least developed countries. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) plays a central role in implementing these objectives by providing technical assistance, policy support, and capacity-building to developing economies. In addition, climate-related agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact have further influenced industrial policy by emphasizing low-carbon development pathways and the need for climate finance and technology transfer. Together, these resolutions and agreements reflect a growing international consensus that industrial growth in developing countries must be pursued in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and aligned with long-term global climate objectives.

Alternative Solutions

The realization of inclusive and sustainable industrialization for developing countries demands that the international community take bold action to eliminate structural impediments in development. This includes the developed countries as well as global institutions needing to greatly increase their climate and development funding to support the development of sustainable industrial infrastructure and lower the risk of investment for developing countries in the emerging markets of development. The development of binding and clear structures for technology transfer needs to be strengthened to promote the availability of sustainable, clean, more efficient, and productivity-enhancing technologies for developing countries' industry.

Governments need to focus more on providing massive skills development and training programs to build an inclusive industrial skills base that has the capacity to provide long-term transformation for their economies. Public-private partnerships need to be promoted for mobilizing private investment and facilitating the rapid development of sustainable manufacturing and infrastructure projects. Support for developing country small and medium enterprises and industrial clusters also has to effectively increase their production of higher-valued products and break the linkage of overdependence on low-value parts of the global value chain.

Useful Links

<https://ecdpm.org/work/green-industrialisation-age-disruption-africa-europe-and-global-economy>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/?utm>

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