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**“We need to create jobs, we need to industrialize, but we need to do it right”  
says the African Union’s Trade Commissioner at United Nations conference in Leipzig**

1 July 2013, Leipzig – More than 200 participants from around the globe took part in the international conference “Green Industrial Skills for Sustainable Development – Risks and Challenges for Least Developed Countries” that opened today in Leipzig in the run-up to the 42<sup>nd</sup> WorldSkills Competition. Dr. Theodor Niehaus, President of WorldSkills Leipzig 2013 stresses that *“WorldSkills is sending a strong message to the economy and politics. We are proud to start at WorldSkills Leipzig 2013 a strong process for sustainable skills development for employability, productivity and sustainability”*

The main purpose of the conference was to increase awareness on the importance of green industrial skills development and to promote a sustainable manner of technical and vocational training for a better future of our young generation worldwide. In a personal message to the conference, Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Chairperson of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar, emphasized: *“Green, Skills and Youth: all matter very much to us in this world when we are trying to preserve our planet, trying to make sure that the future is safe and happy. Furthermore, Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the young competitors of Leipzig 2013 by saying: “Please use your skills (...) and come up with all kinds of ideas and take it forward for a better, brighter future”.*

Being organized jointly by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and WorldSkills Germany, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the WorldSkills Foundation, the conference was opened by H.E. Fatima Haram Acyl, Commissioner for Trade and Industry from the African Union, Mr.

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Guenter Nooke, the German Chancellor's Representative for Africa, and Mr. Theodor Niehaus, President of WorldSkills Leipzig 2013.

H.E. Ms. Acyl the Trade and Industry Commissioner from the African Union emphasized the relevance of the event, saying *"this conference comes timely and we are excited to see the African participation in this Competition. We hope to see even more in the future, in order to learn the hands-on training that Africa needs so much."*

Giving the first keynote Ms. Müller, Director General, Policy Issues and Political Governance of Bilateral Development Cooperation; Sectoral Affairs at the BMZ, stressed: *"The quality of education and skills development counts! Good Technical Vocational Education and Training needs well qualified teachers and instructors and companies that are committed to provide training and jobs. That's why German development cooperation collaborates closely with the private sector."*

Followed by keynote addresses on green industrial skills development, concrete panel discussions at the conference reviewed national programmes in the area of education and sustainable technical and vocational training, and gave an opportunity to directly exchange knowledge and expertise of high-level decision-makers coming from various fields.

Environmental change and resource degradation are affecting production and jobs around the world, while Least Developed Countries (LDCs) generally require a high resilience against those changes. With many LDCs being at the verge of industrialization, the conference discussed challenges and concrete solutions for greening economies in LDCs and showed why skills matter. Mr. Chakib Jenane, Deputy Director of UNIDO's Agri-Business Development Branch said: *"we believe strongly that climate change is a lead to change the labour force. At the same time, there is important development in new technology which needs to be provided with the required new green skills. We hope this conference is a start up to concrete actions"*

The panel discussions reviewed what concrete policies are required for the way forward to strengthen human resources and to enhance green industrial skills development in the educational system. High-level specialists, from Ministries and Institutes of Vocational Training and Education, as well as from the private sector, illustrated good practices and

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lessons learned through concrete examples (e.g. an ambitious yet practical water sanitation project in rural Nepal).

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