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## UK must continue industrial development aid

*From Dr John Humphrey, Dr Hubert Schmitz, Prof Sir Hans Singer, Prof John Toye and Prof Adrian Wood.*

Sir, Malcolm Rifkind has signalled the UK government's intention to withdraw financial support for the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation after 1997, subject to a further review.

As one justification he cites inefficiencies within Unido. However, since 1993 Unido has, in his own words, "implemented a wide-

ranging reform process which has resulted in staff numbers being significantly reduced, the organisation streamlined, and programmes refocused".

His second justification for the proposed withdrawal of support is that the needs of industrial development "should preferably be seen in the context of a particular country's development strategy and integrated into its other development activities".

We agree with the need to

integrate industrial development with wider developmental concerns. However, in our experience, unless industrial development is specifically targeted for support, developing countries are unlikely to succeed in the restructuring and technological upgrading necessary for their integration into global markets.

These problems are particularly acute for sub-Saharan Africa, where industry has declined in recent years. Unido's contribution in this

respect is distinctive and valuable, since industry is rarely a focus of aid programmes, bilateral or multilateral. We therefore strongly urge our government to reconsider its decision to withdraw from Unido.

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