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**Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the
Regional Commissions with the UN General Assembly Second Committee
General Assembly seventy-first session
*One Year of SDGs: Where the Regions Are***

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Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Asia and the Pacific's leadership have embraced the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Some governments have developed national sustainable strategies; others have aligned or prioritized sustainable development within existing plans. In some cases new policy and coordinating mechanisms have been designated, while in others the roles of planning and economic ministries have been sharpened to coordinate implementation of SDGs.

Asia-Pacific is working on multiple fronts.

- First, governments are mainstreaming and integrating the 2030 Agenda in their development plans, albeit the pace varies depending on the room for adjustment in investment pipeline and fiscal space.
- Second, subregional platforms such as ASEAN, SAARC, SPECA and the Pacific Island Forum are proactively pursuing regional cooperation to reinforce sustainable development through development of cross border infrastructure and realization of transboundary goals. The vision and priorities of the ASEAN Economic Community, 2025 will over this period be aligned with 2030 Agenda.
- Third, the region has benefited from ESCAP's enhanced conference structure which now includes finance, science, technology and innovation (STI) and energy. Our growing integrated and multi-sectoral intergovernmental support promotes sustainable development and reinforces through regional cooperation.

In line with the focus of session, I will outline on Asia and Pacific's endeavours to

1. Coordinate national data and indicators for consistent adoption of SDGs;
2. Operationalize sustainable development frameworks;
3. Prioritize financing and STI for sustainable development; and
4. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

Coordination of national data and indicators

During the first year of SDG implementation, ESCAP's platform has been instrumental in shaping global and national debates on indicator frameworks to ensure alignment between

Asia-Pacific's national statistical agencies, regional statistical bodies and global and other non-regional data development partners.

The 2015 ESCAP Statistical Survey brought data gaps to the forefront. Our region has to develop new ways to source statistical information as currently we only have data for about half of the properly defined indicators of the global monitoring framework.

Subregional statistical consultations were held to share emerging knowledge and seek collective action. These inputs are informing the *Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators* and the *High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Drawing from this ground work, the Asia-Pacific statistical community is finalizing a collective vision and framework, and an action plan that will strengthen national agencies to collect official data for SDG indicators. The forthcoming ESCAP intergovernmental Statistics Committee will adopt this strategic framework in December 2016.

Operationalization of sustainable development frameworks

Countries in Asia and the Pacific have been proactively establishing and operationalizing dedicated institutional and legal frameworks for steering sustainable development. For example:

- Sri Lanka has established a dedicated Ministry of Sustainable Development;
- Pakistan and Indonesia have integrated SDGs into national legislation;
- Armenia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines and Turkmenistan have established bodies or mechanisms to coordinate actions across ministries and sectors for the Agenda;
- A whole-of-government approach using SDG implementation mapping was carried out in Azerbaijan, China and the Philippines;
- China, Georgia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Samoa and Togo have submitted voluntary national reviews of their implementation actions; and
- Most federated states are working with provinces and states and urban municipalities to raise awareness of SDGs agenda.

Regional policy coherence, consistency and coordination of national sustainable development strategies is critical for follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Reinforcing UNDS, ESCAP is supporting:

- Countries with Special Needs to implement their Istanbul Program of Actions for Least Developed Countries, the Vienna Program for Land Locked countries and the Samoa Pathway for Island economies.
- Peer-learning opportunities in the region, especially for the least developed countries. A range of tools and knowledge products are now available including e-learning platforms that guide SDG interventions. For example, a new analytical approach and tool to map out integrated and cross sectoral agency implementation of SDG 6 has helped in Sri Lanka recognize the co-benefits of water supply and sanitation across other SDGs. A similar pilot is under development for Tajikistan and Fiji.
- At the same time, ESCAP is promoting systems approaches and methodologies that underscore the significance of policy nexuses such as food-energy-water etc. Work is underway to promote policy synergies emerging from green growth and low carbon

pathways that also address SDG goals and targets. ESCAP has finalized G20 paper to reach out to half a billion people in Asia and Pacific with no energy access.

- In the lead up to Habitat III, ESCAP convened the Asia Pacific Urban Forum on how to galvanize action on urban SDG priorities, and is holding consultations with regional Mayors to share knowledge of the region's rich experience in smart and compact city deployment.

Financing and STI for 2030 Development Agenda

To support sustainable development, investment requirements in Asia and the Pacific's developing countries will range from 5 to 10 per cent of GDP. The *Asia-Pacific Financing for Development Forum*, convened annually since 2014, underscored need to tap the region's tax potential, promote financial inclusion, strengthen public expenditure management and foster public-private infrastructure financing. To promote regional action, an *Eminent Expert Group on Tax Policy and Public Expenditure Management for Sustainable Development* has been established.

An Advisory Board on STI comprised of regional science and technology experts is now steering the regional STI agenda in order to promote policies and best practice to ensure that STEM, innovation, and ICT application as enablers of sustainable development. They also consider how we can fund STI applications with impact financing and other innovative structures.

Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Promoting partnerships will be key to catalyze action for sustainable development. ESCAP's *Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development* has benefited from extensive partnerships with civil society, the private sector and business groups. ESCAP's Business Advisory Council and its network have promoted corporate, SME and banking sector sustainability. ESCAP has sponsored "knowledge networks" with leading regional trade academic, research and private institutions to promote trade research. The UN network of experts on paperless trade is supporting the single window and electronic trade which will reduce costs and enhance efficiency.

ESCAP's partnerships have built high-profile regional campaigns for "Making the Right Real" for people with disabilities, and "Get everyone in the picture" for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. ESCAP- Seoul Metropolitan Government and CityNet have established the International Forum on Urban Policy for SDGs in June 2016 and will launch the "Urban Knowledge Platform." To further promote smart and inclusive planning. With Waste Concern, ESCAP is helping six countries to promote sustainable management of waste in a pro-poor, environmentally sustainable and economically viable manner. This partnership promotes decentralized Integrated Recovery Centers that deploy simple technology and low cost solutions to recover value from waste. The "Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus" project launched by ESCAP and GIZ brings together Asia-Pacific cities¹ to deliver integrated management solutions for water-food-energy issues.

Forging a renewed partnership, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and ESCAP will synergize work on environment and sustainable development, strengthen the science-policy interface in the Asia-Pacific through joint analytical work and conducting practical and solutions-oriented research including in the area of climate change.

¹ The project is implemented in the following cities: Ulan Bator, Mongolia; Rizhao, China; Rajkot and Nagpur, India; Korat and Chiang Mai, Thailand; Da Nang, Vietnam; Santa Rosa and Naga City, Philippines; Pekanbaru and Tanjung Pinang, Indonesia

The regional connectivity agenda is set to benefit from partnerships with regional road institutes and with the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

Through its interface with the *Global Partnership for Sustainable Data*, Asia and Pacific will offer innovative solutions to increase the availability, access and use of data for timely monitoring of SDG progress.

Finally, inter-agency collaboration to support the region's implementation of the 2030 Agenda is being fostered through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and enhanced linkages with the Asian Development Bank and UNDP.

In **conclusion**, the region has made a strong beginning to set the stage for implementing the 2030 Agenda, and effective platforms are being deployed to facilitate and strengthen implementation, while ensuring global and regional consensus and action. The regional Commission is rapidly gearing itself to coordinate and connect global policy with national level implementation of the SDGs. A regional road map for implementation of SDGs will be shortly deliberated among member states and operationalized next year. Such efforts lend confidence to the future of 2030 Agenda.

I thank you.