

**10<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Regional Forum for Sustainable Development**

***Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific”***

**Opening remarks of the President of ECOSOC**

**27 March 2023**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the Economic and Social Council, I am delighted to address this important gathering.

I congratulate you on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Asia Pacific regional forum on sustainable development!

Year after year, this forum has provided important analysis and policy recommendations to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – the HLPF. You have brought key challenges and policy advances from your region to the global debate. You have informed the ministerial declaration of the HLPF.

You are meeting in a troubled international environment. Your discussions will be in the heart of today’s challenges and their impacts on people’s lives- be it through economic disruptions, loss of livelihoods, weak investment in SDGs, lack of fiscal space, access to food and energy. The mounting climate change impacts will also form the backdrop for your debates.

I encourage you to be unfaltering in your assessment of the state of the SDGs in the region. Policy makers need frank data- and evidence-based diagnoses of the situation in order to develop impactful policies.

But I also encourage you to be guided by the conviction that we can still achieve the SDGs if we adopt bold, transformative policies. Your recommendations will be important in advancing such policies and their understanding, based on your national experiences.

The scientists who drafted the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report identified policies that can have maximum impacts across the SDGs. These often focus on areas where the interrelations across the goals are very strong, such as on integrated food or energy systems.

We will learn from the Voluntary National Reviews to be conducted at the HLPF.

The VNRs have been a success story of the 2030 Agenda. In the region, after our July HLPF session, no fewer than 43 countries will have undertaken at least one review:

- 17 countries have carried out a review once so far.
- 30 countries did it twice, and
- Three countries, namely Azerbaijan, Indonesia and the Philippines, have done three reviews.

These numbers show your countries' dedication to realizing the 2030 Agenda.

Let us build on this tremendous political will to pivot on to a track to realize the SDGs.

We must embrace transformation. And we must act now with determination, a sense of urgency and a focus on achieving results by 2030.

Thank you.