

Madame Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the 11th APFSD in February and again at the 80th Commission Session, the Philippines renewed its strongest commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to redoubling our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

To support the country's aspiration to become an upper middle-income economy, the Philippines advocates the need to address the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries.

Among ESCAP's 53 Member States, 23 are lower-middle-income countries, and 17 are upper-middle-income countries. With near total membership in ESCAP, Middle-Income Countries can leverage ESCAP, as the most inclusive intergovernmental body in Asia and the Pacific, and its strengths in capacity-building, peer learning, and consensus-building to position the concerns and realities of Middle-Income Countries in the agenda and discussions of ESCAP.

Through ESCAP, Member States can participate in the UN's system-wide approach to provide tailored-fit support for Middle-Income Countries such as the adoption of the beyond GDP agenda to inform access to development finance.

We also seek an elaboration of a comprehensive, system-wide response plan to address the multidimensional nature of sustainable development and approaches to enable equitable, inclusive, and just transition pathways for middle-income countries.

The Philippines seeks the institutionalization of a well-defined program of action for Middle-Income Countries in ESCAP, as the country sustains its leadership role as part of the Like-Minded Group of Countries on MICs in New York.

To further amplify the voice of Asia and the Pacific on the needs of middle-income countries, the Philippines is pleased to announce its hosting of the *High-Level Meeting of Middle-Income Countries* in the Asia-Pacific next year.

The Philippines looks forward to working with Member States on a Middle-Income Countries agenda in ESCAP, including as a regional platform for South-South and triangular cooperation in addressing development needs and achieving the SDGs.

Thank you.