**Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**

**Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations**

**and Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

**Opening remarks at Tajikistan National Development Council, Tajikistan**

**10 June 2024**

**8:20 – 8:30 hours (Tajikistan time)**

**Building #8, Residence of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan**

**Excellency President Emomali Rahmon,**

**Excellency Chairman Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Jasser,**

**Distinguished members of the National Development Council,**

It is an honor to be invited to Tajikistan and to address the National Development Council. Allow me to thank Your Excellency, President Rahmon, for convening this important meeting.

Tajikistan has made significant socioeconomic progress in recent years. Economic growth has averaged more than 7 per cent in the past decade with the national poverty rate falling to 21.2 per cent from 34.3 per cent.

These achievements, which result from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are reflected in progress towards Goals 1 (No Poverty), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 13 (Climate Action).

Throughout this transition, vulnerable groups have been protected through various measures, including Government actions towards further ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Excellencies and distinguished members,**

Like Tajikistan, **Asia and the Pacific has undergone a remarkable journey.** In the past three decades, the region has withstood multiple exogenous shocks, tripled its per-capita income, reduced extreme poverty to just 5 per cent from 60 per cent and emerged as the center of global growth.

**Our journey, however, continues with new challenges to overcome and great promises to fulfill.**

**To secure a sustainable future,** we must chart a greener path for economic development and break away from resource-intensive ways of production. Asia and the Pacific is already taking the lead in the global green economic revolution. Regional experiences demonstrate that green sectors, such as renewable energy generation and electric vehicles, can become economically competitive with proper policy support.

It is paramount for countries to embrace this green economic revolution and strike a better balance between their economic and environmental objectives.

**To secure an inclusive future**, we must ensure that the rising prosperity lifts everyone fairly. Widening income and wealth inequality gaps have accompanied fast economic growth in the region’s largest developing countries in the past three decades. Such inequalities erode the impact of economic growth on poverty reduction, jeopardize social cohesion and threaten to aggravate the region’s imbalances between demand and supply.

Deliberate policy interventions, especially through the accelerated creation of productive jobs, are needed to fulfill the promises of shared prosperity.

**To secure an innovative future**, we must upgrade our physical and market infrastructure and prepare our workforces for the ongoing digital revolution. Competitive education and vocational training systems as well as universal and affordable access to ICT services are prerequisites. Business environments that encourage investment and innovation as well as effective and flexible social security networks to safeguard livelihoods during labour market shifts are key ingredients for successful transitions.

**Excellencies and distinguished members,**

**To navigate through this new era, development must be anchored on three key principles.**

**First**, balanced and sustainable development, rather than economic growth alone, should be our compass, with development outcomes evaluated based on economic, social and environmental impacts.

**Second**, people should be put at the center of development, with empowerment as the fundamental driver of progress.

**Third**, openness should be embraced as our response to the challenges posed by globalization. Broader and deeper cooperation will enable us to address imbalances and maximize potential benefits.

Your key priorities, namely the green economy, transport and energy connectivity, economic and trade digitalization and human capital development, align with our focus on green, people-centered and innovation-driven development.

We stand ready to support Tajikistan in its pursuit of sustainable development.

With these words, I thank you.