

## Statement by H.E. Mr. Levan Davitashvili

Reporting on regional Forums

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As Co-Chair of the Fifth Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) I am pleased to report on key outcomes of the forum.

The Fifth APFSD reiterated **the importance of regional cooperation** for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and reaffirmed the key role of ESCAP in leveraging its intergovernmental platforms for coordinating regional actions.

- The Fifth APFSD met from March 28-30, 2018 on the theme: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”
- The Fifth APFSD was convened as an inclusive regional forum engaging over 800 government officials, civil society and other stakeholders over three days, including 7 preparatory meetings, an engagement space, a VNR café’ and 25 side events.
- Throughout the meeting, member States recognized the important role of the 5<sup>th</sup> APFSD to provide a platform for member States to share their achievements, the challenges faced and the opportunities arising from the 2030 Agenda including the pace and sequencing of actions taken, and the harnessing of the SDGs through renovated efforts to increase resilience of the Asia-Pacific societies.

Let me now address the important outcomes of the APFSD:

- In light of the complex risks facing the region, the forum underscored that resilience building is a pre-requisite for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The forum highlighted that efforts to identify and empower the vulnerable populations exposed to emerging complex risks, and promoting participation of all stakeholders in policy processes should lie at the core of resilience building efforts.
- The Forum stressed the importance of inclusive, multi-stakeholder participation, including by disadvantaged, poor, vulnerable and risk-exposed populations, and engagement by all levels of government including subnational and local authorities.
- The role of capacity-building and regional cooperation as opportunities to develop mechanisms for mutual support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals was also highlighted by the participants.
- In-depth perspectives were also shared on the cluster of goals under review this year: clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production and life on land. The five roundtables, organized through an interagency cooperation, allowed for exchange of in depth regional and local perspectives and produced tangible and implementable policy recommendations that were highly appreciated by member States.
- Progress in the region towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 17 was also reviewed, particularly with respect to global, multi-stakeholder partnerships, technology and innovation, and data and statistics. An engaging session focused on the interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs between the Sustainable

Development Goals. We were reminded that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs are for the people and they need to be included fully in the decision-making for their implementation. The need for respect for biodiversity for people and the Planet, and for preservation of Indigenous knowledge and technologies was recognized as critical for enhancing the resilience of societies.

- Member States who will present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at this Forum emphasized the positive impact that the VNRs have on both policy development processes and the review of progress. The Forum emphasized the importance of full and comprehensive consultations that included a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and businesses.
- The Forum reviewed, also, progress on the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, endorsed by ESCAP member States at the seventy-third session of the Commission. Country and stakeholder statements highlighted ongoing action across all sectors, expressed appreciation for support by regional partners such as ESCAP, and drew attention to remaining gaps, such as statistical capacity.

**In conclusion**, the outcomes of this Forum demonstrate that the countries of Asia and the Pacific are moving ahead and leading global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

- The APFSD, once again, provided an opportunity for interagency cooperation and collaboration thanks also to the presence, for the first time, of UN Resident Coordinators from the Region.

- In its second year of activity, through the Asia-Pacific SDG Partnership, ESCAP, ADB and UNDP have again shown leadership in pooling resources and expertise to work together and advance the 2030 Agenda.
- APFSD deliberations this year have laid the foundation for a concerted and effective regional response to ensure that our region become more resilient and sustainable.
- I look forward, in my capacity of Co-Chair, to support the APFSD over the year by promoting a more sustainable and resilient Asia-Pacific among my fellow colleagues ministers, stakeholders and other member states and to help steering an inclusive and participatory approach for the implementation of the 2030 in the region.