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**UN Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific**

**Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2016**

**Statement by H.E Octavia Borthwick  
Australia's Permanent Representative to UNESCAP**

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Thank you Chair,

Ministers, Excellencies, Colleagues

On behalf of Australia, I would like to thank the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) for hosting this important forum on the regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I'd also like to thank to my PR colleagues, experts and UN colleagues, civil society and other valued stakeholders working with ESCAP for, their continued efforts to promote inclusive sustainable development across the Asia Pacific region.

We all adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (the Addis Agenda) in July in Ethiopia and the Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs) in New York in September.

Together, the SDGs and the Addis Agenda, comprise the 2030 Agenda which sets the globally agreed roadmap for development for the next fifteen years and the means to achieve it.

Chair

It is appropriate that ESCAP take this global agenda and, with the guidance of members, translate it into a regional context, including by highlighting regional priorities. Once finalised, we – the people of the Asia Pacific region – can draw on the regional Road Map for to assist in implementing the 2030 Agenda

However, as the global development systems continues to work over coming months and years to align itself in the best possible way to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, it will be important that this forum remain careful not duplicate work already being undertaken and to focus on the key strengths and value-adds that can be made through the APFSD.

In our view key elements of the value add for ESCAP on the 2030 Agenda is its regional statistics work, its convening power for the views of member states and all stakeholders, a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda. ESCAP could usefully focus its efforts on these areas.

Australia supports efforts to improve data quality and collection systems. We encourage UNESCAP to take a coordinated approach and commend the good work already being done by other regional bodies already making progress in this area.

We note the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has developed a draft set of Pacific Regional Headline Indicators, which have been mapped against SDG Teir-1 indicators. The SPC is finalising the regional indicators and will assist its member countries with collection, collation and dissemination of SDG indicator data.

We further note the honourable delegate from Samoa emphasised, in the session on Voluntary National Reviews, the importance of not “reinventing the wheel” in view of all the good work already being done at established and important sub-regional fora – such as through the SAMOA Pathway.

The careful alignment of our efforts will be particularly important in the complex area of Follow-Up and Review.

The global follow-up and review processes and framework are still under development by the UN. Active consultations are underway for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) to determine its processes for coordinating, reporting and disseminating information on follow-up and review at global, regional and national levels.

The APFSD, and ESCAP more broadly, will have an important role in bringing the crucial regional perspective to the global discussions but it will take some time for the details of this to be clear and while we should prepare for that role, we should not seek to be too definitive at this time.

Chair

The Australian Government’s international development program has a strong focus on the Asia Pacific region. It aims to promote prosperity, reduce poverty and enhance stability in the region.

We were very pleased to see, in the 2030 Agenda, a strong focus on

- economic growth, including private sector investment, trade and infrastructure
- gender equality and women’s empowerment,
- peace and governance
- oceans, and

- mobilising all sources of finance.

And we are implementing the 2030 Agenda both in terms of our existing efforts and our future plans.

Australia's Aid Program is already supporting global progress towards the SDGs including through investments in:

- gender equality and women's empowerment (goal 5)
- food security, agriculture and fisheries (goals 2 and 14)
- health and education (goals 3 and 4)
- infrastructure, trade and international competitiveness (goals 11, 8 and 7)
- effective governance, institutions and functioning economies (goals 16 and 8).

And we have made commitments to further boost our efforts in

- aid-for-trade - increasing to 20% of our development program
- domestic resource mobilisation - including through the Addis Tax initiative
- private sector engagement - investing around \$1.4 billion this year (15-16) to maximise the development impact of businesses
- and gender - with at least 80% of our investments (in whatever sector) to effectively address gender in their implementation

Chair,

The Asia-Pacific has lot to gain from the 2030 Agenda and a lot to contribute to it.

Australia' looks forward to working with you to ensure we do.

Thank you