

Madam Chair, Distinguished Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It's a pleasure to join you today at the fourth High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development in Asia and the Pacific. Let me thank the organisers at ESCAP for their invitation to speak with you. It's always good to be in amazing Thailand and to have a chance to share my thoughts with my knowledgeable friends and colleagues in Asia and the Pacific.

Based on IMF report published in 2016 on global financial stability, since April 2016, the short-term instability risks have decreased but the mid-term risks still prevail. In addition, political instability in some countries, lack of economic growth and stagnant incomes as well as growing inequality and discrimination has paved the ground for serious problems.

The emergence of populism and protectionism as opposed to regional and international cooperation could be seen in this light. Another negative development is formation of terrorist groups such as ISIS, which despite their brutal and inhuman nature are unfortunately still being supported by certain governments.

Development banks such as AIIB and ADB were established to promote stable economies, create wealth and enhance infrastructures in Asia and the Pacific through investments. They were also meant to foster regional cooperation and partnership. Such objectives cannot be reached unless each and every member state's needs are identified and each and every voice is heard.

Sharing experiences in implementing financial and monetary regulations, optimal allocation of financial resources as well as effective cooperation in financial institutions are right steps toward sustainable financing for development. Such cooperation shall neither discriminate against any existing member state nor prevent any new one from joining in.

I acknowledge that at a national level, governments cannot shoulder this responsibility on their own. It's neither doable nor sustainable! Regional collective efforts and access to international finance are required. Furthermore, non-governmental and private sectors should have a say in such a decision-making process.

Hence, at the regional level, Asia-Pacific is badly in need of a firm determination to develop a sustainable mechanism to finance development through a variety of complementary initiatives, instruments and institutions.

Excellencies,

Islamic Republic of Iran has taken major strides to return the country to economic stability and growth, and the signs are evident. The government of President Rouhani managed to turn the negative economic growth of minus 6.8 percent in 2014 to a positive rate of 6.4% in 2016, and inflation which was hovering above 40% is now 8%. Moreover, For the first time in 50 years, the government's share of the oil revenue is less than what it is earning from tax, including VAT, which has been made

possible through widening the tax base, targeted tax exemption, prevention of tax evasions as well as innovations in the tax system. Furthermore, the country's non-oil trade balance has turned positive for the first time in almost 50 years meaning that Iran's non-oil exports have exceeded its imports. Such initiatives and further deregulation and privatisation measures are in line with the government's policy to reduce dependence on oil revenues and to further diversify the government's income sources. This has also made the budget more sustainable.

I very much look forward to seeing ESCAP a much more important force to be reckoned with, in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thank you