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Statement of EBAC/ESBN at the APFSD

Delivered by Asif Ibrahim

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to deliver a statement on behalf of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council and ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, as a voice of Asia-Pacific business.

We attach great importance to the successful implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which is a matter of creating prosperity for all. In this regard, we wish to emphasize that active engagement of business in the implementation of this Agenda is essential. In particular, business contributes to achieving the SDGs through the sheer nature of its activities driven by the need to remain and strengthen competitiveness. In particular, business contributes to innovation and the development of new technologies, products and services through the adoption of enhanced production models and digitization. Business also is the main provider of employment and, hence, directly contributes to poverty reduction. In addition, business can further enhance its contribution to the SDGs through the adoption of responsible business practices and higher sense of business ethics and accountability.

We also emphasize the business sector's indispensable role in fostering regional cooperation and integration through the expansion of global and regional value chains; and in financing and building infrastructure, including transportation, ICT and energy networks for enhanced regional connectivity. In this regard, we recognize that effective and properly regulated public-private partnerships (PPPs) play an important role in achieving sustainable development.

We therefore call upon governments to duly acknowledge the business sector's role and provide an enabling environment for business engagement and investment that would contribute to inclusive growth, including continued commitment to regional economic cooperation and open borders to trade and investment.

We strongly believe in and reaffirm the important role of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network as an important modality for ESCAP to actively engage business in promoting environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive growth in the Asia and Pacific region.

We also support the Asia-Pacific Business Forum or APBF as a useful region-wide multi-stakeholder platform to articulate strategies for PPPs to achieve the SDGs, and promote business cooperation and dialogue. The most recent APBF, held in Dhaka in February 2017, adopted a resolution which affirms commitment to international cooperation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and calls upon governments of the region to partner with the business sector to ensure the benefits from globalization are fairly distributed.

Thank you.