Mr. Chairman,
Madame Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by joining the previous speakers in extending our sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the 74th session of the Commission. I am confident that under your able leadership, the session will result in fruitful outcomes and I take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation and support.

Mr. Chairman,

Asia and the Pacific is the region known for its fastest economic growth and development. However, the experience of our region over the past years reveals the fact that rapid economic development and dynamism are also accompanied by a rising disparity of wealth, concentration of incomes among the top deciles of the population and this gap is further widening. Hence, we think it is timely and appropriate that the 74th Session of the ESCAP is being held under the theme of the “Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda”.

We find the eight point policy agenda\(^1\) including strengthening social protection, prioritizing education, addressing digital divide and ICT infrastructure, increasing effectiveness of fiscal policies, deepening regional cooperation and others identified in the report “Inequality In Asia and the Pacific” as the most relevant measures for shaping a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Mr. Chairman,

Regional and global studies show that economic growth alone is not sufficient to reduce inequalities. But it should enable everyone, in particular the poor, to participate and benefit from economic opportunities and should lead to job creation, and be complemented by effective social policy. Mongolia, for one, is endeavoring to implement such a policy.

Mongolia was one of the early adopters of the SDGs. In February 2016, the Parliament of Mongolia approved the Sustainable Development Agenda of Mongolia – 2030. The Agenda envisages eradication of poverty in all its forms through reducing income inequality and ensuring citizen’s participation, improving human development through quality educational and health services while building effective, transparent governance institutions. In addition, the Government of Mongolia has mainstreamed its goals into the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020 and other relevant programs. Most recently, on 7 February 2018, the Government approved its three-pillar development policy to be

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\(^1\) 1/ Strengthening social protection, 2/ prioritizing education, 3/ protecting poor and disadvantaged from disproportionate impact of environmental hazards, 4/ addressing digital divide and ICT infrastructure, 5/ addressing persistent inequalities in technological capabilities among and within countries, 6/ increasing effectiveness of fiscal policies, 7/ improving data collection to identify address inequality and 8/ deepening regional cooperation
implemented through strategies on "Multi-pillar economic development policy", "Accountable governance promoting justice" and "Human-centered social policy".

Mr. Chairman,

As mentioned above, my Government puts the people at the centre of its policy. Among the Government’s policies and programs aimed at "leaving no one behind", efforts to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment need to be underlined.

Mongolia ranks 53rd out of 159 countries in gender inequality globally and women’s life expectancy and education levels are currently higher than men’s in Mongolia. However, there are some issues requiring further actions: the first is the need to increase the number of women at the decision-making level both in the public and private sectors; the second area is the elimination of gender-based violence; and the third, gender gaps in the country’s labor market including different rates of labor force participation, unequal pay, and the higher tendency of women to work in unsecure informal work should be reduced and closed.

The Government is keen to enhance public awareness of gender issues and create appropriate legal, financial and structural mechanisms through amendment of the Labor Law within 2018 and effective implementation of the National Program on Gender Equality for 2017-2021.

Mr. Chairman,

To enhance regional integration in our immediate region of Northeast Asia, Mongolia is actively engaged with its neighbors on transit transportation and infrastructure development. In June 2016, the Presidents of Mongolia, China and Russia signed the agreement on establishing an Economic Corridor between the three countries. In August 2017, the three sides agreed on three priority projects relating to railway, highway and energy networks. We are now in the process of setting up a joint "Investment and Planning Center" to coordinate the actual implementation of the Economic Corridor.

In December 2016, China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network, marking another major step in trilateral cooperation. It is my pleasure to inform that the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement or International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network on 12 April this year, following the ratifications by the Governments of the Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China earlier this year. I have the pleasure to inform that in accordance with the agreement, transportation between 3 countries is planned to start this year.

In order to further improve market access to our main trading partners, Mongolia has concluded its first-ever EPA with Japan in 2016 and now the implementation of the agreement is underway. In addition to this, Mongolia is studying the feasibility of free trade agreements with the Eurasian Economic Union, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Chairman,
The special needs of landlocked developing countries come front and center for Mongolia. I am pleased to note that with 10 required ratifications already in place, the Multilateral Agreement establishing the International Think-Tank for LLDCs entered into force on 6 October 2018. The Ulaanbaatar-based International Think-Tank has already been conducting its research activities with the financial contribution of the Mongolian Government and other partners. I am confident that the Think-Tank will further support LLDCs in their implementation of both the Vienna Program of Action and the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Furthermore, the Government of Mongolia will organize the first Inaugural Conference of the International Think Thank for Landlocked Developing Countries at the level of Foreign Ministers on 11-12 June 2018 in Ulaanbaatar. I am pleased to note that within the framework of the Inaugural Conference, the Host Country Agreement between the ITT for LLDCs and the Government of Mongolia will be signed.

Mr. Chairman,

Mongolia is keen to further work together with our two neighbors and other partners to improve energy networks. Mongolia’s State Policy on Energy, adopted in 2015, set an ambitious goal to produce 30 per cent of its energy demand from renewable resources by 2030. Our solar and wind resources are estimated at 7000 TW (terawatt) and 5000 TW respectively. With these resources, Mongolia has unlimited potential to export clean energy to countries in our region.

We are working with our partners to implement the Gobi Tech and the Asian Super Grid projects to supply renewable energy for the Northeast Asia. These projects offer countries in the region a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits including energy security, job creation and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. We look forward to working together with multilateral partners on these renewable energy projects.

Mr. Chairman,

All of us, developed and developing nations alike, are exposed to multiple environmental challenges and natural disasters. We share a view that there is a growing need for better national and local readiness, and a stronger regional and international cooperation. As part of this effort, Mongolia is hosting the Second Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction from 3 to 6 July 2018.

The Second Ministerial Conference, which will be convened under the theme "Preventing Disaster Risk: Protecting the Sustainable Development", will review the status of the Asia Regional Plan adopted in 2016 at the last Asian Ministerial Conference in New Delhi and adopt new Action Plan to accelerate its implementation for the next two years. As the outcome of the conference, governmental delegations will adopt the “Ulaanbaatar Declaration” and “Voluntary Commitments” by stakeholders.

This important multilateral platform serves as global and regional mechanism to discuss and review disaster-related issues and has been instrumental in sharing good practices and knowledge, and forge partnerships based on international cooperation. The Government of Mongolia greatly appreciates its partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in co-organizing this Conference.
Taking this opportunity, I would like to call on member-states to actively participate to this important Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate the Commission's continued efforts to ensure sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific region by providing the technical cooperation to the developing countries and supporting new initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and overcome other social and economic challenges of the region. The Government of Mongolia fully supports the initiatives and strategy introduced by the Commission to strengthen the regional cooperation in supporting an inclusive, sustainable economic and social development in the region.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman I wish to reiterate my delegation's firm belief that under your able stewardship this Session will give a greater impetus to our common efforts towards achieving economic and social objectives and the broader development agenda of the region.

I thank you for your attention.