Mdm Chairperson,

1. Thank you for giving me the floor. Singapore is honoured to participate in the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013 - 2022. We would like to take this opportunity to thank ESCAP, the People’s Republic of China and the city of Beijing for hosting us at this event.

2. As a member state of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Singapore ensures that our overall national policies for persons with disabilities are in line with our commitments under the Commission, the Incheon Strategy and the 17 Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). As we are now at the mid-point of the third Asian and Pacific Decade, it is timely to review the progress made in the last five years and chart the way forward.

3. Singapore’s policies and initiatives have been anchored by our national roadmap, the Enabling Masterplan, which has been reviewed every five years since 2007. The Singapore government has adopted a collaborative approach with stakeholders and the wider community in the implementation of the recommendations under the Enabling Masterplan. Persons with disabilities, their caregivers, their representative organisations and employers were involved in developing these Masterplans. The Masterplan comprehensively maps out strategies and goals across various areas, including early intervention, education, employment, adult care, and the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

4. Singapore launched the third edition of our Enabling Masterplan which spans from 2017 to 2021, with the objective of fostering a more caring and inclusive society where persons with disabilities are empowered to achieve their fullest potential and participate fully as integral and contributing members of society. The Third Enabling Masterplan builds on the progress of the earlier Masterplans and will guide the implementation of initiatives to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities. An inter-agency Standing Committee on Disability comprising senior public sector leaders ensure effective coordination across government agencies in enabling the well-being of persons with disabilities in the country.

5. A dedicated agency, SG Enable, set up in 2013 supports persons with disabilities seeking employment and training opportunities, as well as access to disability schemes. Employment provides an avenue for persons with disabilities to lead an independent life and to be active members of their community. SG Enable has enhanced employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, as shown by
the 70% increase since 2014 in the number of persons with disabilities benefitting from job-placement and support schemes. Employers who promote inclusive workplaces are also recognised by the government for their efforts through awards and wage support in the form of a Special Employment Credit.

6   Singapore has made it easier for persons with mobility challenges to get around. All mass rapid transit train stations and bus interchanges are now barrier-free and all public buses will be wheelchair-accessible by 2020. There is also a slew of transport subsidies and options to facilitate travel for persons with disabilities. In addition, we have also introduced guidelines and initiatives to encourage inclusive universal design for barrier-free access in the physical environment. The 7th edition of Singapore’s Fire Code, which was revised in 2013, has incorporated new fire safety features within buildings to facilitate the evacuation of persons with disabilities during an emergency situation. These efforts are part of Singapore’s commitment towards making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable in line with Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mdm Chairperson,

7   Singapore has made significant progress in building an inclusive society, and enhancing the well-being of persons with disabilities in line with our ongoing efforts to implement the Incheon Strategy and UNCRPD goals. In the coming years, we will also build a support network for caregivers of persons with disabilities, to enhance their capabilities in providing care and to support their physiological and emotional well-being. As Singapore enters the digital economy, we will push with our efforts on leveraging technology for better support and service delivery to persons with disabilities and their families. These initiatives will further strengthen the ecosystem of support for persons with disabilities and their families in Singapore. We look forward to a fruitful dialogue at this meeting to enable the building of inclusive society for all.

8   Thank you.