Statement by

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to the


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Honourable Chair
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the delegation from Samoa, I thank the Government of China and ESCAP for hosting this critical meeting, a chance for us to collectively reflect on progress, share lessons and adjust sails so we can accelerate the achievement of the commitments made to achieve societies and a region where the full enjoyment of rights of our people with disabilities is a reality.
Samoa is committed to the coherent implementation, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, the Incheon Strategy, the SAMOA Pathway, the Pacific Framework for Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2022 and other related commitments.

While the above platforms are important, of equal importance is their contextualisation and translation into national and local actions, priorities and resource mobilisation.

To this end, Samoa has taken the approach of sequential mainstreaming through prioritisation the disability inclusive agenda into our Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 and progressively the 15 sector specific plans.

We have established an integrated National Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the multi-lateral commitments and Samoa was one of the first countries to undergo the Voluntary National Review process in 2016, evidence of commitment to accelerate inclusive development through the use of SDGs.

Our 2016 National Census incorporated the Washington Group questions, we have ratified CRPD, completed a legislation compliance review and costed implementation plan for CRPD. Our Disability Persons Organisation, NOLA, have led community education on CRPD and more broadly, advocate for disability inclusive laws, policies and programs. To increase accessibility of services and the physical environment, our national construction code has been revised, and accessibility audits facilitate ongoing implementation. A National Mobility Devices service operates under the Health Sector, inclusive educations remains a priority of the Education Sector and in partnership with our business sector, a Pathways into Jobs and Small Business Incubator programs is showing good promise in changing the economic conditions of our persons with disabilities. However, there is much that remains to be done.

Given the magnitude of the work, and what is at stake, Samoa is clear that a whole-of-society, integrated, strengths-based approach is critical to accelerated progress and success. Evidence-based prioritisation, resource mobilisation, investment in growing knowledge-base, and increasing implementation and monitoring capacity are the critical success factors going forward, building on the gains thus far. We welcome the continued assistance of ESCAP in mobilising
technical and financial assistance at the regional, sub-regional level and national level. We emphasise the importance of increasing and harmonising development assistance as per the Paris Declaration and UNDAF, to support nationally-led disability-inclusive development.

We urge equitable representation of the Pacific islands in the Working Group and Expert Group membership to ensure that the ocean state voices of our people with disabilities are heard and represented.

Samoa reaffirms commitment to the 2030 Agenda, CRPD, the Incheon Strategy and look forward to continued collaboration to make the right real for our citizens with disabilities so as to leave no one behind. We acknowledge the Government of Australia and UNDP for the support which enabled Samoa's participation here, ESCAP and the Government of China.

I thank you for your attention.