

## Joint Statement of Local Governments to the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

### Agenda Item 2: Regional perspectives on accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

#### Review of regional progress on SDGs

It has been a full year since the WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. COVID-19 continues to ravage our cities and communities. Local governments are the first responders to any crisis by default, from disasters, the climate crisis, and the ongoing pandemic. As a disaster-prone region, COVID-19 compounded the already complex challenges that local governments face.

Capacities of cities have been truly tested. Local governments rose up to the challenge and demonstrated their adaptability by taking immediate responses and now preparing for recovery. Digitalisation efforts have been accelerated to enable access to services and facilitate contract tracing. Local governments launched innovative initiatives to ensure access to basic goods and services.

At the side event we had yesterday, “Our Vision of a Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Grassroots Women and Local Government Leaders Speak-out,” we have seen how community groups and local governments leaders can facilitate responsive action on the ground in addressing food security and livelihood. Grassroot women groups and local governments should be included as we work on the region’s recovery.

COVID-19 recovery financing from national governments, financial institutions, multilateral development banks, and other sources should have clear channels for access of local governments. With refocusing budget and priority for COVID-19 recovery, innovative financing for SDGs localisation is much more needed than ever. Recovery can be stimulated if it is initiated with and from the local level.

With over 65% of the SDG targets actionable at the local level, it is clear that the 2030 agenda cannot be achieved without local governments. It is alarming that Asia-Pacific region is not on track to achieve any of the 17 SDGs<sup>1</sup> and that least progress has been made on the goal dedicated to sustainable cities and communities or SDG11<sup>2</sup>. As decentralisation continues to transform the region, local governments must be equipped with the legal framework and access to resources in order to execute our mandate and deliver the SDGs. Localisation efforts should continue and be intensified in collaboration with national government and all relevant actors.

We continually support the progress made on the localisation of SDGs in the countries. We complement member states for providing good enabling environments to local governments in integrating SDGs in the local plans and actions. Despite the progress in involving in the local governments in VNRs process, we request the central governments to engage local governments in the processes.

#### Asia-Pacific Local Government Coordinating Body

Members:



Partners:



<sup>1</sup> ESCAP/RFSD/2021/L.1, summary

<sup>2</sup> ESCAP/RFSD/2021/L.1, paragraph 8