Written Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(Seventy-seventh session of the ESCAP
Bangkok, 26 to 29 April 2021)

Mr./Madame Chair,

At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the current session. It is my hope that the session will be successful under your able leadership.

I would also like to express my thanks to Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary of the ESCAP and the Secretariat for making this session possible.

I acknowledge the substantial progress facilitated by the Commission in promoting the socio-economic development of Asia and the Pacific at a time of a series of crises including the global COVID-19 pandemic. I am confident that the seventy-seventh session guided by the theme “Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific” will serve as a significant milestone that contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through strengthened regional cooperation against different crises.

Mr. Chair,

The global pandemic has triggered simultaneous, unprecedented global social and economic crises, which threaten to roll back hard-won development gains and complicate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the theme of the 77th session, I would like to draw your attention to the following three areas in building resilience and promoting the social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.
First of all, it is essential to establish and operate the national risk management system in a timely manner to guarantee the socio-economic development.

Sustained COVID-19 pandemic, recurrent natural disasters, unstable situation driven by disputes and conflicts between countries and nations – these are the key factors that hold back the growth potential and impacts negatively the socio-economic development in Asia and the Pacific which covers two thirds of the global population.

Today various crises such as health crisis and natural calamities are found everywhere, in any country, region and continent. This requires all countries to put in place the risk management system that suits their contexts.

Member states should formulate the efficient national risk management strategy, implement it across all areas of social and economic life and take timely and proactive measures to cope with crises. Only then, would the people’s lives and assets be saved and upward curve of economic growth be ensured.

Secondly, protection of ecosystem should be given primary attention in building resilience and our future in Asia and the Pacific.

The socio-economic development brought about by mankind has given us not only a huge benefit but also catastrophic crisis such as environmental disruption.

Environmental protection is not an issue that is confined to any individual countries. It is a regional and global issue closely connected to the future of the earth. However due attention is not paid to the protection of ecosystem.

Carbon dioxide emission continues to rise. Air pollution and climate change continue to bring natural calamities in the region. This is a clear witness to the gravity and urgency of environmental protection.

According to the Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021, the recovery measures approved by countries in the region had very little or almost no consideration of the environmental dimension, despite the fact that big cities in the Asia-Pacific region produced around 200 tons more medical waste per day than before the pandemic.
All countries should fulfil their responsibilities and obligations for environmental protection. It should be considered and given priority as a matter of utmost urgency and a life-and-death issue.

Thirdly, regional and global cooperation should be further promoted under the principles of equality, mutual benefit, and respect for sovereignty to materialize the theme of this session.

Every country in the Asia-Pacific region varies in its level of socio-economic development and the foundation and capacity to achieve SDGs.

The environment of international cooperation that goes beyond individual country or region should be created while countries make their own efforts to cope with crises. It will lead to increased efficiency of risk management in each country.

In keeping with its mission to coordinate social and economic development of the region, ESCAP should further encourage cooperation and exchange among countries in the region to build their resilience.

As is shown by the response to global health crisis today, COVID-19 vaccine is monopolized by certain developed countries, instead of being an asset and property commonly shared by the mankind. Inequality is easily found during the treatment of the coronavirus disease. The prevailing situation indicates that global disaster may be ever more catastrophic unless the globally acknowledged principles of equality, mutual benefit and cooperation are not given enough consideration.

It is required that the countries with developed economy and great potential provide support to other countries materially and technically, and share successes and experiences already achieved.

Member states should cooperate under the principle of respecting each country’s sovereignty, social and political system, laws and cultural diversity. In particular, it should by no means be allowed that a country lever the aid to impose its intention on the other or attach political strings to it.

Mr. Chair,
The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is a people-centred socialist state where everything is geared to serving for the benefits of the people.

Thanks to the policy of giving priority to, respect for and love for people pursued by Comrade Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs of the DPRK, the people’s life and safety are ensured with full credit in the face of sanctions and blockade of hostile forces, harsh natural disasters and global COVID-19 pandemic. Nationwide system for disaster prevention and risk management is in place, thereby making it possible to flexibly cope with all sorts of crises including natural disasters.

The Korean people are making efforts to carry out the first-year tasks of the new five-year plan in close connection with the work to achieve national SDGs. The VNR report is at the final stage to submit to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2021.

Under the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs of the DPRK, and true to the ideals of believe-in-people-as-in- heaven, self-reliance and single-minded unity, the DPRK Government will overcome all challenges in its way to achieve SDGs and continue to dynamically advance along the road of Korean style socialism, footing firmly on its own resources, technology, and internal might.

We are also committed to further strengthening our collaboration with the ESCAP and its member states while we move ahead towards the social and economic development of the region and implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Thank you.