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Agenda 4(h)

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BismillahirRahmanir Rahim

Chair of the Session, Hon'ble Head of State and Government

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum and Good Afternoon

Excellencies,

Against the backdrop of the harsh reality of the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent global unrest ESCAP may come forward to formulate policy papers, and action plans to boost up trade and investment during this critical juncture in order to attain sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Distinguished Guest,

You all are aware of the current global situation. We are in a disorderly world which is beset with pandemic, armed war, trade conflict, digital divide, climate menace and so on. All such disruptive realities are happening at a time when the implementation of the SDGs has nearly come half ways for all. In such context I am encouraged to see the UNESCAP's Trade, Investment and Innovation Division organizing an event which can really catalyze some tangible and credible benefits for our countries.

Dear Colleagues,

Bangladesh is poised to graduate as a Middle-Income country in 2026. We have been an inspiration for the LDCs for implementing global goals like- MDGs, the Istanbul Plan of Action. Since its independence in 1971 under the leadership of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Bangladesh has been trying to develop domestic capacities and resilience to address external shocks, challenges, risks, and uncertainties. During the last 14 years the country performed excellently well in the macroeconomic areas and external sector performance, including export and foreign exchange earnings. Our government has been working diligently to build a hunger and poverty-free Bangladesh which is the main theme of SDG-1 and SDG-2.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a beneficiary of multilateral trading system, Bangladesh has already undertaken appropriate policy actions to face the challenges ahead. These policy actions include- utilization of infrastructures for trade and investment facilitation, upscaling and rescaling the level of human capital, digitization of trading system, formulating roadmap for product diversification, participating in regional and bilateral Free Trade Agreements, undertaking policy reforms like tariff rationalization, enhancing

internal resource mobilization etc. In addition, the country has undertaken ‘ SMART BANGLADESH’ programme based on the tangible success of its earlier version ‘ DIGITAL BANGLADESH’.

In the context of the present world and Bangladesh perspective I would like to highlight some points here:

- UNESCAP may be of great support to help Bangladesh in the trade negotiation capacity building for Bangladesh Trade Officials as a part of its role as Secretariat for APTA.
- UNESCAP in collaboration with 4 other commissions, UNCTAD and WTO may put in some requisite policy actions as to the implementation of commitments as were explicitly embedded in WTO Hongkong and Nairobi Ministerial Declarations. UNESCAP may also make significant contribution
- Bangladesh earnestly requests the UNESCAP to encourage all countries including members of APTA to be a part of this initiative for better results of interoperability.

Distinguished delegates,

Bangladesh is actively engaged in the Cross-border Paperless Trade, Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, public-private partnership networking, renewable energy and other initiatives of

UNESCAP. Noted that Bangladesh was one of the top five countries who signed the ESCAP Framework Agreement on Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific treaty in 2017 and then ratified in 2020. The agreement has come to effective from February 2021. Entry into force of the treaty is an outstanding achievement for our region, conforming the high-level commitment and vision of the Asia-Pacific countries as well as will play a vital role to construct “Smart Bangladesh”.

In implementing the climate resilient trade and investment recommendations, can UNESCAP bring in some enabling roadmap so that the developed markets cooperate with the capacity-constraint countries based on equity. Bangladesh always reposes great confidence in UNESCAP initiatives. I once again admire UNESCAP’s accomplishments.

Thank you all.