Intervention by Mrs. Chatvadee Chindawongse,
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at the 81th Session of the ESCAP
Agenda Item 2(b): Sub-regional perspectives on current and emerging policy issues for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific
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(3 minutes)
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I thank the panelists for their insightful presentations, which highlight efforts of regional groupings in addressing key policy issues for inclusive and sustainable development.

2. Achieving sustainability and ensuring inclusivity remains a priority for ASEAN, as reflected by Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship theme for 2025 "Inclusivity and Sustainability". With only 14 percent of targets on-track, the Asia-Pacific region is facing urgent needs to accelerate action for sustainability. ASEAN is also experiencing rapid urbanization, with over half of our population already living in urban areas. Sustainable urbanisation is therefore among of the issues ASEAN needs to work on, if we are to achieve the SDGs.

3. As ASEAN has set an ambitious goal to achieve a "green ASEAN" under the upcoming ASEAN Community Vision 2045, we are relooking at the complementarities between the new Vision and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to **explore 5 new priority areas** to respond to current trends of sustainable development and contribute to resilient and sustainable future.

4. First, **strengthening resilience against climate change**. With increasing urbanisation, cities in ASEAN are facing increasing risks from extreme weather events, unprecedented natural disasters, and man-made hazards. To withstand these challenges, cities must be equipped with disaster-resilient infrastructure, Prevention, Preparedness, Responses and Recovery systems, and adaptation financing to protect livelihoods and ensure long-term sustainability.

5. Second, **mobilising green finance**. Sustainable development requires strong financial commitments. Facilitating the flow of investments into green and sustainable projects, especially in urban settings, will support climate-resilient infrastructure, drive green economy, and ensure environmental sustainability in both urban and suburban areas.

6. Third, **advancing energy transition**. To accelerate decarbonisation, ASEAN has developed a comprehensive policy framework to guide clean energy transition effort, which is crucial for meeting climate targets and improving air quality, especially in cities and urban areas. The ASEAN Power Grid (APG), established to enhance cross-border renewable energy trade, has a key role to play in this regard.

7. Forth, **leveraging digital transformation**. Digital technology is essential for sustainable urban development, particularly in implementing smart city solutions. The ASEAN Smart Cities Network, with its membership of 34 cities across ASEAN, plays an instrumental role in sustainable urban development, serving as a platforms to share green and smart solutions through digitalisation and the use of technologies.

8. Fifth, **enhancing networks and partnerships**. Partnerships play a crucial role in supporting sustainable urbanization in ASEAN by facilitating knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, and the development of innovative solutions for urban challenges. ASEAN has developed the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS) support cities towards sustainable urban development. This will also help build the capacity of local authorities and communities to manage urban growth sustainably.

Distinguished delegates,

9. Urban transformation significantly impacts the achievement of the SDGs, as it is also interlinked with many SDGs such as social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Effective urban planning and management are crucial for harnessing the potential of urbanization to achieve the SDGs, while also mitigating its associated challenges.

10. No one can achieve this alone. Thailand as the ASEAN Coordinator for Sustainable Development Cooperation will continue to enhance ASEAN's cooperation with all stakeholders and external partners, ensuring that the ASEAN region remains a driver of sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region while leaving no one behind.

11. Thank you.

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