Joint Statement of Local and Regional Governments to the 11th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

**Agenda item 2: Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific** (20 February 2024, 9:00-12:00/14:30-17:30)

Thank you for the opportunity to take the floor. I am (name and position) and I speak on behalf of the organised constituency of local authorities represented by the Asia-Pacific Local Government Coordinating Body.

This year, we organised the first Local and Regional Government Assembly hosted by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. This Assembly discussed how local and regional governments are advancing the implementation of the SDGs and the enabling environment needed to effectively contribute to the acceleration of the SDGs.

Cities and regions in Asia-Pacific continue to address the impacts of multi-linked crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the climate crisis. Securing a sustainable future for our people requires accelerated and targeted actions. We affirm that universal access to public services and comprehensive social protection are catalysts to resilient communities. Furthermore, as local and regional governments develop and implement climate action plans, direct access to sustainable climate financing, including the loss and damage fund, can accelerate concrete actions and reduce the impacts of climate change and air pollution on health and livelihoods of millions.

Localising the SDGs is critical to effectively deliver services and solutions as it recognises the diversity of our region and our ability to lead the attainment of the goals. Through localisation, local and regional governments contextualise the global goals and respond to local needs. Voluntary Subnational Review and Voluntary Local Review are reporting mechanisms that make local efforts on the SDGs more visible and likewise improve transparency and accountability. Harmonising the Voluntary Subnational Review and Voluntary Local Review with the Voluntary National Review can strengthen the implementation of the SDGs.

An enabling environment for local and regional governments is much needed if we are to stimulate our progress to achieve the SDGs. Capacity building and development plays a key role in ensuring that local and regional governments can step up to the ever-increasing challenges of the times.

Let me conclude by expressing the unrelenting commitment of local and regional governments to work with national governments, UN agencies, international organisations, and all stakeholder groups in realising a sustainable and resilient Asia-Pacific region.

**Agenda item 3: Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through voluntary national reviews** (21 February 2024, 9:00-11:30)

Thank you for the opportunity to take the floor. I am (name and position) and I speak on behalf of the organised constituency of local authorities represented by the Asia-Pacific Local Government Coordinating Body (APLG).

Local and regional governments have been conducting bottom-up reporting on the SDGs through the Voluntary Subnational Review and Voluntary Local Review. In Asia-Pacific, there have been 7 VSRs published from 2020 to 2023 in Cambodia, Indonesia, State of Selangor, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka. There have been 53 VLRs published from 2017 to 2023 with 7 local governments having done at least 2 VLRs. In 2022, Dhulikhel Municipality published the very first VLR in Nepal. The VSR and VLR are tangible indications of the commitment to the SDGs and can provide local realities in national reporting on the SDGs. We urge national governments to explore how the Voluntary Subnational Review and Voluntary Local Review can be harmonised with the Voluntary National Review to enhance multilevel dialogue and policy coherence on the SDGs.

We acknowledge ESCAP and the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization for developing the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on VLRs. National level guidelines on VLR have also been created in Indonesia and Malaysia. More local and regional governments want to develop VSR and VLR. These are clear recognitions to the value of
VLRs. We call on national governments to support local and regional governments as we undertake the Voluntary Subnational Review and Voluntary Local Review and integrate them in our planning processes.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Review of regional progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and opportunities for achieving the SDGs (22 February 2024, 13:30-16:30)

Thank you for the opportunity to take the floor. I am (name and position) and I speak on behalf of the organised constituency of local authorities represented by the Asia-Pacific Local Government Coordinating Body.

With over 65% of the SDGs targets requiring local action, the indispensable role of local and regional governments is clear. An enabling environment through regulations, access to financial resources, partnerships, and capacity development is crucial for local and regional governments to advance the SDGs implementation.

With the looming climate crisis, it is alarming how progress towards Goal 13 on climate action is regressing. Local and regional governments are developing and implementing local clean air and climate action plans, and contributing to the enhancement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through the conduct of local stocktake. It is vital to develop climate financing matchmaking tools and to facilitate the direct access of local and regional governments to sustainable climate financing, including the loss and damage fund, to accelerate concrete actions.

Local and regional governments are advocating sustainable productivity and consumption practices and supporting balanced territorial development to reduce poverty. We are also undertaking efforts to enhance energy and resource efficiency to minimise climate and environmental impacts. We recognise that there is much work to be done to meet the needs of communities and the SDGs targets.

Let me conclude by emphasising that empowering local and regional governments with an enabling environment can make a huge difference to fast-track the Asia-Pacific region’s progress toward the SDGs.