Statement of India
Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (28-30 September 2022)

Agenda Item 2(a): Enabling Resilience through Trade and Investment for Sustainable Development in Times of Crises

Madam/Mr. Chair,

The global economy is going through an extremely uncertain phase owing to the various crises happening simultaneously – the enduring COVID pandemic, a lingering war, the rise in energy and other commodity prices, disruptions in global supply chains and worsening food security. The COVID pandemic and the persisting geopolitical tensions have caused major disruption in economic activity and trade across the globe. These crises have further accentuated the inherent weaknesses and inequalities in the global economic and trading system and have highlighted the need for restructuring and diversifying global value chains.

The countries all over the world have taken various fiscal and structural reforms to counter the impact of pandemic and many of them are back to the path of recovery. India too has reached a pre-pandemic level of development owing to a series of reforms undertaken by the Government which resulted in India emerging as one of the fastest growing market economies with a GDP growth of 8.7% in 2021-22. As a result of our special emphasis on economic reforms which include fiscal consolidation, minimizing regulatory compliances, promoting ease of doing business, accelerating infrastructure development, undertaking Goods and Services Tax reforms and direct tax reforms, the exports in goods and services in the last fiscal year has grown at the rate of about 36% and reached about USD 676 billion. During the same period India also emerged as the 3rd largest Start-up ecosystem in the world with more than 70,000 recognized Start-ups covering all sectors ranging from IT services, healthcare & life sciences to education, agriculture and professional & commercial services.

The learning we draw as a global community from the pandemic reveals that the global economy needs greater diversification and thus expansion and diversification of Global Value Chains is the new imperative. Our belief in Atmanirbhar Bharat or Self-reliant India is inspired by this spirit. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan or Self-Reliant India movement is based on the vision of translating immediate COVID-19 related policy measures into actions to bring about transformative changes and aims at making India a bigger and more important part of the global economy by pursuing policies that are efficient, competitive, resilient and self-sustaining.
Madam/Mr. Chair,

India has implemented several measures to facilitate trade since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. We shifted to a common digital platform for issuance of electronic preferential Certificates of Origin at the start of pandemic in April 2020 and are working on facilitating further exchange of information in digital format across partner countries, in the next phase of its development.

India ratified the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in April 2016 and has completed compliance of its commitments on implementation of various provisions of TFA. India has taken a number of measures for reducing the cost of imports and exports such as establishment of a National Single Window System to route all import related formalities, simplification of fees and charges for various clearance related activities at the borders, paperless filing of import/export documents through ‘E-sanchit’ project etc.

The trade facilitation measures have resulted in India scoring 90.32% in UNESCAP’s 2021 Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. The Survey hailed this as a remarkable jump from 78.49% in 2019. India achieved a 100% score in the Transparency index and 96.3% in Paperless Trade index.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

On investment front, the measures taken by the Government of India such as FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country. India recorded highest ever annual FDI inflow of USD 83.57 billion during the financial year FY 2021-22 overtaking the previous year’s FDI by USD 1.60 billion despite COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions. India is offering opportunities for investors in setting up state of the art of manufacturing units across various sectors which is supported by a conducive ecosystem which includes a large competitively priced skilled workforce, Production Linked Incentives (PLIs) scheme spanning fourteen key sectors, a stable tax regime with globally competitive tax rates.

We have taken several measures to ease the foreign trade environment through further digitization of processes and their simplification for businesses. It is important for developing countries and LDCs to focus on improving their domestic physical and digital infrastructure and policy and regulatory frameworks, so as to bridge the digital divide and reap its benefits.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

The pandemic has reminded us of the importance of multilateralism and adherence to a rules-based global order in achieving the larger good in an equitable and sustainable
manner. India remains committed to the multilateral trading system. Multilateral institutions have an important role to play in building mutual trust, in minimizing the impact of disruptions through cross-country cooperation and, most importantly, in ensuring global recovery with efficacy.

Thank you.