

As-delivered

Statement by the 9th APFSD Chair

Reporting on the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development at the
78th Commission Session of ESCAP

Messages from the region

Thursday 26 May 2022

10:00 – 12:00 PM | 11:00 – 1:00 PM

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Good morning to all of you.

It has been an honour to Chair the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. Member States of ESCAP, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, relevant groups, and other stakeholders shared their perspectives on the progress, implementation, and challenges confronting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, particularly on their tireless efforts to build back better after the debilitating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recently-concluded Forum highlighted the pressing need to shape policies with the rights and welfare of the marginalized and the most vulnerable at its heart. To do this, we must leverage the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Forum also underscored the importance of enhancing social protection, providing quality education, achieving gender equality, accelerating the transformation or transition to inclusive and green economies, and prioritizing more sustainable solutions as a way of mitigating the risks associated with climate change.

The Forum hosted five parallel roundtable discussions focused on Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17. The discussions reviewed the strides we have taken towards the achievement of each Goal and identified priority areas

of engagement as we draw closer to the 2030 deadline. Over 40 side events and related events were organized through the contributions and efforts of Member States, UN agencies, and other stakeholders.

The Forum examined the work of the United Nations development system at the regional level with the end view of finding ways to further strengthen collaboration and coordination in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The Forum also highlighted the UN development system's efforts on capacity building and the generation of resources in order to develop solutions to accelerate the region's socioeconomic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delegations reviewed the opportunities highlighted in the voluntary national reviews in order to strengthen the sense of national ownership, improve cross-functional coordination among various levels of government, and facilitate the sharing of best practices such as various homegrown development approaches. Peer learning was deemed as a critical aspect in efforts to transform the 2030 Agenda from aspiration to reality.

Finally, the interlinked and cross-cutting nature of the challenges our region is confronted with such as poverty, hunger, inequality, climate change, and injustice among others require the concerted efforts of all stakeholders at the levels of government and society. Hence, this Forum calls for stronger and more enduring linkages as a critical step towards designing strategies that will enable us to address common risks and challenges.

Despite the ominous threat posed by the pandemic to reverse years of progress we have made towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, the delegations' level of engagement and the quality of the Forum's outcomes is a testament to the strength of our collective resolve to usher in a future of transformative growth and development. Together, let us seize this opportunity to develop a robust and resilient regional response that will enable us to build Asia Pacific back better after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you.