The 81st session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Agenda item 2(a) General Debate: Current and emerging policy issues for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific
Statement by Mr. Robert Abisoghomonyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Bangkok, 21 April 2025

Distinguished Chair,

Distinguished Executive Secretary,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the 81st Session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. I thank the Executive Secretary and the other high-level speakers for their introductory remarks.

This meeting offers an excellent opportunity to reflect upon the achievements so far, assess the existing challenges, and renew collective efforts to get back on track towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at national, regional, and global levels. The Secretariat's note provides us with a comprehensive analysis of evolving policy issues for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. We appreciate the recommendations contained in the document for formulating more effective responses to our most pressing needs.

The 2030 Agenda remains the blueprint for the UN's efforts to achieve sustainable development, ensuring harmony between economic growth and environmental protection and building just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. However, in light of the grave challenges such as armed conflicts, geopolitical tensions, continued violations of human rights and humanitarian law, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, lack of financing for development, surging inflation, and the debt crisis, this remains an ambitious objective. In this regard, the international community should consolidate its efforts to ensure an efficient and timely response to these global crises, enabling the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, strengthening

multilateral cooperation, and delivering tangible results that reach the most vulnerable - ensuring that no one is left behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a landlocked, middle-income country with limited natural resources, Armenia faces complex development challenges, which require a rights-based and people-centered approach to unlock the economic potential of its society. Over the past few years, the Government of Armenia has been taking active measures to advance its reform agenda and align Armenia's national priorities with the SDGs, by incorporating them into national strategies.

In this vein, Armenia values its long-standing and constructive cooperation with UNESCAP in many areas of sustainable development, including the promotion of green economy and environmental protection, improving connectivity, and developing our human capital through overcoming structural constraints and vulnerabilities.

Excellencies,

Armenia, as a mountainous country with fragile ecosystems, is vulnerable to climate change and other environmental hazards. Environmental disasters, like the unprecedented massive floods that occurred last year in the northern regions of Armenia, which claimed lives and livelihoods and caused significant infrastructure damage, have become a new reality in our country.

We are working on enhancing our national climate change adaptation capacities by reviewing Armenia's National Adaptation Plan and devising sectoral adaptation plans, such as in agriculture, water, and other sectors. In this context, stronger international support is vital to achieve the adaptation targets, build resilient infrastructure, and put in place early warning and preparedness systems.

It is also important to effectively address the economic and non-economic loss and damage caused by climate change. As biodiversity loss is considered to be one of the main forms of non-economic loss caused by climate change, Armenia looks forward to building global coherence and joint action for addressing such challenges during the Biodiversity COP17 in Yerevan, in close collaboration with governments, international organizations, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities, women's organizations, and other non-governmental stakeholders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the main focus of our deliberations is regional cooperation, I would like to particularly emphasize the efforts of the Government of Armenia to reach peace and stability in the South Caucasus. Following months of negotiations, the text of the Peace Agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan has already been agreed upon and is now waiting to be signed. While Armenia hopes that Azerbaijan will set aside the artificial preconditions for signing the Agreement in favour of region's long-term peace and stability, we continue to pursue constructive initiatives to promote regional cooperation and connectivity.

Guided by the vision of comprehensiveness, inclusiveness, the non-discriminatory use of regional infrastructure, and building a prosperous future for all interested parties, the Government of Armenia has introduced the "Crossroad of Peace" initiative. This project aims to develop communications between the countries of the region by renovating, building, and operating roads, railways, cables, and electricity lines, with full respect for sovereignty and jurisdiction of all countries involved, as well as the principles of equality and reciprocity.

Having the alignment of economic interests with long-awaited peace and stability at the heart of its concept, it aims to shape a path to enhanced and inclusive economic connectivity, built on common interests in various fields of development - such as trade, transport, energy, and tourism - for the benefit of countries of the region and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the vital role of Information and Communication Technologies in driving progress towards the implementation of the SDGs. The high-tech sector has emerged as a driving force, bringing about transformative changes and expanding opportunities for more inclusive societies.

"The Asian-Pacific Information Superhighway Action Plan 2022–2026" stands as an important roadmap for regional cooperative actions aimed at promoting digital connectivity and digital transformation in the Asia-Pacific region. It aligns with the need to harness the potential of ICTs as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of Armenia attaches particular importance to the support of innovative projects. Modernizing Armenia's economy, with particular emphasis on advancing digital technologies, fostering innovation, and creative education, is at the heart of our development agenda. We are

pleased to note the close and effective cooperation with UNESCAP in developing digital technologies.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, let me reaffirm Armenia's full commitment to effective multilateral cooperation for development at all levels. We look forward to working with all our partners to identify measures to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at all levels.

I thank you.