Agenda 4: Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States
81st Session of the UNESCAP
United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok | 21–25 April 2025

Her Excellency Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning.

It is a great honour to address this Special Body on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States during the 81st session of UNESCAP. I thank the ESCAP Secretariat for convening this session and for its steadfast commitment to inclusive and resilient development across our region.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the LDC Group. We believe that the development needs of countries in special situations must remain at the heart of global cooperation frameworks.

Bangladesh is on track to graduate from LDC status by November 2026. While this transition reflects significant progress it also presents emerging challenges—particularly the phasing out of international support measures such as concessional finance, preferential trade access, and special treatment under WTO provisions.

To address these concerns, we have developed a comprehensive Smooth Transition Strategy, aligned with our national development plans and prepared through broad-based stakeholder consultations. Key reforms are underway, including the implementation of a new National Tariff Policy to create a business-friendly, WTO-compliant trade environment and a National Logistics Policy aimed at improving infrastructure and connectivity. We are actively streamlining trade procedures under the Trade Facilitation Agreement and expanding investment services to district levels. Bangladesh is also modernizing its intellectual property regime and pursuing Free Trade and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements to safeguard market access.

Recognizing the importance of digital transformation, Bangladesh has ratified the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Paperless Trade and is developing a roadmap for implementation. We are also establishing institutional mechanisms to promote digital commerce and support SME growth.

Urban development remains a national priority as we strive to build resilient cities and ensure that the benefits of graduation are shared equitably.

To secure a smooth and sustainable graduation, we urge continued international support—particularly through extended trade preferences, TRIPS flexibilities, access to concessional and climate finance, and technical assistance in trade and digital governance. We call on ESCAP to enhance the Asia-Pacific Graduation Support Facility and promote deeper regional cooperation.

Bangladesh remains committed to sharing its experiences and fostering solidarity with fellow LDCs. With inclusive planning and strong partnerships, we can turn graduation into a gateway to sustainable development.

Thank you.