Closing statement on behalf of stakeholders by Ms. Susanna Harding, Tsao Foundation, Singapore

Thank you Mdm Chair. Good afternoon your excellencies and distinguished guests.

1. Tsao Foundation congratulates the Asia Pacific community and ESCAP. The outcome of this Intergovernmental Meeting on the 4th Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing shows that the voices of older people were heard and the ESCAP, with its 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members considered the experiences, challenges and key recommendations by the civil society organisations who work with older people on the ground.

2. Specifically, we welcome the recommendation, “To support the formation and strengthening of older persons’ associations and civil society organizations to provide an effective community mechanism for strengthening the voices of older persons, and to promote the creation of age-friendly agencies, local communities and workplaces.”

3. In response, Tsao Foundation is committing to be the catalyst that will facilitate the establishment of an Asia Pacific regional alliance among older people’s groups, non-governmental organisations, researchers and academics, and individuals interested to support the implementation of the recommendations of the this MIPAA Review and Appraisal process.

4. In close partnership with OPAs, Self-Help Groups and other community based organisations, we are ready and look forward to continuing our active participation, engagement and direct representation of older people at the regional and national level platforms ensuring that the evolving needs of older persons are responded and their aspirations are supported.

5. We will meaningfully engage and work closer with intergovernmental organisations such as ESCAP, UNFPA, WHO, ILO, ITU and international NGOs such as HelpAge International, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, IFA, IAGG and other like-minded organisations, all of which are committed to accelerating the implementation of MIPAA as
well as the SDGs and in ensuring that the rights of older people are promoted so they live longer in dignity.

6. Tsao Foundation believes that as we move towards 2030, the focus should shift towards healthy ageing and longevity. While Asia Pacific will still be among the younger world regions in 2030, its 65+ population will increase at a faster pace than the global average.

7. In this respect, we will utilise and leverage on the results of the National Academy of Medicine’s report, Global Roadmap for Healthy Longevity, which underscores the fact that humanity needs to fundamentally shift how we are preparing for population ageing to maximise the number of years lived in good health.

8. Mdm Tsao Ng Yu Shun, our founder said in 1992. “I know what it is to grow old, and I feel deeply the desperation of those who face old age alone, who cannot get to a doctor, and whose families cannot or do not know how to care for them. The pain of poor health is so much worse when you are old and frail.”

9. Thirty years hence, the foundation continues her mission to advance a positive transformation of the ageing experience through mindset and systemic change in Singapore and moving forward in the Asia-Pacific region, to ensure that no older man or older woman will ever feel alone, cannot get to a doctor, and their families are able to and want to care for them joyfully till the end.

10. Thank you very much.

Speech by Mrs Susana Concorde Harding
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1 July 2022