Opening Remarks
at the Seventh South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum
“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effective Delivery of Sustainable, Resilient, and Innovative Solutions in Asia and the Pacific”
6 November 2023 at 09.00-09.30 hrs.

Mr. Hirohito Toda, Deputy Executive Secretary for Partnerships and Coordination of ESCAP,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to be here today as we consolidate our efforts to reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are currently facing multiple challenges, ranging from geopolitical tensions, food insecurity, pandemics and climate change. The intensifying severity and conflation of such global challenges disproportionately impact the most vulnerable. They continue to cause great hardship to many - particularly those in the developing world, many of whom are in our region.

Collective action to address these interconnected challenges is needed now more than ever. This forum, therefore, is a great opportunity for us to share experiences and best practices, and identify approaches that can help accelerate our efforts to respond to these crises, build resilience and achieve the SDGs.

Distinguished Delegates,

A sustainable future requires us to pursue development efforts that are more balanced in all dimensions. What we need is a more people-centered and planet-centric development.

For Thailand, we have long applied the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), our locally-driven development approach which promotes balance in all aspects. Throughout the years, the SEP has proven its value in empowering people, and creating resilience for communities.

Building on the SEP is the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model (BCG), which leverages science, technology and innovation to advance economic growth, while conserving the environment. Embraced by APEC economies, the BCG will help ensure more balanced development and resilience for the long-term.
We will continue to share our approach with all interested partners, both within the South East Asian region and beyond.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Thailand welcomes the latest Secretary-General Report on ‘Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet’, which offers key recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, particularly on eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities and on supporting developing countries in their efforts to achieve the SDGs. We also welcome other global and regional initiatives which help maintain the momentum for SDG implementation.

At the SDG Summit, the Prime Minister of Thailand pledged Thailand’s commitments toward SDG attainment through (1) uplifting the livelihood and well-being of the people, particularly to leave no one behind while reaching those furthest behind first, (2) to promote and protect the human rights of all persons and the right to health, and (3) to foster cooperation and partnerships at all levels in support of climate action.

Thailand also strives to localize SDG implementation in order to realize our pledges and improve the lives and well-being of the people. As ASEAN Coordinator for Sustainable Development Cooperation, Thailand and ESCAP co-organized the side-event “Fostering Partnerships for Our Common Future: Enhancing Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Accelerate the SDGs in ASEAN” during the UNGA High-level Week in September 2023. The goal was to enhance partnership to accelerate achievement of the SDGs, especially at the local level.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

With only seven years left, we must utilize all tools, including science, technology, and innovation to accelerate SDG implementation. STI, digital technology and AI can greatly contribute to SDG implementation through their application in areas such as data-driven decision-making, agricultural transformation and climate change mitigation and adaptation. This will in turn increase economic opportunities, and improve the quality of life of local communities. It should, however, be emphasized that the challenges of digital disruption and digital divide will need to be properly addressed to ensure that all can benefit from new technologies.

Another important tool is Financing for Development (FfD) which is key to carrying out development projects and reducing inequalities. Innovative or alternative means of resource mobilization such as the issuance of sustainability-linked bonds or funds can complement traditional sources of funding. This is where multi-stakeholders can play a role. Public and private sectors must work together to ensure adequate funding for achieving the SDGs.
These tools coupled with transformative approaches to development, including the SEP and the BCG, can help provide sustainable solutions to eradicate poverty and counter the impacts of challenges and crises.

However, development cannot be truly sustainable without peace and security. The multilateral system thus plays a crucial role in addressing geopolitical crises, resolving conflicts and creating lasting peace, which will help promote conducive environment for sustainable development.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Development in itself is a complex endeavour, and partnership is indispensable. Constructive dialogue such as this meeting to exchange ideas and enhance cooperation is vital. But multi-stakeholder coalitions, especially on the ground, are key to bringing about the much-needed transformative changes. The private sector is the linchpin of this cooperation.

Last month in Thailand, the Sustainability Expo (SX) was organized through the collaboration of over 100 regional and global businesses, representing a collaborative platform that unites all stakeholders in driving sustainable development.

This is an example of good multi-stakeholder cooperation. We are happy to note that many more of these activities are happening all over our region.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

This year’s South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum is timely as we stand at the halfway point in our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our regional perspectives will pave the way for more meaningful and in-depth discussions at the APFSD and the HLPF next year. We also have to make sure that regional views, including our discussions in the ASEAN fora, are well-reflected at the Summit of the Future.

In this regard, Thailand would like to express our appreciation to ESCAP for its continuous hard work in promoting cooperation and enhancing partnerships at sub-regional, regional and global levels. We look forward to working closely with ESCAP and all partners in our efforts to build a sustainable future for all.

At this critical juncture, Thailand believes that the complementarity between regional and multilateral systems will help strengthen our efforts to respond to current and future challenges. With all stakeholders working together, we can achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, without anyone or any country being left behind.
Thank you.