Statement by the Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN)
81st Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Agenda item 2(a) General Debate:
Sustainable Urban Development and Private Sector Engagement

Monday 21 April 2025 from 10:30-12:00 and 14:30-17:30
ESCAP Hall, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok

Ms. Shinta Widjaja Kamdani, Chair of the ESBN, Chief Executive Officer of Sintesa Group, and Chairman of the Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, I am honored to contribute to this timely discussion on sustainable and resilient urban development in Asia and the Pacific. Our region's urban transformation is both a pressing challenge and a tremendous opportunity—one that requires decisive, inclusive, and innovative action.

With more than 2.2 billion people residing in cities and contributing to over 80 percent of the region's GDP, urban areas are central to our development agenda. Yet, these same cities are increasingly exposed to climate-related risks, infrastructure deficits, and widening social disparities. To address these challenges, the private sector must be seen not only as a source of capital but as a co-creator of solutions.

At ESBN, we have been working to reimagine how the private sector can lead in building energy-efficient, inclusive, and digitally enabled cities. On 10th April, we convened regional private sector leaders in Kuala Lumpur, culminating in the Kuala Lumpur Business Leader's Declaration. This declaration reaffirms the business community's collective commitment to sustainability and resilience, with a focus on climate action, innovation, and inclusive growth. Critically, it emphasizes the need to invest in sustainable infrastructure that supports urban systems, such as energy, water, transport, and waste, built on circular economy principles and digital transformation.

This declaration builds upon and reinforces the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business, our flagship initiative launched in 2022. Through this initiative, ESBN

has mobilized businesses across the region to align their operations and investments with sustainability goals. One of its key pillars is precisely what we are discussing today: supporting infrastructure that underpins sustainable urban development. Whether through clean energy integration, smart building technologies, or climate-resilient construction, private enterprises are already delivering tangible solutions on the ground.

From Jakarta's award-winning flood control system to low-carbon building retrofits and the use of recycled materials in construction, ESBN members are actively demonstrating that **green business is not just good policy—it is smart economics.**

But private sector leadership must be matched by enabling policy environments. To scale this impact, we must continue fostering strong public-private collaboration. Governments play a critical role in creating enabling environments—through integrated national urban policies, innovative financing mechanisms, and multilevel data systems that guide investment where it's needed most.

ESBN stands ready to support member States through continued policy dialogue, technical support through advisory services and position papers, and regional platforms for sharing knowledge and expertise. Together, we can turn our cities into engines of sustainability, inclusion, and innovation.

Let us seize this opportunity to harness the full potential of public-private partnerships, and deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda—for our people, our planet, and our shared prosperity.

Thank you.