Statement Germany

At the 81st Commission Session,

UNESCAP Bangkok, April 21st, 2025

Thank you Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and privilege to address you today on Germany´s contribution to Sustainable Development and Urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific during the 81st Session of the Commission.

Germany would like to emphasize that Climate Change remains one of the main obstacles to sustainable development in this region and beyond.

As we are currently experiencing a phase of profound political and economic turmoil, efforts towards sustainable development and global climate negotiations are becoming more and more challenging.

But despite the numerous and seemingly more pressing crises around the world, the planetary crisis of climate change will not simply go away.

On national level governments have to grapple with a multitude of issues simultaneously and Climate Change seems to take a back seat in some cases.

At the subnational level, however, there is growing momentum for more active climate action: Although cities only cover two percent of the earth's surface, they are responsible for 75 percent of global CO_2 emissions and 70 percent of global energy consumption. At the same time, the greatest potential for emission and energy reduction exists in urban areas. Cities are therefore not only causes, but also solutions to the problem.

Therefore, the topic of this year´s Commission Session is well chosen.

Cities are also under great pressure to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Here in Bangkok, "Chulalongkorn Centenary Park" is a good example for how green infrastructure is contributing to climate resilience by reducing urban flood risks as the park is serving as a rainwater detention basin.

Yet globally, at COP28, the historic Global Stocktake Decision showed that there is not being done enough yet with respect to reaching the Paris Agreement goals.

Also at COP28, cities and other subnational actors played a larger role than ever before: The first "Local Climate Action Summit" with more than 500 mayors took place, discussing the role of cities in climate action. This is where the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-level Partnerships (CHAMP) initiative was launched: An initiative that commits countries to incorporate robust urban climate actions in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as enhance cooperation between local and national governments on planning, financing and implementation. Germany is one of the countries that has endorsed CHAMP.

The German government has (also) been promoting climate action and biodiversity conservation in the Global South since 2008 through the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

In the Asia-Pacific region, the IKI alone currently finances more than 15 urban development projects with a total budget of more than 150 million EUR.

In this context, we support partner countries and cities in developing strategies for sustainable, climate-friendly and resilient urban development and urban biodiversity.

In the Asia-Pacific region, for example, the IKI funded "Urban-Act" project supports a transformation towards low-carbon and resilient urban development. At the local level, the project supports 14 pilot cities to integrate climate change into urban plans and budgets. Cities are enabled to identify targeted measures for GHG emission reduction and resilience in urban mobility, urban environment, circular economy and leverage finance for the preparation and implementation of urban climate actions.

In the area of adaptation to climate change, the focus is on strengthening urban resilience. The aim is to better prepare cities and disadvantaged neighbourhoods for the challenges of climate change and to reduce risks to people, the environment and livelihoods e.g. through nature-based solutions (NbS).

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In conclusion, Germany recognizes ESCAPs indispensable contribution to sustainability in the Asia-Pacific. We are grateful for ESCAPs remarkable work that is already being done in, for and with cities of this region in these challenging times.

Germany is a strong partner to support sustainable and resilient urban development in ESCAP member states: In total, we are currently supporting over 40 projects with a volume of more than 350 million Euros – ranging from health and social inclusion to climate resilience and sustainable transport solutions.

I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to our country booth located on Level 1, presented by the GIZ to learn more about our projects in Thailand and the region as well as a dedicated side event on Sustainable Buildings on Wednesday, jointly organized with our colleagues from the French Embassy.

We will continue to support the Asia-Pacific region and ESCAP in its mission towards a more sustainable development.

Thank you