Hong Kong, China's Statement for
81st Session of the United Nations
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Agenda item 2(a) General Debate on Current and Emerging Policy Issues for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

Your Excellency the Chairperson, Executive Secretary and Distinguished Delegates,

Hong Kong, China has all along been a strong advocate of inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. We actively participate in regional and global efforts to accelerate progress towards full implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of our many initiatives in this regard.

First, Hong Kong, China fully recognises the importance of **digital transformation** in driving high-quality economic and social development. And in pursuing the digital transformation, we are always mindful and always ensure that any policies and initiatives that we take would promote **inclusiveness** and **inclusive growth,** rather than any creating any digital divide.

For example, in July 2024, Hong Kong, China set up a new **Digital Policy Office** to spearhead data-driven, people-centric, and outcome-based digital strategies. The Office has launched several initiatives to strengthen cybersecurity awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to enhance their digital capabilities.

To promote **digital trade**, we launched an **E-commerce Development Task Force** in early 2024 and rolled out the "**E-commerce Easy**" funding scheme, offering up to **US$120,000** to help SMEs tap into online markets and scale up.

We are also investing heavily in **artificial intelligence** and **new industrialisation**. Through targeted funding, we are supporting

manufacturers, including SMEs, to adopt smart production and fostering strategic industries including AI and robotics. Our **US$1.3 billion Innovation and Technology Industry-Oriented Fund** helps channel market capital into sectors such as AI and robotics.

Second, in advancing the energy transition and reducing climate change, Hong Kong, China is leveraging its strengths as an international financial centre to mobilise green finance. We are committed to bridging the funding gap for green infrastructure and technology through capital market solutions. Over the past three years, we have issued green debt amounting to an annual average of US$63 million to fund climate-resilient projects.

Beyond financing, we also contribute to **global green standards setting** and are building a **voluntary carbon credit market** via the Hong Kong Stock Exchange to support net-zero ambitions.

Third, on investing in people, Hong Kong, China firmly believes that **education and talent development** are critical to long-term sustainability. We continue to invest heavily in attracting, nurturing, and retaining talent.

Hong Kong is a **global hub for post-secondary education**, with five universities ranked among the world's top 100. Our investment in people have extended beyond Hong Kong. Through our **"Study in Hong Kong"** initiative, Hong Kong China has been attracting overseas students from all over the world and offering scholarships to overseas students, in particular those from ASEAN and Belt and Road countries, to study in Hong Kong.

Apart from talent development, Hong Kong, China also fully recognises the **important role of women in our economy's continued success**. With equal opportunities in education and employment, women in Hong Kong are working in various professions and taking up a variety of leadership roles in their own industries. In 2023, Hong Kong, China set up a **Women Empowerment Fund** to support projects

that help women of all backgrounds unlock their potential and advance professionally.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the face of the political, social and environmental challenges ahead of us, the promotion of inclusiveness and sustainability is more important than ever. Hong Kong, China will continue to contribute actively to regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, and to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. We look forward to regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific to jointly address the challenges. Thank you.