STATEMENT TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
28-31 March 2022

AGENDA ITEM 2: Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As we begin this year’s Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, we have entered the second year of the worst biological shock of the century, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even as cities and countries around the world slowly begin reopening, we are still grappling with the tremendous fallout from this once in a generation challenge.

As outlined in IOM’s inputs to the High-level Political Forum, the pandemic has reversed hard-won development gains and altered human mobility dynamics around the world.

Disruptions to travel and mobility from border restrictions and increased displacement are just two examples of these impacts.

As countries across the Asia-Pacific region respond to the pandemic, they have continued to face the immense challenge posed by the climate emergency.

They have had to contend with the regular sequence of natural hazards we know so well in this region, made more severe by the impacts of climate change.

In East Asia and the Pacific, over 12 million people were newly displaced by these hazards in 2020. In South Asia, over 9 million were newly displaced.

All this against the backdrop of stalled, and in some cases reversing progress against the climate-related Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 14 on life below water.

To respond to the twin challenges of recovering from the pandemic and addressing the climate emergency, governments must take strong, decisive action to implement their global commitments.

This means doing more to strengthen the positive impact of human mobility on societies and on sustainable development.

It requires proactively and coherently integrating migration into national development strategies and frameworks, including Voluntary National Reviews under the HLPF, or National Adaptation Plans under the UNFCCC.
IOM has proposed 11 priority actions to the HLPF that can help governments leverage migration in accelerating COVID-19 recovery and sustainable development through an integrated approach.

With the SDGs on life on land and life below water a focus this year, we call on governments to integrate the migration and climate change nexus in policies and frameworks at all levels, drawing linkages across global processes including the International Migration Review Forum (17-20 May 2022) and COP 27.

The recommendations outlined in IOM’s submission to the HLPF can serve as entry points for this.

Thank you.