Mr. Moderator,

Distinguished representatives,
ladies and gentlemen,

At the very outset, and on behalf of my government, I would like to extend my cordial gratitude to the host country and the organizers of this important conference as well as the distinguished panelists who would kindly moderate this afternoon’s session.

Excellencies,

Inequality and social exclusion have received global attention in the post-2015 development agenda. And we all know despite significant progress in poverty reduction in many parts of the world, social and economic inequalities still persist and people in vulnerable situations continue to confront barriers that prevent them from fully participating in economic, social and political life.

Given the limitation of time, I would like to briefly share with you what the Islamic Republic of Iran has so far done in this context.

Iran has been actively involved in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action and has reevaluated its aid plan over
time. On a national level, Iran's National Document of Older People (NDOP) was approved in 2019, consisting of six major goals and related strategies and policies. The first draft of the national bill of rights for older people has been prepared, and the first national survey on older people is underway to provide evidence related to their quality of life.

At the community level, Iran has a network of community peer groups called the Fazanegan Foundation, with over 120 groups nationwide. The Age-Friendly Cities program has been piloted in major cities, and several cities have started making their cities more age-friendly. Additionally, the Community Driven Development approach program has been initiated in a few cities to empower older people at the community level.

However, Iran faces major obstacles such as unilateral coercive measures taken against it, illegal sudden immigration of Afghans, and dealing with the fallout from the Covid pandemic. Despite these challenges, Iran is committed to striving forward and embracing collaborations with countries in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure meaningful and fruitful lives for older citizens everywhere.

Regarding the enrollment of refugees and undocumented Afghan children, UNHCR reports that more than 500,000 children are enrolled in primary and secondary schools. It is estimated that three out of four registered and undocumented Afghan children are in school.
Dear Colleagues,

The Welfare Department is responsible for identifying and providing support to children with special needs, including vocational training, therapy, and residential facilities. The Special Education Directorate under the Ministry of Education also serves disabled children.

The State Welfare Organization focuses on prevention, rehabilitation, and empowerment of disabled individuals. The Health and Education Departments assess students physically and mentally, providing psychological assessments and directing them to appropriate educational programs.

School psychologists and counselors offer parent training. After graduation, students with intellectual disabilities receive support from the Behzisti Organization.

Iran has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has laws and regulations in place to ensure inclusive education for students with special needs. The Ministry of Education is working on policies and plans to improve the education and well-being of these students.

Thank you