Your Excellency Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UN ESCAP, Honorable Chair of the Forum, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, we would like to convey our appreciation to the UN ESCAP Secretariat for arranging this important meeting amidst the difficult circumstances we are all currently facing. We wish to express solidarity with all member states as we battle the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, extend our condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and wish everyone speedy and full recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another challenge towards the realization of Agenda 2030 in the Asia Pacific region, and in the world. While the measures imposed to curb the spread of the virus are completely necessary, we cannot deny that its unforeseen effects on public health systems and poverty are grave.

For Indonesia, we have projected that the pandemic crisis will slow economic growth to 2.3% in 2020, deviating from consistent growth of 5% per annum over the last decade. This will undoubtedly undermine progress on SDGs that we have achieved thus far.

We realize that vulnerable segments in our population can easily slip back into poverty. Therefore, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia has set aside US$25 billion to support health care measures to address and contain the pandemic, as well as for social safety net programs and economic incentives to maintain consumer purchasing power and stimulate economic recovery. We are also focused on preventing disruption in production and maintain steady flow of goods distribution, especially basic food supplies and health equipment.

We have recently raised US$4.3 billion through the issuance of ‘Pandemic Bonds” to further strengthen our social protection and stimulus efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The pandemic underscores the urgency of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, as an opportunity for reflection and recalibration of our efforts. the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must continue to be the guiding framework of development. In particular, the principle of “leave no one behind” while addressing health, social, and economic issues during and throughout the recovery from the pandemic.
Indonesia commends UN ESCAP’s work and would like to encourage member states to look into leveraging the six critical entry points to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

In this regard, we feel the following policy recommendations are key to the prospects of SDGs in the region:

➔ Leverage efforts in the six critical entry points to accelerate the SDGs, and focus on the interlinkages between the Goals to take advantage of co-benefits
➔ Increase the scope and coverage of social safety net in response to the COVID-19 crisis and other future crises
➔ Investment in an inclusive education system, universal health care, and human capital
➔ Effective and robust fiscal policy
➔ Strengthen and maintain political will for sustainable development

We urge all stakeholders in the region to scale up these efforts, and continue to support each other through exchange of best practices, knowledge and development cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addressing the Coronavirus epidemic, we strongly underline the urgent need to build international cooperation and encourage multi-stakeholder involvement to produce practical and implementable policies that first and foremost seeks to protect the health of the people while concurrently minimizing the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the short-term, the goal should be to “flatten the curve” of the spread of the pandemic quickly as possible, and to minimise the impact of the crisis to economic and social development, while keeping the long term goal of achieving the SDGs firmly in mind.

Therefore, it is crucial that UNESCAP continue to play their role in advancing regional dialogue and member states do not waver in their commitment to SDGs and identify opportunities to effectively recover and return to path of accelerated implementation of Agenda 2030.

Thank you.

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