Her Excellency Madam Chair/the Moderator and the panelists

All distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am Shyamalie Karunaratne representing the NSO of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is faced with actively striving for recovery from the economic crisis against the backdrop of increasing inequalities. Women, youth, and individuals with disabilities are facing compounded challenges that hinder their access to opportunities and resources. However, tapping into their potential is essential for Sri Lanka’s recovery and development. This requires comprehensive and inclusive solutions which are grounded on accurate and timely data.

Data is essential to monitor the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific.

The Ministerial Declaration endorsed the Programme of Action has identified 11 priorities that the region should focus on and “Data and Statistics” is one of them.

In the Report of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, several policy directions have been identified under this priority area to strengthen the National Statistical System at all levels to produce reliable, disaggregated and internationally comparable statistics on Population, Social and economic development in a timely manner to help monitor subnational, national, regional and international development. Most importantly Sir Lanka recognizes that ending inequalities must start from knowing where inequalities lie. Only disaggregated data can provide this information.

Sri Lanka’s Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), in collaboration with the United Nations, has taken a momentous step to modernize its legal framework, recognizing that the existing legal framework, established in 1956, is no longer sufficient to address contemporary challenges. Through this collaborative journey, involving stakeholders from various sectors, Sri Lanka will lay the
foundation for a statistical framework that will serve as a pillar for sustainable development and evidence-based governance.

This will ensure the optimal utilization of valuable information within administrative records, resulting in enhanced and more comprehensive official statistics. Recognizing the importance of diversifying data sources, the legislation promotes the integration of both traditional and emerging data types, enriching the scope and depth of statistical insights. This inclusive approach to data utilization is imperative for comprehending the intricate dimensions of economic, social, and environmental phenomena in Sri Lanka.

This achievement will be a pledge to a future where data is not merely a resource but also a guiding light, leading the nation toward informed decision-making and for policy formulation to reach the most vulnerable people and ending inequalities in our rapidly evolving world.

Thank you.