Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates.

Malaysia has demonstrated commendable resilience in its recovery efforts, making steady progress in overcoming various challenges, notably the global pandemic. These challenges encompass not only the public health crisis but also deeply ingrained socioeconomic inequalities, including gender disparities, poverty, ongoing digital divide and limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

2. As reported in the regional report of implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Programme of Action in Asia and the Pacific, we remain concerned that people in vulnerable situations, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons face specific challenges and barriers when it comes to accessing public services. Many of them have encountered varying levels of discrimination due to their
unique needs and circumstances. It is imperative to address the persistent socioeconomic inequalities they face and to strengthen the rights of these vulnerable groups.

3. In alignment with the MADANI Policy Framework for Action, Malaysia has taken a progressive approach by giving priority to the improvement of social protection and the identification of service delivery methods. To accomplish this, the Government has reactivated the Malaysia Social Protection Council (MySPC) with the aim of strengthening the national social protection system. Our objective is to enhance the social safety net, aligning it with our national development priorities while adhering to the principle of 'Leaving No One Behind.' The Government is undertaking a research to develop an instrument to assess the well-being of social assistance recipients.

4. Notably, there has been a significant 14.05 per cent increase in the number of women with disabilities benefiting from disability-specific social assistance schemes between 2020 and 2022. This underscores our commitment to ensuring that social assistance reaches those who need it most, particularly women with disabilities.

5. The Government firmly believes that addressing social inequalities and exclusion depends on recognising and addressing the intersecting factors of age, gender and disability. In charting our path forward to accelerate the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government of Malaysia will continue its endeavor to promote implementation of gender-sensitive, rights-based approaches towards population and development issues.
6. Key priorities include improving the national data collection and fostering regional cooperation to harmonize the collection and analysis of population and development data for evidence-based policymaking. Additionally, we will continue to develop tailored social protection programmes, focusing on vulnerable populations, especially those living in rural, remote, and indigenous areas to facilitate their access essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

Chair,

7. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to accelerate its implementation actions towards achieving the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This commitment involves leveling the playing field to ensure that all citizens, especially those people living in vulnerable situations and their representative organisations can participate meaningfully and voice their needs.

I thank you.