Opening Remarks
at the Sixth South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum
“Accelerating the Recovery from COVID-19 while Advancing the full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
7 November 2022 at 09.00-09.30 hrs.
(7 minutes)

Madam Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to be here today as we discuss how to accelerate recovery from COVID-19 while also advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We, countries of South-East Asia, have encountered many challenges, but also have many success stories to tell in our Post-COVID-19 recovery efforts. This forum, therefore, provides a great opportunity for us to share experiences and best practices, and identify approaches and pathways that can help accelerate our efforts to achieve the SDGs in these challenging times.

COVID-19 has impacted peoples and communities around the world, creating even more inequalities and disparities among us. Therefore, countries must ensure that recovery efforts are inclusive and leave no one behind. All SDGs must be implemented in a holistic manner to ensure sustainable development.

Sustainability has long been part of the Thai culture. It has a special resonance owing to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy or SEP, introduced by His Late Majesty King Rama IX the Great, which advocates moderation in all aspects, be they the economy, environment or social. The SEP helps build resilience for people and communities. It is Thailand’s pathway towards sustainable development, and we have been sharing the SEP with partners, both within the South-East Asian region and beyond.

The Sufficiency Philosophy Economy serves as the foundation for the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model, Thailand’s national agenda for post-COVID-19 recovery. The BCG model advocates economic growth, while also preserving natural resources and the environment, which leads to more balanced and sustainable development.
Thailand hopes to share the BCG Economy Model with all. We have done so within ASEAN, and are now doing so in APEC, which Thailand is currently hosting under the theme “Open. Connect. Balance.” We aim to promote trade and investment that is open to all opportunities, to reconnect the region in all dimensions, and to drive APEC towards balanced, inclusive and sustainable post-COVID-19 growth through BCG Economy Model.

For this reason, we have introduced the “Bangkok Goals on BCG Economy” as a key deliverable for adoption by APEC Leaders later this month. The draft document which is still under discussion focuses on a range of potential issues such as energy, food and agriculture, trade and investments, building on APEC’s strengths and existing framework. Thailand hopes that the Bangkok Goals will become a guide for APEC-wide work on sustainability.

_**Distinguished Delegates,**_

**Partnership is key** in driving forward the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. **Thailand was proud to co-host the 11th Global South-South Development Expo** with ESCAP and UNOSSC in September this year. The event provided a global platform for countries and stakeholders to share expertise and innovative development solutions, with a particular focus on the role of South-South and multi-party cooperation, which is indispensable for sustainable development.

Back home, Thailand is actively pursuing SDG localisation. SDGs are being integrated into the provincial and regional development plans. SDG indicators are also being developed by some localities which we hope will better fit their local contexts. Stakeholders, be they Government agencies, academic institutions, civil society or the United Nations Country Team are working together to drive forward sustainable development in different localities and affiliates.

Last week, the **Global Compact Network Thailand** comprising over 100 business entities organised its annual forum under the theme “Accelerating Business Solutions to tackle climate and biodiversity challenges”. In addition to their earlier net-zero emissions and funding for SDGs targets, this year the GCNT pledged to manage their businesses in a sustainable and just manner throughout their supply chain, to help the country achieve its goal of protecting at least 30 per cent of land and marine areas by 2030.
Distinguished Delegates,

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are shared global goals. They cannot be achieved by one country alone. We need to work together to ensure that we achieve these goals without leaving any country or anyone behind.

Thailand welcomes and looks forward to taking part constructively at the SDG Summit next year. The Summit will provide a great opportunity for countries to assess their recovery efforts and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at this critical mid-term point. We believe that, given the multitude of complex global challenges, accelerated and transformative actions on the SDGs will require stronger partnerships. SDGs are very much about investment. Financing for development, finding more innovative means of doing so and getting more sectors involved should be at the top of our agenda.

The task is hard, but we should remain optimistic.

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to ESCAP for its continuous hard work in promoting cooperation and enhancing partnerships at sub-regional, regional and global levels. Thailand has and will continue to work with ESCAP and all partners in this regard.

In concluding, I hope that this year’s South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum will result in constructive and innovative ideas that can be taken up for further discussion at next year’s APFSD and the HLPF, and bring us a step closer to attaining the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.

(857 words)