Agenda Item 3: Thematic discussion on achievements, challenges, gaps and emerging issues in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific

Roundtable C: Inequalities and social exclusion, and rights

As delivered by Undersecretary Adonis P. Sulit, Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Plans, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippines

Thank you to the panelists for the substantive discussion this afternoon.

In Philippine experience, we acknowledge that social inequalities and exclusion lead to a situation where access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities becomes challenging, and ultimately hinder the promise of a more inclusive society. Admittedly, there is much to do to protect the rights of the poor, the marginalized and the disadvantaged, especially in remote or geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

Towards this end, the Philippine government is ramping up efforts to implement policies that promote inclusive economic growth, ensuring equitable access to resources, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship. Let me cite a few:

1. Our conditional cash transfer program to around 4.4M economically disadvantaged families promotes education, health and nutrition of the household members.
2. The monthly social pension for indigent older persons had been helpful to address some needs of the beneficiaries.
3. The Barangay Health Workers Program has been effective in bringing basic social services, health services to underserved communities, addressing immediate healthcare needs at the grassroots level.
4. The Magna Carta of Women promotes gender-responsive governance and development, observance of gender equality in the workplace, addressing gender-based violence, and empowering women economically.
5. Programs adopting community-driven development foster economic resilience to marginalized communities and indigenous peoples.
6. We have recently adopted the social protection floor, and this is a large part of the Philippine Social Protection Plan 2023-2028 and the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

By these targeted strategies and building on lessons learned, we are optimistic that it can contribute to dismantling the structural causes of inequalities and social exclusion. The Philippine government, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development and other social protection agencies, remains committed to implement development programs, laying the foundation for a society where every individual is afforded equal opportunities, rights are protected, and no one is left on the margins of progress.

Thank you.