Seventh Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Forum (APFSD7)

National Statement of Pakistan

Madam Chair,

As the Executive Secretary has informed, five years down the road, progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals has remained unsteady. While progress has been made on some goals, we are lagging behind or regressing on others. Our region has limited success in reducing inequalities, promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth, and building strong institutions. Fruits of rapid economic growth have not been equitably shared. Structural barriers are impeding inclusive and equitable development.

Year 2020 marked the commencement of the Decade of Action. Hopes were high for concerted collaboration for taking tangible actions towards achievement of SDGs. However, it has met a wobbly start. COVID-19 pandemic has rattled the entire world – impacting public health, disrupting economic activities and causing socio-economic setbacks. It is clear that the impact of COVID-19 crisis will be most severe on the developing countries. It has threatened to reverse the hard-won progress on the SDGs. Precious resources have been diverted to mitigate and defeat the Pandemic, which has further squeezed the fiscal space hampering the progress towards achievement of the SDGs.

Madam Chair,

We are facing complex and multifaceted challenges which would require multi-pronged solutions. Regional cooperation remains the key to implement the 2030 development agenda in an inclusive and sustainable manner in the Asia-Pacific region.

In this milieu, business-as-usual is not and should not be the way forward.

Pakistan has mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda into our national development policies and action plans. The priorities of our Government are fully aligned with the objectives and aspirations of the 2030 Development Agenda in all of its three dimensions. Fostering social and financial inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for the marginalized and disempowered, provision of educational opportunities, and access to livelihood and social safety nets are some of the top priority areas of the Pakistan government.
Through laws, policies and strategies, concerted efforts are being made at national and provincial levels to address gender inequality and foster women economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.

A Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Division has been established for aligning and integrating various poverty alleviation and social protection initiatives. The Government has also launched a targeted national poverty alleviation program – Ehsaas (Compassion) to expand social protection, safety nets and support human capital development throughout the country. This programme complements and expands the on-going robust social protection program for poor women.

In particular, youth employment remains high on the agenda. On 28 April 2020, the Prime Minister approved “Green Stimulus” Package as part of 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Project in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic with focus on creating more jobs and promoting community engagement among youth and women in Pakistan.

Madam Chair,

Pakistan fully supports a regional response to the global Decade of Action. Efforts should be geared to achieve transformative change required to advance the SDGs, with special emphasis on mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing to close the financing gap for the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Thank you.