The Chairman, your excellency

Thank you for the opportunity to speak

- Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates
- All protocols observed

- It is an honour to address this gathering of the seventh Asia Pacific Population Conference. I convey warm Pacific greetings from the government and people of Solomon Islands.
- At the outset, I convey sincere gratitude to the government and people of Thailand for hosting us and for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation.

The leadership of the UN ESCAP and UNFPA must also be commended for their effective collaboration to bring all partners and stakeholders together here in Bangkok to review progress and identify ways for the further and effective
implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on population and development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Excellences and distinguished delegates,

- This seventh Asia Pacific Population Conference takes place at a pivotal moment. As we reach midway through the timeframe that we have set ourselves for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals’, it is indeed useful to review progress made towards the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

- This conference also accords us the opportunity to recalibrate key actions and impactful ways to accelerate progress to address the pressing population and development needs that our people face.

Mr. Chairman,

- Today we live in a world of increasing multidimensional crisis and vulnerabilities intersecting population and development. Asia and the Pacific is home to 60% of the world’s population. What happens here and how we, that make up the 60% of the world’s population deal with the complex and dynamic issues of our population and the nexus with our development is critically important.

- Being small, diverse and vulnerable to climate change and disasters doesn’t stop our ambitions to bring about better changes to the livelihood of our people. As a large ocean state, geographically spread over a vast ocean, with diverse people, culture and languages, Solomon Islands faces challenges unique to our setting.
Despite the inherent and systemic challenges that we face as a Small Islands Developing State and a Least Developing Country, Solomon Islands remains committed to the vision and the goals of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the priorities of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Solomon Islands has made significant progress in terms of its policy environment and the need to have clear relevant policies and legislations in place across all sectors. The Solomon Islands 20-year road map, the National Development Strategy 2016-2035 holds the aspirations of the Solomon island’s government and a vision for the development of our people. The development of the first Solomon Islands National Population Policy 2016-2027 is another milestone achievement.

In education and health including sexual reproductive health rights, the Solomon Islands government ensures all Solomon Islanders have equal access to quality health care and education. There were significant improvements in education in terms of literacy rates and primary school enrolment. Mortality rate among women and girls have significantly reduced along with Child Mortality due to improvements in access to antenatal care and family planning health services.

The government however achieved some progress but at a slower pace in terms of gender equality and women empowerment, young people empowerment and children and disability rights. The government of Solomon Islands is fully devoted to ending issues affecting our marginalized population that prevents them from fully enjoying their human rights to participate and access equal opportunities and development outcomes.

On the other hand the government of Solomon Islands is still experiencing mixed progresses in the following areas:
- poverty eradication and employment generation as 75% of our population is still living under poverty line.
-sustainable development as much of the Solomon Islands economy still lies heavily on natural resources,
-increasing rural-urban migration due to lack of decentralized services and developments to the scattered islands,
-timely data and statistics to support planning, budgeting and decision making.

- Moving into the future, the government of Solomon Islands recognizes the need to:
  -ensure stakeholder support to implementation objective 1 and 2 of the National Development Strategy: sustained and inclusive economic growth and poverty alleviation across the whole of Solomon islands through community led interventions and behavioral change investments.

  -address outstanding issues that causes a risk to the population and development specifically the issue of high prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases and shorter life expectancies and implications on development and investments.

  -The government of Solomon Islands wishes to see a regeneration of our population and building population resilience at all levels.

- The government is keen to see acceleration of policy implementation through the right interventions with behavioral change investments in every sectors, including having increased access to financing for development. Strengthening statistical systems and capacity is also critical as data and statistics play a crucial role in informing policy and decisions in support the resilient development of our population.

Chairman, Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,

on behalf of the government and people of Solomon Islands, thank you all.