Briefing on the Sixth Session of the Committee on Environment and Development

Agenda item 4 (f) Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Committee on Environment and Development

Talking points for Ms. Suchitra Durai, Chair of Session

Thank you Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- It has been an honour for me to serve as Chair of the sixth session of the Committee on Environment and Development, which was held in hybrid mode on 09-10 December 2020. I am pleased to mention that Mr. Dicky Komar (Indonesia) and Mr. Oleg Shamanov (Russian Federation) served as Vice-Chairs.

- The Committee reviewed the environmental challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, including through regional cooperation.

- Let me express appreciation to the secretariat for its analysis on the thematic priorities deliberated during the session, namely:
  
  i. Raising climate ambition
  ii. Safeguarding ecosystem health
  iii. Clean air for all
  iv. Cities for a sustainable future

- The Committee noted the relationships between environment and development and especially between environmental health and human health. The importance of safeguarding environmental health to prevent zoonoses was highlighted.

- The Committee acknowledged the impacts of climate change and the critical need to raise climate ambitions, and welcomed carbon neutrality targets from several nations. It discussed policies such as decarbonization of sectors, renewable energy, emission trading and carbon pricing, and mainstreaming adaptation measures.

- Recognizing that the region had failed to meet any of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Committee discussed the importance of safeguarding ecosystems health to avoid the risk of zoonotic diseases. The Committee also noted the opportunity to accelerate the
application of ocean science in the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and to address issues of plastic pollution, including through circular economy approaches.

- The Committee highlighted the role of urban centres and local actions to support resilient recoveries. Information was shared with the Committee on smart city developments, integrating climate resilience in urban planning and policy solutions to address high levels of air pollution. The International Day of Clean Air for blue skies was highlighted as a new regional advocacy platform.

- The Committee decided to establish a Technical Expert Group to enhance regional exchange and mobilize expertise to accelerate environmental and sustainable development action. I am hopeful that the Expert Group can help the subprogramme to continue building on the outcomes of the 7th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development.

- I look forward to the endorsement of the recommendations and decisions of the 6th Committee on Environment and Development by the 77th session of the Commission. As Chair, I would like to once again thank all the distinguished delegates who contributed to the robust discussions during the session.

- Thank you.