(Translation)

Statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu
At the General Debate of the 81st Session of ESCAP

Bangkok, April 21, 2025

Madam Chair,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to extend congratulations on the convening of the 81st session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and thank the Thai government and the ESCAP secretariat for the thoughtful arrangements.

As we speak, global transformation not seen in a century is unfolding in profound ways. Unilateralism and hegemonic bullying are intensifying, seriously disrupting international rules and dealing a blow to world economic stability and recovery. The world has once again come to a critical crossroads. The more turbulent the times, the greater the need for solidarity. As the most influential regional economic and social development organization of the U.N., ESCAP should remain at the forefront and encourage all sides to stand united and work together to shoulder the responsibilities of our times and build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future. I would like to propose the following:

First, we should firmly uphold multilateralism. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the U.N. Eighty years of trials and tribulations fully show that the future of humanity is closely interconnected and multilateral cooperation is the right way to address global challenges. We should firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, the U.N.-centered international system and the international order based on international law, and support U.N. regional economic commissions

represented by ESCAP in playing an important role. All countries must be equals in terms of rights, rules and opportunities, so that we can work in solidarity to meet the various challenges facing Asia-Pacific development.

Second, we should resolutely advance openness and cooperation. Protectionism will lead nowhere. Openness and cooperation is the right way to go. We should stay committed to the right direction of economic globalization, and safeguard the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. With a great vision of building the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), we should advance regional economic integration and connectivity, implement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) with high quality, enhance industrial and supply chain cooperation, and promote integrated development among Asia-Pacific countries. China stands ready to synergize high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with the work of ESCAP, to advance regional economic integration and achieve higher-standard opening up.

Third, we should foster new drivers of innovation-driven development. The new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is progressing rapidly, and the Asia-Pacific is leading the world in areas such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence and big data. China has put forward the Global AI Governance Initiative, the Global Initiative on Data Security, and the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative. China stands ready to work with all sides to seize opportunities, foster an enabling environment for innovation, accelerate the development of new quality productive forces, and harness scientific and technological innovation to better drive economic and social progress. China hopes that ESCAP will fully leverage its strengths as a policy platform and think tank, strengthen information sharing, capacity building and policy coordination, and assist all its members in enhancing innovation-driven development capacity and fully unleashing growth potential.

Fourth, we should promote inclusive and sustainable development.

The global development divide is widening; climate challenges are becoming graver, while the implementation of the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is seriously lagging behind. We should uphold the vision of universally beneficial and inclusive development, make the pie of economic growth bigger and share it equitably, and ensure that development gains are delivered to different countries, social strata and communities. With a stronger sense of urgency, we need to expedite the implementation of the Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, and take more effective actions to address regional sustainable development challenges. The Global Development Initiative is an accelerator of global sustainable development. China is ready to build greater synergy between this Initiative and the work of ESCAP, to provide more impetus for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the development of the Asia-Pacific.

The theme of this year's session is "Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific." Over the past decades, China has gone through the world's largest-scale and fastest urbanization process. The urbanization rate has risen from 11 percent in1949 to 67 percent in2024. Following the vision of "people's cities built by the people and for the people," China has steadily improved urban construction, operation and governance, with a view to creating livable, resilient and smart cities. Urban residents in China now enjoy a per capita housing floor area of over 40 square meters, a per capita park and green space of nearly 16 square meters, and total urban rail transport line exceeding 10,000 kilometers. These are notable achievements in China's people-centered new urbanization. China hopes to make good use of this session to strengthen exchanges on urban development vision and enhance practical cooperation with all sides, and take cities as a vehicle in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Madam Chair,

Recently, the U.S. administration has imposed "reciprocal tariffs" on countries across the world, sparking strong disapproval of the

international community. The United States uses tariff as a weapon to exert maximum pressure and pursue its own selfish gains. This is a typical move of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying. It severely infringes upon the legitimate rights and interests of all countries, severely violates WTO rules, severely undermines the multilateral trading system and severely disrupts the global economic order. All Asia-Pacific countries are victims.

Tariffs hikes violate basic economic laws and market principles, and will do harm to others and ruin oneself. There are no winners in tariff wars and trade wars. China has taken resolute countermeasures both to defend its own legitimate rights and interests and more importantly, to safeguard international fairness and justice, safeguard the free trade regime of the world, and safeguard the normal global economic order. Faced with bullying and highhandedness, compromise and concession will lead nowhere; cooperation and collaboration is the only way out.

Madam Chair,

China is a staunch supporter and practitioner of multilateralism. China is firmly committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind, and implementing the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, to provide stability and positive energy for a changing and turbulent world.

China will resolutely advance high-standard opening up. China will further improve its business environment, continue to shorten the negative list on market access for foreign investment, steadily expand institutional opening up covering rules, regulations, management and standards, leverage the strengths of its supersize market, and gradually expand voluntary and unilateral opening up. In doing so, it can handle uncertainty with the certainty of its own development, and remain a growth engine for the world economy.

China is a driver of and contributor to Asia-Pacific cooperation, and will continue to provide financial support through such channels as the

China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme to assist ESCAP in fully playing its role. China is ready to work with all sides to tackle the challenges of our times and create a better future for the Asia-Pacific.

Thank you.