

Statement by INDIA – Day 2 – Mayor’s Panel – Agenda item 3(a)

Honorable Chair, Member State Representatives, IGO, CSO and Major Group representatives, and all other stakeholders,

In addressing this Forum yesterday, India highlighted its strategies and preparedness for the VNR process and how it is placed to fuel the 2030 Agenda in the country. India notes with appreciation the measures taken by Member States in institutionalizing and achieving the SDGs which representatives have shared since yesterday. India also commends the efforts being undertaken by Member States for VNR this year and it remains committed to partnering with Member States and all other stakeholders for the further implementation of the SDGs.

In the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we attach significance to the regional review, follow-up and learning processes in implementation and progress in addition to the VNR engagement process. India recognizes the indispensable role that civil society organizations, major groups and the business sector has to play in the achievement of the Global Goals. India resonates with the emphasis laid this morning by the Hon. Vice-President of ECOSOC Mr. Munir on the necessity of ownership of the SDGs by the masses, and we extend that idea to corporates and businesses as well.

As brought out by the recommendations of the Roundtable on SDG 9 last evening, it is essential for businesses to imbibe sustainability in their DNAs and governments must create conditions for ensuring this result. We have taken into consideration and are in line with the Note by the Secretariat on Leveraging trade as a means of implementation in the new global environment (document no. E/ESCAP/FSD(4)/INF/6). India recognises the importance of trade as a measure of implementation of the SDGs. Our region could unlock the full potential of attracting international investment and business if it prepares adequately and is able to prove its commitment and alignment to sustainability, with special emphasis on corporate sustainability and responsibility. For that, governments must also map their trade policies with the SDGs, as guided by the page 6 of the Note of the Secretariat, and also move towards preferring sustainably produced commodities in public procurement.

In the area of furthering the trade & SDG linkage, we commend the work which is being undertaken in this area by the UN Forum on Sustainability

Standards, UNCTAD, UNIDO, WTO and other donor agencies for promoting mechanisms, research grants and international cooperation for ironing out issues relating to sustainability standards and helping producers revamp capacities for sustainable production. We observe these to have a positive impact on trade, exports, and integration of firms with Global Value Chains, while at the same time driving the sustainability agenda in the production and manufacturing sector. India further notes with concentration the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the achievement of the SDGs. In India, our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given a clarion call for implementing Zero Defect Zero Effect in manufacturing and in MSMEs; in line with that, our autonomous national accreditation body, Quality Council of India, from which I belong, is driving the ZED Certification Scheme with support from the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises of the Govt. of India. The scheme is an extensive drive of the Govt. of India to enhance global competitiveness of the MSMEs by providing them financial support in assessment rating and handholding of its manufacturing processes on quality & environment parameters.

We have also initiated a National Platform on Private Sustainability Standards for addressing key issues in the area of sustainability standards and to help stakeholders in dealing with them. Having said that, we continue to note with concern the potential that private sustainability standards may have in becoming non-tariff technical trade barriers for developing countries, and therefore, it's essential to address the issues of duplication, accountability, traceability, legitimacy and costs in their implementation. India is willing to help Member States in this endeavour of promoting sustainability and through its experience of dealing with sustainability standards.

I congratulate and thank the UN ESCAP for organizing this meeting and the Royal Thai Government for creating an enabling atmosphere and extending hospitality for productive meetings such as this.