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Opening Remarks

10th International Forum for Energy in Sustainable Development

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Your Excellency Mr. Sontirat Sontijirawong, Minister for Energy of Thailand,

**Your Excellency Mr. Bambang Brodjonegoro, Minister of National
Development Planning, Indonesia**

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome you to Bangkok for the 10th International Forum for Energy in Sustainable Development. This is a global event, which has been realized by a partnership between ESCAP, Regional Commissions of the United Nations and the Royal Thai Government.

Countries around the world and in the Asia-Pacific region are united in transitioning to a future based on sustainable energy. The globally adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change have provided us an ambitious framework to keep global warming within within safe limits.

These global targets tell us what our energy systems need to look like in the future – low carbon, renewables-based, and high efficiency with universal access to all. Yet how we navigate a path to this future is less clear.

We know that this will require a radical transition in many areas. How we source and consume energy must change. Transformation across sectors is needed and we need decisions on fuels and technologies to account for the full costs of air pollution and leverage clean energy to bring back blue skies, clean water and healthy cities. To extend renewable energy-based grids, we need deeper regional cooperation and integration.

The year 2030 may seem far, but in the timescale of energy infrastructure, it is just around the corner. In the Asia-Pacific region, we need to realize a four-fold increase in energy investment between now and 2030. This is complex work and timing is tight. Yet, this global shift to low carbon and sustainable energy brings unprecedented opportunities.

First, the energy transition ushers in new infrastructure and technologies.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are reliable, cost-effective and make sense today. The cost curve for technologies like wind, solar and energy storage continues to drop. Both governments and the private sector will play pivotal roles in financing and deploying new clean energy projects.

Second, renewed energy policies and institutional frameworks will lay the foundations for a sustainable energy outlook.

We have just heard from the Honourable Minister of Energy of Thailand on how this country is rethinking its energy future. One driver of SDG7 is Thailand's new strategy Energy 4.0, which is focused on energy security, economic prosperity, and social sustainability, together with smart technologies and innovation.

Third, to enable countries to reposition themselves on energy transition, there is one element that we cannot overlook – regional cooperation.

When faced with the complexities of the advanced technologies, capacities, policies and finance needed to usher in the energy transition, countries cannot go it alone. Working together in the energy transition is critical to achieving the Paris Agreement, as committed by countries at the UN Climate Action Summit last month.

The core purpose of ESCAP is to leverage the power of regional cooperation to create a better future for the people in the Asia-Pacific region. We work in many sectors, but energy holds enormous potential for enhanced regional cooperation to meet our shared goals. Allow me to give you a few examples of regional energy cooperation in which we are currently engaged.

We provide a neutral and open platform for countries, large and small, to work together to address common energy challenges.

Together with our member States, we created the first ministerial level intergovernmental energy conference in Asia-Pacific, the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which is developing a regional agenda for sustainable energy. The Committee on Energy, to be held later this week for its second session, provides a cooperation platform for countries to monitor progress towards SDG7 and progress work on commonly identified challenges.

We are also working with our member States to develop roadmaps for energy connectivity. Using our convening power and technical capacities we are identifying and agreeing upon the steps needed to build interconnected power grids across the region that will allow all countries to tap into more renewable energy, lower energy costs and increase energy security.

Lastly, we are supporting our member States with tools to accelerate progress on SDG7. Our National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning (NEXSTEP), will support the development of national SDG7 roadmaps and enable policymakers to make informed policy decisions to support the achievement of the SDG7 and emission reduction targets.

These are just some of the efforts underway. We are further developing our energy work and welcome your cooperation, support and ideas. We are grateful for the support and cooperation received from all other Regional Commissions and the Royal Thai Government in particular the Ministry of Energy, Thailand to organize this Forum.

I wish you all the best in your debates, deliberations and learnings over the next two days. I hope that you will gain new perspectives, form effective partnerships and develop innovative solutions to the many challenges we are facing.

Thank you for your attention.