Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review

27 – 29 November 2019

Bangkok, Thailand

Papua New Guinea Statement

Salutations:

• Excellencies
• Honorable Ministers
• Distinguished Representatives of United Nations agencies
• Permanent Secretaries and Senior Government officials
• Distinguished guests • Ladies and Gentlemen

• Madam Chair, good afternoon to you and all Honorable Ministers and delegates. It is my honor to deliver this statement on behalf of my Honorable Minister for Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Religion, Honorable Wake GOI and my Secretary, Ms Anna Solomon, Department for Community Development and Religion of Papua New Guinea, in acknowledgment of the efforts of all who have been instrumental in working hard to advance the policy agenda for the empowerment of our women and girls and females with disabilities in our Country.

• With emphasis on our National Consultation under National Goal Number 2- Equality and Participation of all Citizens in the Development process of our Country and benefit of Development, Papua New Guinea being the largest island Country Nation in the Pacific outside Australia, thrives on an economy driven by our vast natural resources. With a population size of close to 8 million people, concentrated in rural areas, and a diversity of over 800 different languages, cultures and ethnicities we continue to face many challenges as a country and a democracy.
- Despite these challenges, Papua New Guinea has progressed in various aspects in the advancement of women that I am proud to share with you all today. I would also like to share our challenges in anticipation that through this continual engagement we can overcome the challenges towards realizing the human rights of our women and girls within the Region.

- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Papua New Guinea at 44 years of Democracy and as a developing country, has come a fair way in the 25 years since Beijing, and as a young nation. Our women and girls continue to be the forefront of the impact of socio economic advancements as we develop.

- Our women face challenges in access to health services due to the demography of our country, are exposed to various forms of violence, and lack full participation in decision making at all levels including political representation. With most of our women being concentrated in the rural areas, there are still pockets of poverty measured through the lack of opportunity that continue to exist. Papua New Guinea also faces a youth bulge with challenges also for girls, particularly in the areas of sexual reproductive health and social protection.

- Despite these challenges, an 80% majority of our women participate greatly in the economy through the informal small to medium enterprise sector. Our priority as a country is to increase the participation of women in the economic sector to drive the empowerment of our women.

- Papua New Guinea has undertaken major legislative reforms to provide a conducive legal and policy environment that empowers and protects our women and girls, however like many of you have reported we still need to institutionalize most of these laws and policies in order for, there to be effective enforcement.

- Outside of legislative and policy agendas, Papua New Guinea over the last five years have been focused on coordination of all stakeholders working on advancing gender equality and participation of women in all spheres Development, to create a synergy in the efforts towards the empowerment and protection of our women and girls and to instill institutionalization.

- Papua New Guinea has strong NGO, Civil Society, Community Groups and Churches networks that collaborate to defend the human rights of our women and girls in areas where there is no road access and difficult terrain. Papua New Guinea will continue to prioritize a coordinated and streamlined approach to advancing women and girls.
• Papua New Guinea also has great assistance from our Development Partners. We acknowledge the continued support of the Australia as our nearest neighbor in the Region amongst others who have been instrumental in resourcing of many initiatives in the advancement and protection of our women and girls.

• In the last five years, our advancements as a Country have been challenged by factors such as our vulnerability to natural disasters now intensified by climate change that threatens our livelihoods, security, the wellbeing and future of our people. Papua New Guinea in signing the Paris Agreement has prioritized mitigation efforts to climate change and disaster preparedness through various global financing opportunities. However, there are challenges that we face in ensuring women and gender is streamlined in these approaches.

• We join our brothers and sisters in the Pacific to call for Global commitment in addressing Climate Change that continues to put our women and girls at risk.

• Nevertheless, Papua New Guinea presses onwards. Prioritizing Data and the collection of statistics as it remains one of our major challenges. There is a gap in systematic reporting and coordination in collation and compilation of data and statistics. We call for technical support in this area.

• In conclusion, your Excellencies, Distinguished guest, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the last 25 years, Papua New Guinea joins the Pacific in making significant progress towards gender equality including gender parity at primary school level and increased numbers of girls and women in secondary and tertiary levels, progressing legislative frameworks, reducing maternal mortality, and strengthening women’s and girls’ leadership.

• Papua New Guinea acknowledges that there is still more to be done to the advancement of women and girls in the Region and shows strong commitment to Generation Equality through its steady progress in establishing its own Human Rights Commission, with the objective of swift actions towards addressing Violence against women, girls and our women with disabilities and keep up with realizing efforts towards SDG 2030.

• Thank you