PHILIPPINE COUNTRY STATEMENT

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Madam Chair, Honorable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon!

The Philippines played a vital role in crafting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. Nearly 25 years since its adoption, the Philippine government remains dedicated in developing and implementing policies and programs to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, consistent with its vision of a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life for all Filipinos.

The Philippines is pleased to participate in this Conference and we would like to share with you our achievements and challenges in the implementation of the BPFA in conjunction with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also put forward some recommendations to accelerate progress towards realizing women’s rights for an equal future.

In the last five years, the Philippines has maintained its global standing in bridging gender inequalities as it developed and implemented policies that created more favorable conditions for the participation of women and girls. It made critical interventions in upholding the rights and dignity of Filipino women through the implementation of policies on sexual and reproductive health services, universal health care, support programs for maternal neonatal child health and nutrition in the first 1000 days, the increase in maternity leave from 60 to 105 days, the expansion of the definition of sexual harassment and its concomitant sanctions through the Safe Spaces Act, and strengthening the meaningful participation of women in managing humanitarian situations in times of conflict and disaster, in adherence with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 on Women Peace and Security. In education, the
Philippines expanded its scholarship program through free college education in state universities and colleges. A conditional cash transfer as well as a social protection program which we call the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino has been strengthened and widened in coverage. To end VAW, particularly among women migrant workers and domestic workers, we enacted the Domestic Workers Rights’ Act and the Handbook for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) Act. We also actively engaged men and the youth in the advocacy campaign and strengthened preventive and support service mechanisms for victims and survivors through inter-agency councils. In the ASEAN region, we have strengthened our cooperation towards gender-responsive governance and offered capacity development on gender mainstreaming for around 300 Senior Officials across the 3 pillars of ASEAN. The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report ranked the Philippines as the 8th most gender-equal country in the world and the only Asian country in the top 10 in 2018.

Despite our efforts, there remain major challenges and we put forward recommendations to accelerate achievement of GEWE in the region:

1. To pursue our vision for inclusive development, we aim to eradicate poverty and uplift the condition of marginalized women especially IPs, migrants, PWDs, and those in rural areas.
2. There is a need to develop a harmonized definition of the informal economy in coming up with appropriate policies, programs and services that will ensure women’s access to decent work, improved wages, and social protection.
3. Identify and remove barriers that constrain women’s and girls’ access to public services (eg. geographic, legal and institutional barriers including rural and remote areas) in order to guarantee their access to these services on a regular basis and during situation of emergencies.
4. Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against all women and girls in public and private spheres. This includes elimination of harmful stereotypes and negative social norms by reviewing schools’ and learning institutions’ curricula at different levels (elementary, secondary and tertiary) textbooks
and other instructional materials to eliminate sexist language and terms to become gender-sensitive. We propose a ministerial conference on education as a venue for sharing experiences and good-to-know gender-responsive practices in the education sector.

5. To achieve gender balance, we must (a) broaden the political participation of women and provide a gender-responsive electoral process that is inclusive, participatory and non-discriminatory; and (b) increase national investments in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through gender-responsive budgeting.

6. Accelerate the implementation of women, peace and security agenda noting the general recommendation 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post Conflict Situations.

7. Adopt and implement gender-responsive strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to and recover from adverse impacts of climate change. There is also a need to promote equal access to essential infrastructure and climate-smart agriculture technology, clean energy, appropriate financing and technology and other relevant interventions that seek to empower women and girls to become resilience.

8. Develop priority indicators for each of the 12 areas of concerns of BPfA to serve as a common framework of implementation for member states.

In closing, the Philippines looks forward to our collective action in furtherance of BPfA implementation and the realization of our 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for gender equality and women empowerment.