Thank you Mr Chair,

First, the Republic of Korea extends its appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat and UNFPA for organizing this important conference today. In 2013, here in Bangkok, the member States adopted the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, and reaffirmed their commitment to the full and effective implementation of it with the rights-based and people-centered approach.

Since then, despite huge progress, many challenges persist and new issues are emerging as the population in the region, is undergoing major transition of rapid aging, urbanization, low fertility, and migration. Given the changing population dynamics, this mid-term review is especially timely.

The Republic of Korea, under our President’s vision for “an inclusive welfare state for the benefit of all” has been trying utmost effort to address population and development challenges.

The most urgent challenges to Korea is rapid aging of its population. Korea is among the fastest aging countries in the world with the lowest fertility and longest life expectancy. Such rapid population aging poses numerous social challenges such as older population’s high poverty rate, ill health, financial hardships, social isolation and inequity.

To address these pressing issues, Korea has introduced a series of 5-year action plans. The 3rd plan for 2016-2022 is currently under implementation. Among others, “community care” policy deserves your attention. By reorganizing and restructuring health and welfare services around older person’s community, it makes them to easily receive welfare benefits and services, while letting them interact neighbors in their community. The government plans to establish infrastructure for community care by 2025 before Korean turns super-aged in early 2026. This flagship policy is a clear example of community-based and people-centered approach as guided by 2013 Declaration.

At the regional level, Korea has been closely cooperating with UNESCAP by contributing to project entitled “Using ICT to promote and enhance accessibility and quality of health and long-term care for older persons.” I am sure that good practices on the use of ICT in Korea will be helpful in finding ways to increase access to healthcare for older persons in rural areas of the region.
Our cooperation with ESCAP leads to the issues of persons with disabilities. Korea has long been leading and supporting activities related to Incheon Strategy for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, in particular, member States’ capacity building to collect quality disability data.

In the area of gender equality, with the understanding that women’s economic empowerment is a key, Republic of Korea has supported the Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) flagship programme to provide comprehensive and integrated ICT and entrepreneurship training programme to women entrepreneurs, government leaders, and policy makers.

In addition, we reaffirm that universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health is fundamental to achieve sustainable development goals as affirmed in the Declaration.

Finally, Madam Chair, I would like to reiterate Republic of Korea’s commitment to the full implementation of the 2013 Declaration and the ICPD and also reaffirm Korea’s close cooperation with and contribution to the ESCAP and its member states in this regard. Thank you.