

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Mary Jo A. Bernardo-Aragon, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to ESCAP at the 72nd Session of ESCAP, Bangkok, 19 May 2016

His Excellency Mr. Qohir Rasolzolda
Her Excellency Dr Shamshad Ahktar
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I congratulate Your Excellency on your election as Chairman of this year's session. I also wish to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the ESCAP Secretariat for the excellent arrangement in ensuring a successful conclusion of our deliberations at this session.

Mr. Chairman,

With the gains achieved in terms of the Millennium Development Goals, we renew our commitment in pursuing the 2030 Agenda or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Following the adoption of the global indicators in March 2016, the Philippines engaged various stakeholders through workshops in finalizing the set of SDG indicators for the country. We are pleased to inform that the Philippine Government is in the process of establishing a body that will be in charge of steering policies and of monitoring progress on SDG implementation performance. With the new administration coming in, these SDG indicators will be mainstreamed into the new Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for the next 6 years.

Given the importance of integrating the three (3) dimensions of sustainable development, namely: (1) economic, (2) social, and (3) environmental, the country will be relentless in its pursuit of achieving the targets set in the SDGs, particularly in the areas of the economy, poverty, gender, climate change, migration, marine conservation, employment, health, education, water and sanitation, and energy, among others.

As one of the most disaster-prone countries, the Philippines will continue to play an active role in tackling the issues of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction management. We shall endeavor to foster greater partnerships with member states in taking urgent action in combating the effects of climate change which result into calamities and disasters. In this regard, we thank the support given to the resolution sponsored by us that would enable the expert group on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific to successfully conclude its work.

We reaffirm the importance we attach to SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources which requires a collective action using a rules-based approach in international law as reflected in UNCLOS.

On health, we recognize the significant role of UN ESCAP and the work of UNAIDS in advancing progress in the region, and in particular in our country towards the achievement of the SDG to end AIDS by 2030.

We are pleased with the inclusion of migration in Agenda 2030 and in particular in SDG 10 which recognizes the important contribution of migrants in the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination. We urge member states to include migration in their national development plans.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased with the country's economic growth in recent years amidst the current global economic situation. In our efforts to sustain our economic growth and for the economic gains to be more inclusive, the country has recognized the vital role of science, technology and innovation as key drivers to implement the SDGs. Hence, we find this year's theme on "Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Sustainable Development" as most appropriate and timely.

The Philippines, through the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), developed an STI Ecosystem founded on *Technology Self-Sufficiency* which has the elements of know-how through human resource development, S&T infrastructure, policies for technology transfer, and programs and projects that respond to national problems.

This has resulted, among others, in

- four-fold increase in S&T scholarships up to doctoral level;
- establishment of innovation centers for food processing in the country side, central facilities for metals and engineering, semiconductor and electronics, aerospace and manufacturing industries as well as technology business incubators and innovation hubs that link the academe and industries;
- policies on data sharing, technology transfer protocols for Research and Development institutions, and favorable royalty and spinoff policies for researchers; and
- use of Light and Detection Ranging, remote sensing, numerical modeling, high performance computing and ICT to generate flood, landslide and storm surge hazard maps that are available online which has resulted in the reduction or zero casualty in the 20 typhoons that hit the country in recent years.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we share the views expressed by other member states that it is important to enhance regional and international cooperation on access to STI and financial resources as well as increased investments, among others, to help developing countries, especially those with special needs, in the Asia Pacific region in their efforts to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030.

Thank you.