Statement at the 75th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific by H.E. Atiqullah Atifmal, Ambassador Extra Ordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Malaysia

Bangkok, May 2019

H.E Mr. Chairman

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as the chair of this important session. Also I would like to thank Madam Executive Secretary and her able team for the excellent arrangements of current session.

Theme of this session “Empowering people and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality” is very important for the future of developed and peaceful Afghanistan.
H.E Mr. Chairman:

Allow me to briefly highlight our major ongoing efforts and achievements in pursuing an integrated approach towards our key development objectives including those related to the theme of this year’s meeting:

First, the Afghan Government has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda outlined under the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) which was presented to the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016. The Government has also developed a number of National Priority Programs (NPPs) which cover important areas such as infrastructure development, agriculture development, rural and urban development, human capital development, private sector development and women’s economic empowerment, all capable of contributing to the goal of achieving a self-reliant economy and closing gaps including in education, employment and income. The government has also developed a domestic production-led growth policy, a National Export Strategy and a National Trade Policy.
Second, the government has made remarkable efforts to mainstream the global development agenda into national development planning which includes the development of Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs) while bringing coherence among the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), National Priority Programs (NPPs) as well as Vienna Program of Action (VPoA) and Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA).

In order to ensure greater synergy and coherence among various global development agendas at a national level, the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) for Least Developed Countries and the Vienna Program of Action (VPoA) for Land-locked Developing Countries have been recently incorporated into the work of the Executive Committee on SDGs which will include the utilization of the Executive Committee as a national mechanism for coordination, monitoring and reporting including data collection and analysis on the two programs of action.

Third, regional economic cooperation remains a key driver of economic development in Afghanistan and the wider region and can significantly contribute to the realization of development objectives as reflected under the global development agendas including with respect to job creation, income generation and poverty reduction. Over the recent years, Asia and the Pacific region has witnessed growing regional economic cooperation efforts. Thanks to such collective efforts, regional economic
cooperation has taken root in various sub-regions, building a solid foundation for benefiting from the enormous economic opportunities that exist across the wider region.

H.E Mr. Chairman:

Afghanistan is making intensive efforts to utilize its central location as a regional land-bridge in support of increased growth in Afghanistan and greater connectivity and trade in the wider region which has resulted in promising progress over the past few years. The Government of Afghanistan has pursued this vision under two major Afghanistan-centered regional cooperation platforms: Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process (HoA-IP). The next ministerial meetings of Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) and Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) will take place in the second half of this year in Istanbul and Tashkent respectively.

As we highlighted under our voluntary report on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), National Priority Programs (NPPs) as well as Afghanistan’s Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs) all
aim at advancing sustainable development including through increasing productivity, creating jobs, increasing access to education and improving the delivery of essential services to people, thus, helping with closing the gaps and ensuring inclusive economic growth and development.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite the challenges related to security and development, the government of Afghanistan is determined to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development agendas. However, continued international assistance, shared responsibility and coordinated efforts including under UNESCAP remain essential in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the wider Asia and Pacific region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.