Empowering People and Ensuring

Inclusiveness and Equality

Statement by Director of the Macao Economic Bureau
Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region

Mr. TAI Kin Ip

Bangkok, Thailand 27 May 2019
Chairperson,
Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, Madame Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of Macao, China, we are delighted to participate in the 75th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. We would like to congratulate Your Excellency on your election as the Chairperson. Also, we would like to thank the ESCAP Secretariat for the excellent preparation for this meeting, and the Thai Government for the warm hospitality extended to all participants.

It has been almost three years since the adoption of the “2030 Agenda” in September 2016. Recognizing that empowerment of people and inclusiveness are necessary approaches to reduce inequality and accelerate progress towards many of the Sustainable Development Goals, we come together this year to share our works and views under the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. In tandem with the rapid economic development which the Macao economy has been experiencing, the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Government also considered that inclusiveness is the means to build a harmonious society and by sharing the fruits of economic growth among all levels of society.

To pursue this objective, policies and measures implemented by the MSAR Government stretch over many areas to accommodate different needs in society. Among these measures are:

**Public Participation in Social Affairs**
Building multiple channels for public participation in social affairs and communication mechanisms are important for achieving sound governance. The MSAR Government attaches great importance to fostering talented young people and professionals to participate in various consultative bodies. For instance, on economic development, consumer rights, cultural industry, youth affairs and public housing.
These committees are composed of a wide variety of representatives from the academia, business sectors, social organisations and government representatives with an objective in assisting policy formulation and bridging communication between the public and private sectors. For instance, the Economic Development Council was reformed in 2007 as an advisory body of the MSAR Government in the formulation of economic strategies. Three different groups are formed under the Committee, and each of them focuses on specific areas, that are responsible for conducting Macao economic policy studies namely, economic diversification policy group, human resources policy group and socio economic development group. Members of the Committee contribute suggestions and views from different prospects that are invaluable in assisting policy formulation.

In addition, to further promote public participation and listen to their voice on public policies, the MSAR Government published the “Normative Guidelines for Public Policy Consultations” in 2011 which required Government departments to provide local people, social organisations, professionals and all stakeholders with a fair environment, ample time and diversified channels to participate in public consultations. To enhance consultation transparency, public can also easily obtain the consultation timetable and all the related information online.

**Women and Children Affairs**

In regard of women and children rights, the MSAR Government established the “Woman’s Affairs Advisory Committee” in 2005 and subsequently as the “Women and Children’s Affairs Committee” in 2016. The Committee is composed of government representatives, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and prominent social representatives. In 2018, the Committee proposed to implement the “Macao Women Development Goal”, which is a seven-year pilot project (2019–2025), aiming to boost women social status, equality, social welfare and participation in social affairs along with 21 key policy goals and 79 execution measures.
Social Welfare
The non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System came into effect in 2018, marking a milestone in the development of the two-tier Social Security System. The System serves as the safety net for people at their old age by providing more options and flexible arrangements in the individual accounts of the non-mandatory Central Provident Fund.

The MSAR Government also continues to provide subsidies to respond to a broad range of social needs, which are, namely, financial assistance to families with special needs registered with the Social Welfare Bureau, a special subsidy for three categories of disadvantaged families, rent waiver for public housing tenants, disburse temporary housing subsidies for eligible families, Ordinary Disability Gratuity and Special Disability Gratuity, tuition fee subsidies for students with financial difficulties, monthly subsidy for underprivileged through Positive Live Programme and Community Employment Assistance Scheme and so on.

Economic Development
In providing all kinds of social measures mentioned above, the MSAR Government adopts a proactive approach in its economic policies. In 2018, Macao maintains its growth momentum with GDP of 4.7%, while both the unemployment rate and inflation rate remained at a modest level of 1.8% and 3% respectively.

On the other hand, to explore for new opportunities, the MSAR Government pursues its economic diversification policy and integration into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Economic Cooperation
The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development is planned by President Xi Jinping and with his witness, the “Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Greater Bay Area” was signed in July 2017, which was devised under the “One Country, Two
System” principle. Soon after that, on 18 February 2019, the “Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area” was released. Under the Outline Development Plan Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR and the municipalities of Guangzhou namely Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province shall embrace strategies to develop into an international first-class bay area and a world-class city cluster.

The MSAR Government carries out the goal of “One Centre, One Platform” policy by developing Macao into a world-class tourism and leisure centre and a commerce and trade cooperative service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. At the same time, we strive to promote an appropriate level of diversified economic development, and develop into a base for exchange and cooperation where Chinese culture is the mainstream and diverse culture coexist. Aside with this pilot project, the MSAR government will actively engage in and facilitate the implementation of the “Belt and Road” initiative, which meant connecting all participating economies and promote interregional cooperation. With unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds as major goals, the MSAR Government will coordinate our policies and measures, and integrate all resources to achieve complementary advantages and joint development.

Economic Diversification
To diversify the Macao economy has been one of the core policy principles of the MSAR Government. In achieving this objective the MSAR Government strives to foster the development of the convention and exhibition industry, the Guangdong-Macao Traditional Chinese Medicine Technology Industrial Park, the cultural and creative industries and featured finance.

With the unremitting efforts of the MSAR Government, the convention and exhibition industry takes wings with steady growth in both the number of events and attendees throughout these years. Besides, Macao is making progress in developing as a Renminbi clearing centre for Portuguese-speaking countries and the prospects are yet to see the development of the Great Bay Area.
**Conclusion**

While inclusiveness and equality is the destination, empowering people is, by all means, the stage post on its path. The MSAR Government shall continue to incorporate the needs of people to better serve the public and intensify our efforts to support public participation in social affairs while promoting sustainable economic development.

Thank you.