Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first of thank UN-ESCAP for convening the 75th Session. It is an honour to present Maldives statement in this session.

In 2015, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a new milestone for fifteen years in our joint efforts to build a society that leaves no one behind. The theme of the 75th Session of the UN-ESCAP session “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” is indeed very timely and relevant to the SDGs. We believe it reflects the universality of the SDGs in its strive to overcome the challenges we face today.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ensuring quality and equitable education is a key priority of the Government of Maldives. We have been successful in providing universal access to education, particularly at the pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels, with indicators showing an absolute parity between boys and girls. My government aims to decentralize the education system to provide accessible and equal standards of quality education throughout the country. To achieve this, regional hubs for education will be created.

Interventions in this regard include the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education, by making sure all classrooms can cater to children with
special needs, both in terms of facilities and trained educators. This is in line with our commitments under the various human rights conventions. School infrastructure will be overhauled to ensure accessibility to children with special needs. Affordable education will be available to students from low income families and scholarships will be provided in social and economic priority areas. The government has already announced the provision of free undergraduate education in Maldives and reviewed the President’s scholarship scheme to include more countries where education will be provided.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Maldives is committed to the principle of gender equality through numerous national and international commitments. Despite progress achieved in this area, a number of challenges remain. The Government is developing a number of strategies to address them, including efforts to mainstream gender issues within the national development framework. To increase the role of women in social, economic and political decision making, the government has increased budget allocations for local Women’s Development Committees throughout the country. The government will also strive to ensure that more women occupy executive level positions and aims to eliminate barriers to women’s employment in high-growth sectors and support community efforts in promoting women’s employment. The government is committed to ensure the implementation of current laws and regulations designed to mitigate Gender-Based Violence.

Furthermore, under His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih’s “Blue Economy” vision of development, increasing national productivity is a priority for the Maldives. This is envisaged to trickle its benefits nationwide, especially to those people whose livelihoods depend entirely on fishing and related industries. The government is also deeply committed to the principles of good governance and democracy, the benefits of which will reach the wider population and in turn contribute to our sustainable development goals. We believe that our national efforts, complemented by support from our bilateral and multilateral partners, will pave the way towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our commitments to the SDGs remain staunch and the Government of Maldives will make every effort to work together with the international community to make a difference in the lives of our people.

Before I conclude, I am pleased to note that the Maldives has recently opened an Embassy in Thailand with the aim of not just enhancing our bilateral
cooperation, but also our multilateral engagements with organizations such as ESCAP. We hope to continue our close engagements on the myriad of issues that will be taken up during this session.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.