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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANKHBAYAR NYAMDORJ,
STATE SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MONGOLIA,
AT THE OPENING OF THE UNESCAP 79TH SESSION**

/15 May 2023, Bangkok/

Honorable Chair,
Honorable Executive Secretary of the UNESCAP,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Mongolia, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat for organizing the 79th Session under the theme of “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”. We believe that the current session will provide a crucial platform for member states to engage in constructive dialogue and collaborative efforts toward identifying innovative solutions to mitigate the current challenges and difficulties in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We are confident that this gathering of minds will yield meaningful outcomes and pave the way for accelerating climate action in our region.

Mongolia places great value on its close collaboration with the Commission in various fields, including sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, trade facilitation, statistics and protecting the interests of landlocked developing countries. We are deeply appreciative of the Secretariat's unwavering commitment, invaluable expertise, and steadfast support to its members. We commend the Secretariat for its visionary leadership in setting new goals and charting new paths for regional development and shared prosperity among member states. We look forward to continued cooperation and partnership with the Commission to advance our shared objectives.

Eight years ago, when the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we embarked on a journey to transform our world into one that is sustainable and resilient, with no one left behind. However, our progress in achieving the SDGs has been hindered by a range of challenges, including geopolitical instability, the far-reaching consequences of the pandemic, and the surge in inflation and commodity prices.

As a result, landlocked developing countries such as Mongolia are facing more difficulties than ever before. Despite these obstacles, we remain optimistic

that the UNESCAP will continue to render its support to the countries with special needs in diversifying their economies and strengthening their resilience.

Currently, Mongolia is actively preparing to present its second Voluntary National Review at the ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum in July 2023, where we will share our accomplishments and experience in implementing the SDGs and other national development policies and programs. The review will not only showcase our progress, but also provide an opportunity for us to learn from others and collaborate more closely to overcome the challenges ahead.

Honorable Chair,

During this unprecedented time, making economic growth more inclusive is essential for all economies in the region. To achieve this, cooperation among nations is crucial, based on the principles of mutual support, to help transform our economies into more effective and resilient ones that can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of Mongolia recognizes the need to address the challenges posed by the current global crisis. To this end, we began implementing the “New Recovery Policy” which prioritizes green development, infrastructural improvement and digital transformation aimed at ensuring macroeconomic stability, intensifying public-private partnership, and creating a favorable business environment for foreign and domestic investors. In order to effectively carry out this policy, we are firmly committed to strengthening our cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

First. Green development

The Government of Mongolia is a staunch supporter of the ESCAP's efforts to achieve green development. As part of its commitment, the Government of Mongolia warmly welcomed the 7th meeting of the Environment and Development Committee of the Commission, which focused on crucial aspects such as air quality management, control, and capacity building. In this regard, I am pleased to report that the "Asia-Pacific High-Level Forum on Clean Air," hosted by our government, was held successfully last March in Ulaanbaatar with your participation.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to highlight the importance of a flagship theme study “Race to Zero: Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific”, prepared by the Secretariat for this year’s Commission Session, which sets out policy actions, rallying all stakeholders including private sector, cities,

regions, financial and other institutions in support of global climate agenda, while making economic, social and environmental gains.

As the pandemic continues to impact the world, it is critical that countries take decisive action to mitigate the negative effects of climate change. At the initiative of the President of Mongolia, a national movement to plant a billion trees is currently underway in our country as a way to combat climate change and reduce desertification. To that end, we would like to collaborate with you in order to learn from your best experiences.

In addition, it is my pleasure to inform that Mongolia has begun the preparations to host the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17) in 2026. The upcoming session presents an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our commitment to combatting desertification, promoting sustainable land management, and advancing our collective efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second. Infrastructural improvement

As a landlocked country with huge transit potentials, Mongolia joined the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and is expediting the implementation of various projects under the China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor. This includes the implementation of the initiative on Intergovernmental Agreement of International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network, which facilitates international road operations between the three countries on designated routes. Furthermore, in line with the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, the Investment Research Center under my Ministry has conducted an assessment study on dry ports in Mongolia and capacity building activities.

Seizing this opportunity, I take note of the important role played by the International Think Tank for LLDCs in addressing the specific challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, and would like to urge the fellow LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of the International Think for LLDC to do so at their earliest convenience. Thus, I extend an invitation to transit countries and other interested parties to support the International Think Tank for LLDCs.

Three. Digital transformation

We believe that digital transformation is an essential enabler for sustainable economic growth and recovery. As such, the Government of Mongolia is fully committed to creating a favorable business environment that promotes competitiveness in a free market by cracking down on corruption and reducing excessive government control and bureaucracy. In line with this commitment, we recently launched the "E-Business" platform, which is designed to support entrepreneurs in their business operations. This platform represents a significant step forward in reducing bureaucracy, as it allows entrepreneurs to obtain special licenses and register their businesses without the need to physically visit registration and taxation offices.

Mongolia actively participates in the development and implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway action plan, which is centered on regional cooperation toward connectivity for all, data and digital technology, and applications. As part of our commitment, last September, the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications, in collaboration with the UN, hosted the first-ever Global Digital Dialogue. The event brought together Member States, UN entities, the private sector, international financial institutions, and other key stakeholders to exchange experiences and best practices on digital transformation strategies.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Today we have gathered here for the annual session of the Commission, focusing on the theme "Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific for Sustainable Development". I am confident that the current session will serve as a cooperative platform for exchanging experiences, best practices and lessons learned in our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also generate key messages to drive actions towards an accelerated, inclusive, and green recovery.

I extend my sincere wishes for a highly successful 79th session of the Commission.

Thank you for your attention.