Key Messages, Priority Actions and Closing

In the last two days, we were given the opportunity to contribute to the process of accelerating SDG implementation. The importance of our subregional multi-stakeholder engagement with stakeholders cannot be emphasized enough. As has been highlighted by ESCAP Deputy Executive Secretary during the opening, it lays the groundwork for our region-wide conversations on the SDGs through the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which itself is one of the regional consultations feeding into the global engagements at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

And in line with HLPF’s guidance, globally, the SDG engagements this year focus on four SDG targets: clean water and sanitation (Goal 6); affordable and clean energy (Goal 7); industry, innovation, and infrastructure (Goal 9); sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11); and partnership for the goals (Goal 17).

In the last two days, we mindfully structured our session discussions in such a way that we were able to deep dive into each of these SDG targets. The assessment from ESCAP’s annual SDG progress report served as our overall anchor, providing us a starting point on where our subregion stands in the implementation of the 17 SDGs. Each session then started off with a framing of the SDG target in focus – highlighting,
in most cases through the use of SDG indicators, the developments and issues needing attention. The country experience in focus for each session together with various perspectives shared – from sectoral experts/practicioners, multilateral development partners, business sector, civil society – shaped the exchanges in such a way that issues at hand were distilled in consideration of varying priorities.

To this end, given our achievements and progress in SDG implementation, what are opportunities for our collective action to address still existing challenges?

We opened with reflections on the national progress of SDG implementation. There are achievements on the institutional support for SDG implementation embedded in national processes which have strengthened throughout the years. The VNR processes which countries in the subregion have undertaken contributed to this. Still, there are opportunities to improve on ensuring consistent, inclusive and meaningful engagements with civil society. There are already entry points embedded in existing national framework, the opportunities for action are on how to effectively use them in a more consistent manner.

Our discussions on a very pressing issue on food security highlighted several policy measures to address escalating food prices, including fiscal measures and increasing domestic food availability. With the sounding alarm that food insecurity is even more on the rise after the pandemic, there are opportunities for our collective action on how to ensure that efforts towards reaching SDG2 targets remain sufficient even in the face of more challenging and uncertain contexts brought about by crises.

On SDG7, our discussions highlighted that we all share the view to accelerate a just energy transition. With CO2 emissions by fuel source in selected ENEA countries, accounting for about 40% of global GHG emissions, without a doubt, the critical point is on the heavy reliance on coal. It is well noted that countries have taken strong and
ambitious measures to support low-carbon transition in the energy sector, in line as well with the carbon neutrality pledges of countries. In the face of still troubling statistics of our subregion’s GHG emission, a welcome trend is on the dramatic increase of deployment of renewable energy in North-East Asia. And this is where opportunities for collective action also abound. For instance, on power interconnection grid from neighboring countries to utilize renewable energy. We noted of many investment projects on renewable. Noting the huge scale of these projects, there are opportunities of enhancing financing partnerships and collaboration for capacity building. In all these, the call for balanced assessment of investment projects to take into consideration environmental and social concerns are further opportunities for stronger multistakeholder engagements in this area.

Our discussions on SDG9, showed that, in general, ENEA countries have made good progress towards developing quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure. With global challenges to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities while tackling climate change, the pathway is the transformation of economies and societies that require STI and promotion of the use, adoption, adaptation and development of new technologies. In this context, most ENEA countries are well positioned to use, adopt, adapt and develop frontier technologies. With such achievements, the opportunities for collective action converge where digital divide and disparities in infrastructure are still an issue. This is the case for Mongolia. There are opportunities for collective action on partnerships and capacity building for Mongolia to address its wide urban and rural infrastructure disparities towards inclusive, resilient, and sustainable infrastructure. In terms of transborder infrastructure, there are opportunities for collective action through partnerships on economic corridor development with better platforms for policy coordination as well as capacity building and technology transfer.

Discussions this morning on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation presented five accelerators to support the achievement of SDG6,
including governance, financing, capacity development, data and information, and innovation. These, then, are the opportunities for our collective action.

The discussions on SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities similarly underscored opportunities for our collective action across multiple fronts. These include further SDG localization and adapting urban policies to address multiple interlinked crisis, among others. In addition, to ensuring urban planning and management more participatory and inclusive, leaving no one behind.

The common thread across our session discussions is on the need for partnerships, which we have just focused on in our last session and our session rapporteurs have nicely highlighted on the rich exchanges. Our shared priority actions serve as basis to further strengthen our cooperation knowing that with the tasks at hand, no one country can do it alone.

And on a high note, dear participants.

On behalf of the organizers of our Forum – the Ministry of Economy and Development of Mongolia, United Nations ESCAP and UN Mongolia, I bring the 6th North-East Asia Multistakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals 2022 to a close!

Indeed, we have heard each other’s voice. Not just in identifying the problems but collectively engaging to find pathways/entry points to accelerate SDG implementation. We highly appreciate your active participation making it truly a multistakeholder engagement.

Thank you and stay safe!

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