

***Country Statement by H.E. Mr. Lee Do-hoon
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
on the Occasion of the UNESCAP 78th Session of the Commission
May 23, 2022***

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Madam Chair, Ministers and Ambassadors,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking Her Excellency Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP. We sincerely appreciate all she has done - and all our deep thanks also go to all the staff for their hard work in organizing this event.

The Asia-Pacific region has led global economic growth in the last few decades. Indeed, the region now accounts for more than a third of global production. However, these achievements are being jeopardized amidst the devastating effects of the COVID pandemic, as well as the dire consequences of the war in Ukraine on global economy, especially food and energy security. In addition, the threat of climate change is casting a greater shadow than ever. These crises cannot be resolved through the efforts of any single country alone. I believe that ESCAP, as the most inclusive intergovernmental platform in the region, is well placed to coordinate our common attempts to address these challenges and advance sustainable development. In particular, I would like to emphasize three

pressing issues where our joint endeavors are vital.

First, we should continue our concerted push to overcome the pandemic and work together to build a sustainable global health system. The ROK will remain committed to supporting the initiatives of the international community to bring this pandemic to an end – and to prepare for any future health crisis. In this respect, Korea will contribute an additional 300 million dollars to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A). We sincerely wish to render support to developing countries to move toward vaccine self-sufficiency. In this spirit, we will establish the WHO Global Biomanufacturing Workforce training hub in Korea, as presented by our President at the 2nd Global COVID-19 Summit this month.

Second, we should unite in our efforts to win the fight against climate change. We should abide by the pledges we made at COP26 in Glasgow to keep 1.5°C within reach and achieve carbon neutrality by or around mid-century. Korea, under the new administration, remains wholeheartedly committed to its NDC target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% compared to 2018 levels by 2030.

The ROK calls for stronger inclusivity on our path towards carbon neutrality. Sharing knowledge and experience is an integral part of this. Against this backdrop, Korea and Viet Nam

are co-hosting a side-event, “Sharing Ambitions and the Way Forward: Carbon Neutrality Goals and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific” here at ESCAP Tuesday this week. We hope to welcome you all to the event. This will be a great venue to discuss how we can reach an inclusive carbon neutrality together.

Third, the pursuit of digital cooperation is a key goal. With the acceleration of the digital transformation and the widening of the digital divide during the pandemic, inclusive access to innovative technology has become more important than ever for the sake of sustainable development. On this, Korea has consistently worked closely with ESCAP, with a view to building and strengthening the capacity of its members to leverage ICT for socio-economic development.

One of the most notable examples of ROK-ESCAP cooperation is the Asian and Pacific Training Center for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), hosted by the ROK since 2006. Furthermore, Korea has been actively engaged in the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Action Plan 2022-2026 since the drafting group phase, and is currently chairing the plan’s Digital Data Working Group.

This year, as we mark a milestone - the 75th anniversary of ESCAP – the ROK and ESCAP will co-host the Asia-Pacific

Digital Ministerial Conference 2022 in November. This conference will be a great chance to share thoughts on ways to strengthen digital cooperation and ease the digital divide. The support of all the participants here as well as your governments and organizations would be most deeply appreciated.

Madam Chair,

In a richer but riskier world, ESCAP has a vital role to play in advancing sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific. Under our new administration, the ROK will strive to develop into a global pivotal state which plays a key role in promoting freedom, peace and prosperity in the region and in the global community. In this regard, as ESCAP's top donor, Korea will continue to join hands with ESCAP and other members to address the global challenges and realize our common agenda. Thank you. /END/