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Statement of the UN Regional Commissions at UNCSD (Rio+20)

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Roundtable 20 June 2012

(Check against delivery)

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the five UN Regional Commissions, allow me at the outset to join previous voices to congratulate Brazil for forging a successful outcome for this important conference and express our deepest appreciation for the hospitality of the people and governments of Brazil and the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro.

Twenty years ago, this city hosted the landmark Earth Summit that laid the foundations for sustainable development, including through a number of critical principles to guide the international community in striving towards sustainable development. Twenty years after, these principals are proving to be still valid and valuable in our world today as reaffirmed by this conference. Building on the Earth Summit solid foundation and its follow up conferences, this conference also reached a number of agreements which are important in carrying forward the sustainable development agenda, it has initiated a number of inclusive political processes to implement the Rio+20 outcome, including on sustainable development goals, a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development and means of implementation.

We are pleased that many of the agreements reached here found their basis in the regional positions and agreements reached in the regional preparatory meetings leading to this conference and organized by the regional commissions. Through these regional meetings, there was general agreement that the future of this planet depends on an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable development. It was also acknowledged that green economy policies, if pursued, should be firmly anchored within the overarching framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and while it does offer many opportunities, the process of transition to a green economy may be challenging for many developing countries especially Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island developing States. For all these countries, transfer of technology and predictable financial resources are essential for the effective implementation of sustainable development. Moreover, it was stressed that a bottom-up approach is key to an effective institutional framework for sustainable development and that the regional level is critical in providing efficient and coherent linkage between the national and global levels.

In this context, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Member States for the continued faith in the Regional Commissions as demonstrated in the outcome of this conference which again explicitly recognizes the important role played by the Commissions in promoting an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable development at the regional level. The outcome document calls for the Commissions to assist member States, upon their request, in developing green economy policies and to support the decision-making process at the global level through a regional bottom-up approach of evidence-based analysis and policy advice, including for the development of the sustainable development goals.

We highly value this reiteration of trust that was expressed since 1992 in Agenda 21 and followed on in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Throughout these major conferences, member States strongly recognized the regional dimension of promoting sustainable development and called upon the Regional Commissions to play a leading role in coordinating regional and sub-regional activities by sectoral and other United Nations bodies, and to assist countries in achieving sustainable development.

Let me assure you, Excellencies, of my commitment and that of all my colleagues the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions in carrying out these valuable mandates you entrusted us and in continuing to work closely with your countries and all our partners to do so. We will remain your faithful and effective multi-sectoral platform for action on sustainable development at the regional level and in bringing the voices of your regions to the global level.

I thank you.