

Statement by

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is grateful for this opportunity to address the Commission on Population and Development. We find the theme of this session, sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration to be very timely and has a great relevance for the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Chairman, Asia-Pacific region is passing through a number of population and development challenges, including rapid ageing, inclusion of youth especially young girls, and millions of migrant workers, among others. Improved life expectancy coupled with declining fertility resulting from growing prosperity, improved health care and educational attainment in this dynamic region, have contributed to rapid ageing of the population. The number of older persons is expected to more than double, from 535 million in 2015 to about 1.3 billion by 2050 when one in four persons will be in old age group. Ageing is a universal phenomenon. What distinguishes Asia-Pacific, however, is speed of the transition. While the European

countries had more than a century in their transition from ageing to the aged societies, in many Asia-Pacific countries, this transition would be completed in just twenty years. This means the governments have very short time frame to provide income security and health care for growing number of elderly while also meeting the challenge of declining productivity and labour shortages as the dependency ratios rise. ESCAP is focusing on assisting the member states in developing old-age income security systems through its capacity-building activities. It also assists the member states in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and conducted its regional review last year when the member states adopted a Plan of Action for implementation over the next five years and identified emerging areas in light of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Chairman, young people in the Asia-Pacific region face a number of challenges in their transition from school to work. The youth unemployment rates are as much as 10 times that of adults. A primary survey conducted by ESCAP shows that there are significant rural-urban, rich-poor and gender divides in youth inclusion in employment, education and training. To assist the member states ESCAP has launched a Youth Policy Toolbox, an online resource that focuses on promoting good practices in youth policy, enhancing youth participation and smoothing the transition from education to the world of work. The tool box was launched at the Interregional Youth Policy Forum convened by ESCAP in

member states in implementation of the global compact on migration including through its regional follow up and review.

In 2018, ESCAP in collaboration with UNFPA is working on the review of implementation of the programme of action of the sixth Asia-Pacific Population Conference and the regional review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and will convene an intergovernmental meeting in November 2018. This outcome will feed into the global review of ICPD at the 52nd session of this Commission.

In closing, Asia-Pacific countries face a number of critical policy challenges resulting from the demographic transitions. As their regional commission, ESCAP will continue to support them in their sustainable demographic transitions as a part of the ESCAP Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the member states in 2017.

Thank you