

**UNFPA statement to be delivered at the 80<sup>th</sup> session of ESCAP  
on 25<sup>th</sup> April -Agenda item 4 (2 minutes)**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Members of the Civil Society, and colleagues from the UN,

Good morning!

My name is Madu Dissanayake, serving as the Regional Programme and Intergovernmental Specialist. Today, I am here on behalf of Mr. Pio Smith, the Asia-Pacific Regional Director for UNFPA.

It is my pleasure to highlight the longstanding and robust partnership we share with UNESCAP, particularly in our collaborative efforts revolving around population-focused initiatives and data management. A notable example of our cooperation includes supporting the ESCAP Secretariat and the Social Development Division in organizing the Asian and Pacific Population Conference every decade, along with its mid-term review every five years.

We at UNFPA extend our congratulations to the ESCAP Commission for adopting the Report of the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (7APPC). This achievement reflects our collective efforts in contributing to significant advancements, such as reducing poverty, maternal and infant mortality rates, unplanned pregnancies, and enhancing access to education and employment for girls, young people, and women. Additionally, it acknowledges our efforts in bolstering resilience to climate change and towards sustainability.

Despite these achievements, we are reminded of the numerous challenges that persist within the region. These include issues like low fertility rates, an ageing population, food insecurity, severe climate vulnerabilities, and increasing social inequalities exacerbated by challenging economic and humanitarian conditions. The report highlights the necessity for greater data and evidence, investment, and a commitment to innovative solutions in our continuous effort to reach the most vulnerable populations, strengthen intersections, and ensure no one is left behind

Reflecting on the 30-year review of one of the most progressive plans introduced globally—the ICPD POA—we are reminded of its enduring relevance and critical importance since its inception in 1994. It remains a cornerstone in safeguarding human rights and promoting gender equality.

UNFPA remains steadfast with our country offices across the region to support our member states to achieve the 2030 agenda by ensuring every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Thank you!