

EDA

EBAC Statement at Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Forum

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council which represents the business sector at this Forum, I have the pleasure to make a brief statement.

We recognize the many challenges ahead in ensuring the future we want as outlined by the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. We are pleased that due recognition was given to the role of the business sector in that document. Indeed, the engagement of business in setting our common future is only logical as business is a leading employer and generator of income and, hence, a major engine of poverty reduction. We pay our taxes and invest in new technologies and productive capacity. We are also leading regional integration through our ever-increasing global and regional supply chains and production networks providing opportunities for small and medium enterprises, including our own, to grow and prosper. In this regard, we call for an early conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations as we believe that the multilateral trading system offers the best modality for business to advance global trade.

But we are also very concerned about the threats posed by unsustainable development, including unsustainable economic growth, rising income inequalities among and within countries, lack of logistics connectivity, continued marginalization of certain groups of people, climate change, environmental pollution, dwindling fresh water resources, overcrowded cities and the overwhelming challenge for governments to effectively respond to natural disasters which are rising in frequency in the region affecting us all. We believe that the business sector is an essential and natural partner of government to address these challenges and that it is in the interest of business to take these challenges seriously. We want to be part of the solution rather than be seen by some as only part of the problem. In this regard, we have committed to improve our uptake of responsible business practices, including those contained in the United Nations Global Compact, and work with the international community, as represented by organizations such as ESCAP, to ensure a more sustainable future for us all.

I am pleased to report that we at EBAC are already doing our share. We established the Sustainable Business Network two years ago comprising 6 task forces that tackle specific issues related to sustainable development. Yesterday, we convened our seventh meeting of EBAC and discussed the progress made under the various task forces that had met on Saturday. Through the Sustainable Business Network we are now undertaking policy advocacy and capacity building in areas such as green business, inclusive trade and investment, micro and small and medium enterprise development and social entrepreneurship, regional connectivity platforms for SMEs, trade and transport facilitation, and banking and finance. We intend to make an active contribution to the various sessions of this Forum which should formulate and communicate the regional perspectives on sustainable development to the High Level Political Forum. We look forward to working with ESCAP, governments and other stakeholders to formulate and implement the sustainable development goals and development agenda beyond 2015.

Thank you.