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**REMARKS:**

**RULE OF LAW IN THE POST-2015 AGENDA:  
A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION  
Pattaya (Thailand), 21 May 2014**

**DELIVERED BY:**

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Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

This session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development provides a valuable opportunity to discuss the role of the rule of law and well-functioning institutions in the post-2015 development agenda.

Indeed, one lesson from our experience with the Millennium Development Goals is that our efforts could have been enhanced by placing stronger emphasis on the rule of law and the functioning of institutions.

The Declaration adopted by all 193 Member States at the 2012 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly reaffirmed that development and the rule of law are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Let us also recognize that justice and the rule of law are both goals of development as well as essential to the achievement of many other development outcomes.

The rule of law is not an abstract concept. It encompasses such tangible goods as legal frameworks that give effect to human rights, and enforceable contracts and fair labour regulations that are required for equitable and inclusive growth.

The rule of law also provides mechanisms for holding public officers accountable.

To cite just one example, this year China adopted a policy to enhance accountability for the implementation of environmental regulations. Companies are required to install monitoring equipment and to publicly disclose the emission of pollutants. As a result,

industries are more certain as to what to expect, and public officials are less likely to disregard non-compliance.

The rule of law also means independent and effective justice systems that protect people's rights and ensure that even the most vulnerable individuals and communities can obtain redress when wrongs are committed. Access to justice empowers citizens to address underlying causes of inequality and exclusion.

In Cambodia, the Public Interest Legal Advocacy project has helped communities to assert their rights to land through collective judicial actions against illegal land seizures.

The rule of law also supports security, helping to counter armed conflict and crime.

The rule of law is implemented through responsive and well-functioning institutions. Development depends on institutions that are accountable to the law and to people, that support the delivery of vital services and that foster public confidence by combatting corruption and upholding the public trust.

The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has recognized the importance of the rule of law to development, and is discussing whether the rule of law and institutions should be a stand-alone goal, be combined with a goal on peaceful societies, or be reflected through a number of targets that are mainstreamed across other goals.

A number of side-events have addressed how to measure impact and progress in this area. International and regional organizations have developed measurement methodologies on a number of rule of law issues, such as land and property security, corruption and access to services and information.

Countries are increasingly measuring the rule of law for use in national policy planning. Timely and reliable statistics help decision-makers and ensure that policies are evidence-based. This supports resource mobilization, transparency and accountability.

The Regional Commissions have an important role to play.

Last year's report, *A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, helped to identify common global challenges and regional priorities.

The common challenges identified by the Regional Commissions – employment generation, environmental sustainability, democratic governance and action against inequality — are all supported by a strong rule of law.

So are the regional priorities, including inclusive and equitable development, enhanced efforts to address discrimination and violence against women and girls; the

sustainability of natural resources and steps to respond to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

A regional discussion on these issues has already begun, including at the *Bangkok Dialogue on the Rule of Law* last November.

Today's session can take this discussion forward.

The effort to shape an ambitious post-2015 agenda is an historic opportunity to make substantial progress towards a world in which freedom from fear, freedom from want, and a life of dignity for all become a reality for all. Regional perspectives are central if that agenda is to bring meaningful change to people's lives.

I wish you all a very fruitful discussion.

Thank you,