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**Closing Statement as Delivered by
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**Ministerial Segment
69th Session of the Commission
Bangkok, Thailand, on 1 May 2013**

Madame Chair,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

We have come to the close of this ministerial segment, and I would like to thank the Chair and our Vice Chairs for their leadership of what has been an extraordinary 69th session of the Commission.

My special thanks go to the Royal Thai Government for all their hospitality and support to the member States of this Commission. I also wish to extend our very deep appreciation to their Excellencies, the President of Myanmar and the Prime Ministers of Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, whose guidance has helped to ensure that this session will be remembered as a high-point in the history of ESCAP, as the most inclusive decision-making table for Asia and the Pacific.

Another exceptional feature of this session has been the extensive participation of our United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, to whom I extend my heartfelt thanks for having invested no less than five full days in our Commission session.

I also want to thank all of the Vice Presidents, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and former ministers, as well as my fellow Under-Secretaries-General and Executive Secretaries of the other UN Regional Commissions, for their valuable contributions to our successful outcomes.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Real Asia-Pacific Opportunity

A recurring theme of this 69th session of the Commission has been regional opportunity. The opportunity to grow better, to close development gaps, to build resilience, to end hunger, and to ensure the inclusive and sustainable future we want.

We must remember, however, that rising Asia-Pacific must be based on the power of knowledge, and ideas which endure. The *true* opportunity of rising Asia-Pacific is to change the *idea* of progress – to prove that people and planet prosper best together.

This is the key to ensuring the continued rise of our region – the big idea, which will be our lasting legacy to generations yet unborn.

Increasing Asia-Pacific economic power has to address inequality in our increasingly unequal world..

It is not enough to simply follow the models of development, which place the interests of ever-richer, ever-smaller elites, sheltered in tax havens, at odds with those of our planet and people.

Our people and our region deserve better.

This is the next great transformation, to which I referred in my opening address, and it has been at the heart of every discussion of this session: it is the core of the post-2015 development agenda from the Asia-Pacific perspective; it drives the Zero Hunger Challenge; it entails the building of more resilient economies and communities, and the adoption of more forward-looking macroeconomic policies; it thrives on greater partnerships between regions and amongst the countries of the global South.

In short, it is Asia-Pacific leadership by example, on inclusive and sustainable development: our acknowledgment that to *truly* rise, the countries and peoples of our region must anchor not only the global economy, but also sustainable stewardship of our shared global future, that takes care of our people and our planet.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Emerging Regional Framework for Resilience

The countries and people of Asia and the Pacific embody the truth of the Japanese proverb which says: “Fall seven times. Stand up eight.” No other region knows more about the direct and devastating effects of natural disasters and economic crises.

It is also true, however, that no other region knows better about building back – stronger, and more resilient than ever before.

Resilience has been so much more than just the topic of our Theme Study this year. It has permeated every panel and every discussion of the 69th Commission session. I would like to thank you all for contributing your experiences, perspectives and solutions to what is emerging as the building blocks of a new Asia-Pacific regional framework on resilience.

Your messages are clear – that disaster risk management and better preparedness are key development imperatives; that people at every level must be empowered partners in change; that political, technical and financial resources must be mobilized before shocks hit (whether economic or natural); that apathy is our biggest risk; and that early warnings and early actions save lives and livelihoods.

Building on your guidance from this session, ESCAP will now work to ensure the inclusion of resilience as a critical aspect of the Asia-Pacific development agenda.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

ESCAP & South-South Cooperation for a Sustainable Future

We have entered an era in which South-South Cooperation will play an increasingly important role. While regional economic integration is already an important trend, it is time for us to unlock the real potential of inter-regional cooperation.

It is here that the UN's five regional commissions are working together to facilitate such cooperation, by bringing our respective constituencies together in pursuit of shared prosperity.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to express the thanks of the Commission to the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and rapporteurs of the two Committees of the Whole, and the Working Group on Draft Resolutions, for the successful completion of their duties. The fact that we have seen no fewer than 17 very substantive resolutions adopted this week, is testimony to the value and relevance of this session.

I also wish to thank my staff – and in particular the Secretary of the Commission and his team, our interpreters, Conference Services, security personnel, and everyone else who has worked behind the scenes, whose professionalism, and hard work over many months, have made our deliberations possible.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every one of you – our delegates – for your participation, advice, and support of the 69th Commission session and of ESCAP itself.

It continues to be my privilege to serve as the Executive Secretary of this Commission, working with you to build the inclusive, resilient and sustainable Asia-Pacific we all want.

I wish you a very safe journey home.

I thank you.