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**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS**

Closing Remarks

26 October 2018 Incheon, Republic of Korea

Your Excellency Mr. Il Jae Kim

Deputy Minister for Government Innovation and Organization Management,

Republic of Korea

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to have taken part in this Symposium. I thank the government of the Republic of Korea for hosting this event and for the excellent collaboration. In particular, I wish to thank again the Korean Ministry of the Interior and Safety and the Incheon Metropolitan City for their support and great hospitality.

As we are getting to the end of the Symposium, let me share with you the following brief points:

1) Over the past three days, we have witnessed the good progress made by many governments in Asia and the Pacific in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries across the region have shared both their achievements and constraints in governance capacities.

2) During this Symposium, we had the opportunity to discuss challenges and share information on how to strengthen public governance and bolster capacities of public institutions to support implementation of the Goals.

As noted by all of you, the critical role of public institutions, as laid out in Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, is a foundation for the achievement of all the other goals. Without effective, inclusive and accountable institutions there can be no progress in the delivery of services such as health, education, clean water and sanitation, transportation, among others.

3) The issue of innovation has been highlighted throughout the Symposium. We need strong public institutions at all levels to foster new ways of thinking and working that can build on the Sustainable Development Goals. We need the multiple ideas and innovations coming from the public sector as well as civil society and the private sector.

4) Many schools of public administration from across the region have taken part in this Symposium and exchanged knowledge on how to shift mindsets and develop new competencies for civil servants. You have served as backbone in promoting the improvement of public administration in all countries.

I commend your unwavering efforts to put the Sustainable Development Goals at the center of your work and to transform capacities of public institutions.

5) We had the opportunity to learn from many innovative approaches to public service delivery. Indeed, embracing a culture of excellence and innovation also contributes to bolstering accountability, fighting corruption and engaging people in decision making.

For this reason, I am encouraged by the innovations discussed here, and countless others the world over, to make progress in many critical areas, ranging from the challenges of an ageing society, to gender equality and youth empowerment.

6) We have also heard how important it is that governments take a proactive role in regulating the use of rapidly evolving technologies, particularly artificial intelligence. We have learned about the key pillars for enabling a digital transformation that bridges divides within and among countries. Divides based on income, age, geography and gender are still persistent in many parts of the world.

7) The importance of the availability of timely, relevant data, including its availability for everyone to use is highlighted. Disaggregated data and stronger focus on ending exclusion will be of particular relevance. Disaggregated data helps us give a voice to all.

8) Partnerships also play a critical role in knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer learning. Strong, sustainable and multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical. We must find ways to leverage the expertise, technology and resources to deliver on the 2030 Agenda's promise of a prosperous and peaceful future.

More than ever, there is a need for collaboration across levels of governance and across sectors to solve the many present and future challenges

that humanity faces. Only by working together can we shape a bright future and support our shared planet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Promoting innovation and supporting institutions in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals are top priorities for UNDESA.

I hope that this Symposium has provided you with new insights and tools. If even one idea shared during these past days can be translated into a new strategy or policy, then we can say that this Symposium has achieved its objectives. I hope that as catalysts of change you will return to your own countries with renewed commitment and inspiration to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Goals.

Finally, I thank all of you for your participation. I hope you have enjoyed your presence at this Symposium. I wish you all a safe trip in returning home!

Thank you.
