

Opening Remarks – 11 December 2024

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and a very warm welcome to the 10th Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Public Electronic Procurement Network (APPeN).

It is our pleasure to host this year electronic procurement conference, the flagship annual procurement networking event, here in ADB Headquarters as we mark 10 years of successful collaboration.

Since its inauguration in 2015 the network established itself as a platform for exchanging knowledge, mainstreaming innovation and supporting procurement policy reforms in ADB's developing member countries (DMCs).

This was achieved through ADB's leadership in setting and maintaining the network and continuous funding assistance of Korean Government represented by Public Procurement Service. Combining ADB funding with co-financing from the government of Korea enabled the network to hold annual conferences, workshops and funded targeted interventions mainstreaming digitalization of public procurement in ADB Member countries.

In the past decade our DMCs transition from manual to electronic government procurement has been accelerated providing greater transparency and efficiency in public procurement.

Periodic ADB's surveys show encouraging trend that majority of ADB DMCs, except for a very few in South East Asia and the Pacific are using electronic procurement tools with many embarking on next-generation reforms to analyze procurement data based on broad development outcomes, including sustainability objectives. Public procurement is able to leverage next generation of digital tools through Big Data analytics, use of Artificial intelligence, machine learning and robotic process automation.

We are pleased to see substantial progress made in 2024 in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea with government support to e-procurement agenda leveraging ADB's Technical assistance.

Asia and the Pacific region continue to face development challenges. There are two that are of particular interest to this conference:

- 1) **Climate change** poses a profound existential threat for Asia and the Pacific, with the potential to disrupt decades of progress and burden future generations with the costs of unsustainable economic development. The impacts of climate change could reduce the region's GDP by 17% by 2070 under a high-end greenhouse gas emissions scenario. Asia and the Pacific account for more than half of all greenhouse gas emissions and are hit harder by disasters and other climate risks than any other region.

Sustainable public procurement can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting the use of sustainable products and services. It can encourage the use of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, and promote sustainable transportation practices, such as electric vehicles and public transit. It can specify lower carbon materials. Additionally, it can reduce waste and promote circular economy practices, such as recycling and reusing materials.

- 2) Governance challenges, including weak public sector institutions, potential for misuse of public funds and lack of accountability.

As a major development partner in the region, ADB continues its support to developing member countries in strengthening governance, accountability, and value for money in public spending.

We trust that the next few days will provide an excellent opportunity for learning from each other, inspiring you to bring innovations and collaboration back to your countries and that your time investment will bring fantastic returns.

Once again, congratulations on the major milestone – 10th anniversary of the Asia Pacific Public Electronic Procurement Network!