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Written statement by Asian Institute of Public Policy and Public Affairs (AIPPA)

Item 8: Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on essential workers in the public sector.

‘Leaving No one Behind’

For the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development to be achieved, effective delivery of public services is needed. Leaving no one behind is an ambitious objective for any Member State. It is at the core of Sustainable Development Goal-16, in particular the promotion of inclusive societies and the rule of law. The ongoing covid -19, pandemic has brought to light the pivotal role of the public administration in response to pandemic, governments around the world diverting the public finances, national resources to crisis response in mitigating the effects of pandemic the role of public servants, and essential workers as first responders is essential in continuity of public services.

The corona virus outbreak has put a new spotlight on essential workers who perform duties across critical infrastructure sectors and maintain the services and functions that citizens depend upon on day to basis, the health care workers, police, sanitation workers, social welfare worker’s embeddedness in the community are in a unique position. These frontline workers by putting their own lives in risk to mitigate the disease pandemic through surveillance and mobilization of communities ensuring the delivery of public services courageously with motto of service before self and coordinated action to maintain essential health services and public service delivery, mitigating the risk of system collapse.

When an outbreak has been identified it created a universal imperative for governments to immediately act upon to protect their citizens. Public sector has also started to rapidly adjust to the new reality and impact of coronavirus. By devising strategies for resilience and through proactive political leadership in which national resources have been allocated and utilised determines the institutional capacities to protect the societies and communities. The impact of corona pandemic on essential workers moral and health must be taken into consideration by revisiting existing regulatory frameworks to ensure equal treatment of essential workers regardless of their employment status and ensuring adequate working conditions for all workers should be an integral part of building back better.

Since the 2030, agenda adopted provides a shared blueprint by the member states for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The covid-19 global pandemic has thrown new challenges of reversing the global goals achieved so far calls for increased policy coherence in particular between various stakeholders, public sector and a whole-of-government approach recommitting to path leading to effective implementation of the sustainable development goals will be those that mainstream the policy response on health, economic, social and fiscal fronts.