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DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
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of the
Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund
on the
Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries)

NINETY-THIRD MEETING
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Statement by
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President
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93rd Meeting of the Development Committee

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On behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), I would like to thank the Development Committee for the invitation to attend its 93rd meeting as an observer. Migration and forced displacement are critical development issues in Asia and the Pacific.

There are an estimated 27.5 million international migrants in the region—43 percent of whom are from Asian countries.¹ Widening economic disparity, demographic challenges, and upgraded transportation and communication links continue to stimulate inter-regional migration.

Moreover, there are a significant number of refugees and displaced populations. In 2015, UNHCR reported 3.5 million refugees, 1.9 million internally displaced people and 1.4 million stateless people in Asia and the Pacific. Afghanistan, after more than three decades of protracted displacement brought by conflict, contributes around 20 percent of the global refugee population.² This demonstrates starkly how important it is to effectively manage the diverse forms of human mobility occurring in the region.

Migration within—and emanating from—Asia and the Pacific occurs for a variety of economic, social, political and environmental reasons. These factors often combine to influence decisions by a person or a family to relocate. Forced migration takes place to escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological degradation, or other situations that endanger lives, freedom or livelihood.

ADB aims to address underlying causes of forced and voluntary migration by creating livelihood opportunities closer to home through financing and technical advice to support inclusive economic growth, access to markets and services, and job creation. For example, in Afghanistan ADB plays a leading role in financing infrastructure development, road and rail transport, energy, water resources and irrigation. These investments help to generate medium- and long-term inclusive economic growth, improved service delivery, private sector development, and sustainable job creation. ADB administers the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund, which has commitments and pledges of over \$800 million.

In Pakistan, ADB works with the government to improve connectivity, productivity, and access to markets and public services. This helps to speed inclusive and sustainable growth, creating productive employment opportunities and reducing poverty. ADB's strategy focuses on infrastructure development to improve connectivity, boost productivity, attract private investment, create jobs, and provide access to markets and

¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM) website (<http://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific>)

² United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (<http://www.unhcr.org/ga15/index.xml>)

basic services. ADB also fosters institutional reforms to help mobilize resources, facilitate private sector participation, and improve public service delivery. Priority sectors include energy, transport, agriculture and natural resources, water and other urban infrastructure, public sector management, and finance.

ADB provides systematic support to countries with unique development challenges arising from fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS). The support is premised on understanding local conditions, providing a long-term commitment, ensuring country ownership, and developing customized and flexible interventions for FCAS countries. ADB continues to support state-building efforts to strengthen and reinforce the foundations for social and economic development. It also piloted conflict-sensitive approaches in Afghanistan and Nepal; carried out fragility assessments in selected urban settlements in Kiribati and Papua New Guinea; and undertook political economy analyses in the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu.

Migration driven by environmental factors, including climate change, is emerging as a serious concern for the region. ADB has committed to double its annual climate change financing from the current \$3 billion to \$6 billion by 2020 and established a grant financing mechanism for disaster risk reduction for its poorest developing member countries.

ADB also helps communities to build resilience against environmental threats— including floods and storms—that can cause displacement of people. For example, ADB has provided financing for the Philippines’ National Community Driven Development program, known as KALAHI-CIDSS. Grants provided under this program enable communities to build small-scale infrastructure tailored to their local conditions and needs. One Philippine community, Mangorocoro in the Western Visayas region, has built a seawall that has helped reduce threats from storms to the lives of local residents and to their sources of income. The seawall prevented serious damage from Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated neighboring coastal communities.

Large refugee movements are commanding increasing attention. It is thus important to remember that migration—particularly when planned and orderly—can bring tangible benefits to both source and destination communities, and to the migrants themselves. For instance, the migration of labor from countries with a young and abundant work force alleviates labor shortages in countries with ageing populations and falling labor supply. This not only generates much needed flow of remittances but also promotes the transfer of new ideas, skills and knowledge across countries. ADB has made recommendations on how ASEAN can implement its new rules permitting mobility of certain classes of skilled labor among its member countries.

There are a number of steps that the international community can take now to address forced migration. These include:

- Capacity building of recipient countries to manage refugees and migrants,
- Research on the impact of refugees and migrants,
- Technical support for coordination among civil society organizations,
- Technical support for cross-border programs including repatriation processes and livelihood programs for countries that have exited the conflict stage, and
- Long-term engagement to strengthen institutions of countries after a peace process.

ADB stands ready to support its developing member countries as they address migration challenges. ADB’s experience and expertise can help countries manage fragility, and reinforce the link between effective humanitarian relief and inclusive sustainable development.