Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Asia-Pacific Group as Chair for the month of March. At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this special meeting to commemorate this important day, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and focusing on the important issue of mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies as per resolution 73/262. Given the senseless loss of innocent lives just less than 2 weeks ago Friday, 15th in our Asia-Pacific region in Christchurch, the theme is particularly apt and timely.

Madam President,

It is alarming to see that in many parts of the world, there are islamaphobic, xenophobic and extremist movements based on ideologies that seek to promote populist, nationalist and racial supremacist positions. What is more alarming is that such positions are given some measure of legitimacy by governments. The terror attacks in Christchurch, which claimed fifty lives portrayed the scourses of racism and racial discrimination as well as extreme supremacist ideologies. The Asia-Pacific Group consists of 57 member states and are from different parts of the globe with wide diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, religion and culture and the recent attack in Christchurch reiterates the fact that no region of the world is immune from rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies. We must continue to promote tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination. We must Kia kaho1, that is, Stay strong!

We reaffirm our commitment to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in 2001. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remains a solid basis and the only instructive outcome of the World Conference, which prescribes comprehensive measures for combating racism and providing adequate remedies for victims.

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1 A word in the indigenous language of New Zealand meaning "stay strong" and is a sentiment said at times of great challenge and suffering, as in the case of the recent terror shootings in Christchurch on the 15th March 2019.
We recognize and affirm that the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, is a matter of priority for the international community.

The eyes of the world, in particular the innocent victims of senseless violence and discrimination based on race, are upon us again today. We therefore celebrate this Day not only to mark our successes in our common approach towards eliminating racial discrimination from among us but also to reaffirm our concern and our ongoing efforts at mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies.

Madam President,

On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, we again declare and reiterate our strong commitment and unwavering determination to ensure that the countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies remains a high priority for the member states of our Group, and for the entire world.

I thank you.