

Joint statement, delivered by Mr Juzhong Zhuang, Deputy Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank, on behalf of the co-organizers of the Ministerial Conference

1. It is my great pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, Plan International and ADB. Our institutions have worked jointly to organize this Ministerial Conference, and continue to support Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, or CRVS, improvements at the global, regional and national levels.

2. We believe that international, regional and subregional organizations and initiatives play an important role. They add value to the improvement of CRVS through advocacy, capacity building, dissemination of information, application of ICT, research, innovation, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

3. We are pleased to accept the invitation contained in the draft Ministerial Declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific, and to contribute and support accountability for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework. With reference to that invitation, we agree that:

- Subregional organizations and groupings, such as Association of South East Asian Countries (ASEAN), the Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), are well-placed to promote subregional cooperation for the improvement of CRVS;
- Countries will benefit from the technical and financial resources of bilateral and multilateral development agencies and other institutions for the improvement of CRVS systems;
- The United Nations system can most effectively support the Regional Action Framework by jointly delivering assistance for improving CRVS using existing mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels;
- Development cooperation agencies can contribute immensely by strengthening the effectiveness of their policies, plans and programmes on CRVS, and by mainstreaming CRVS as a component of other development assistance initiatives – for example, in the areas of governance, health and education;
- Non-governmental and civil society organizations are trusted agents at the community level and can play a key role in helping governments to work on the demand side, especially in reaching hard to reach populations, including through innovations, and ensuring that civil registration is consistent with human rights principles and standards;

- The private sector can greatly contribute to innovation and investment; and
- The collection, development and dissemination of good practices, innovations and technical resources are best done with the full involvement of academic and research institutions.

4. We commit to continuing our partnership beyond this Conference. Recognizing that the regional CRVS agenda offers action areas as the basis for activities of development partners, we commit to ensure the most effective and coordinated approach to implementing the outcomes of this Conference as they are reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of the Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade of 2015-2024 and the Regional Action Framework on CRVS, maximizing our respective institutional mandates.

5. We commit to provide our support in accordance with the key principles laid out in the Regional Action Framework. In particular, our assistance shall be conducive to a comprehensive and integrated “whole-of-system” approach to improving CRVS, and delivered in a coordinated and harmonized manner that is aligned with the priorities and targets set by countries. We will bring together different approaches, resources and expertise to safeguard rights, realize universal civil registration and legal identity, strengthen governance, and improve health information and vital statistics systems, and where appropriate, identity management systems.

6. We commit to continue to advocate for the mainstreaming of CRVS as a development issue, most urgently for its inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda.

7. We commit to exploring options for strengthening our existing partnership. We believe that expanded cooperation among the partners, working towards a shared vision on CRVS, can sustain and increase the effectiveness of the support given to countries. We also believe that coordinated approaches can facilitate obtaining additional external funding for CRVS improvement in the region.

8. We welcome and encourage other development partners, including the organizations participating in the Conference this week, to join the Asia-Pacific regional partnership for improving CRVS.

Thank you.