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**PHILIPPINE STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 6
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON CIVIL REGISTRATION
AND VITAL STATISTICS (CRVS)
27 NOVEMBER 2014**

**DELIVERED BY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THAILAND
H.E. JOCELYN BATOON-GARCIA**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

My delegation would like to thank UNESCAP and all the organizers and stakeholders for hosting this Ministerial Conference, and Your Excellency, Mr. Chair, for leading this Meeting.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of having legal documents for all individuals to establish identity and claim ensuing rights. It supports universal civil registration, and commits itself to producing accurate, complete and timely vital statistics.

To pursue this, the Philippines developed a computerized civil registration system that streamlines and enhances the retrieval and storage of civil registry documents. More importantly, our country made civil registration documents more accessible to its citizens through different modes of application, including through outlets such as shopping malls in various local areas, the internet, and a phone-based service. The Philippines has also introduced systems to improve registration in the sub-national level.

Moreover, the Philippine Statistics Authority (or the Authority) continues to enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders such as: 1) the local civil registrars through conventions, local seminars and training programmes; and 2) government agencies, including the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Justice, among others, through the formulation of guidelines for filling up forms related to civil registration and training programmes on implementing these guidelines. The Authority also coordinates with foreign embassies in the Philippines for the validation and verification of civil registry documents; and, the academe and research institutions for the utilization of data. We also encourage multi-sector participation in the Authority's Inter-Agency Committee on CRVS.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

Super Typhoon Haiyan highlighted the need for all Filipinos to have their birth certificates to access their rights and enjoy the benefits extended by the government to calamity victims. In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, the Authority reconstructed civil registration documents for Local Civil Registration Offices, which lost their files. The Authority prioritized the issuance, free of charge, to some 37,000 individuals under an agreement between government officials and stakeholders. More importantly, the

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Authority facilitated mobile registration to areas most affected by the typhoon. These efforts gave a human face to the CRVS system in disaster-stricken areas.

Like other countries, the Philippines also faces some challenges in its civil registration efforts, including its low death registration. Toward this end, we will endeavor to encourage death registrations, along with an accurate reporting of their causes. We believe that birth and death registrations allow the production of accurate and complete statistics on the loss of life. Accurate recording as well provides opportunities for grieving families to access temporary financial and other kinds of assistance extended.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates:

While we recognize the gains we made, we also look forward to a continued collaboration and sharing of good practices with other UNESCAP member States to further enhance current CRVS practices in the country.

We believe in the importance of CRVS in addressing many developmental issues at the national level, and of vital statistics to develop evidence-based policies on matters of national priorities. Towards this goal, we call on all UNESCAP members and associate members to update their national strategy for the development of statistics.

My delegation also wishes to recall UNESCAP resolution 70/2 on Disaster Related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific that it sponsored, which among others: 1) “stressed the importance of disaggregated data related to disasters to enable a comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic effects and strengthening of evidence-based policy-making at all levels”; and 2) “called for the establishment of an expert group comprising of statisticians and disaster reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to be approved by the UNESCAP Commission at its seventy-second session”.

The Philippines hopes that the development of a basic range of disaster-related statistics through the collaboration of experts in the region, as requested by this resolution, will lead to the adoption of uniform concepts and definitions related to CRVS across the region to help us enhance the national and regional efforts towards data recording and analysis.

We believe that the adoption of uniform concepts and definition will contribute significantly to a better and enhanced CRVS system in the region.

At this point, the Philippines wishes to reaffirm its commitment to do its share in improving our vital statistics; and calls on all delegations to elevate the CRVS journey, which started in 2009, into concrete action for the peoples of the Asia Pacific region.

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