

Mr Chairman and Distinguish delegates

On behalf of the Kingdom of Tonga I'd like to extend our sincere appreciation to UNESCAP, UNICEF and all organizations involved in organizing and funding of this historical conference. I would like to indicate my country's 100% support to the Regional Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

The goals of this framework very much reflect Tonga's National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Committee's Plan for 2014-2015.

There are much to be done to improve Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Tonga but we are taking small steps forward just to be sure we're on the right track and that we achieve our goals. I'd like to share with you 2 areas that we are currently focusing on and that we are aiming at reaching a very high level in both areas by or before 2024.

- Aiming at registering all birth and deaths in Tonga. In corroboration with the Ministry of Health we are able to gather verified data which indicates that in 2012 only 90.0% of births were registered in 2012 and only 70.7% of deaths registered.
- Digitize all records of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Tonga. In 2011 Tonga stepped into a new era of digitizing its births, deaths and marriage records. This project not only aims at preserving these original births, deaths and marriage records for their historical value, security, accurateness and privacy of individuals and at the same time facilitate and speed up the process for the issuance of Birth, Death and Marriage certificates for the Registrar General clients. At the moment the Registrar General's Office has been able to scan and store soft copies of births and death records from 1867-2012 as well as marriage records from 1892-2012.

Once again the Kingdom of Tonga confirms its support to the Regional Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.