

Check against delivery

**Country Statement to be delivered by Head of Nepalese Delegation Dr. Som Lal Subedi , Secretary,
Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
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Mr. Chairperson

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation and on my own, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to you Mr. Chairperson on your election to the Chair of this important Ministerial Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, we would be able to bring the Conference to a successful conclusion.

This is very important event that member countries of UN-ESCAP are present here to show their commitments for the achievement of a common goal of universal registration to ensure identity rights of each and every individual. This is a basic and very technical task, which not only demands a well-functioning system of legal framework, registration, documentation, reporting and analyzing for evidence based planning, but also a comprehensive level of front line coordination among different agencies and stakeholders with their capacities built in. In this context, I am honored to share our experiences, achievements, challenges and perspectives.

Mr. Chair

Nepal started vital registration 37 years ago by assigning responsibilities to local bodies. We started identifying citizens through citizenship since early 1950s. However, we experienced that the scope of identification through vital registration system is wider as it also covers non-citizens. In line with this wider scope, Nepal has established local registrars' offices at local bodies, as closer to the people. We have emphasized on wider range of coverage through social mobilization and empowering the communities through ward citizen forums and citizen awareness centers. My delegation is confident that strengthening local governance can institutionalize government's initiatives as well as enhancing people's participation.

Mr. Chair

Nepal has recently established Central Department of Vital Registration which will improve CRVS and increase the efficiency of the universal social cash transfer management. Nepal is piloting the software based vital registration. Furthermore Nepal is launching an online registration system being implemented in all 130 municipalities by the end of FY 2014/15. Nepal is also planning to run 1000 online registration centers targeting the whole country in coming five years and survey on CRVS has been initiated which will produce baseline for 2015. Based on this baseline, we will be able to set the targets on yearly basis so as to achieve the goal of regional action framework. Nevertheless, until and unless we strengthen frontline with skilled human resources and basic logistics, no system can work efficiently. Consequently, we are committed to strengthen the capacity of front line service centers. The Ministries of Federal Affairs and Local Development and Health and Population have been collaborating for inter-agency co-operation at local level. We are confident that our CRVS system will contribute to the well-functioning of the National ID system. With all these initiatives, we want to stand along with rest of Asia and the Pacific region.

Nonetheless, we are not free from challenges. Scattered demographics along the hills and mountains, weak infrastructure and connectivity and limited human resources are the impediments against the smooth functioning of the CRVS. Furthermore, making birth registration mandatory to the services has a risk of tradeoffs between registration and utilization of basic services like immunization and primary school enrolment. Above all, it has been a critical challenge for us to incentivize vital registration to the general people.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal is practicing different pragmatic models of local governance including mobilization model. Our design was based on generalized and one size fits all. Now we need to adopt an asymmetric model of decentralization with adequate capacity to carry out assigned responsibilities including vital registration.

Since CRVS is our priority sector, the Government of Nepal will definitely invest for improvement of services. Against this backdrop, my delegation invites development partners and civil society to come hand in hand to improve local level governance and the CRVS in particular for getting everyone into the picture.

Thank you.