Statement of H.E. Dr. Thongchanh Manixay, Minister of Home Affairs of Lao PDR, the Head of Lao delegation to the Second Ministerial conference on Civil Registration and Vital statistics in Asian and Pacific, 16-19 November 2021.

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
- Distinguished Chairman,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Lao PDR delegation, I have great honor to attend this important Second Ministerial Meeting on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). On this special occasion, I would like to congratulate ESCAP member states, Regional Steering Committee, development partners, and organizers of the meeting for their contribution in reviewing progress made in the implementation of commitments made in the Ministerial Declaration “Get Every One in the picture” signed in 2014, and the implementation of the Regional Action Framework towards reaching the goals of the CRVS Decade 2015-2024.

We highly appreciate the work of the ESCAP Commission and its Secretariat in overseeing and monitoring the implementation of CRVS Decade in Asia and Pacific.

Congratulations to all countries that have succeeded significantly in achieving their CRVS targets in the first-half of the decade, despite global difficulties and challenges faced, such as Covid-19 pandemic, natural disasters and global economic difficulties.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Lao PDR, as member of ESCAP, has actively implemented the Regional Action Framework, and contributed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in general, and CRVS goals specifically. CRVS is an important component towards reaching SDGs because 67 indicators out of 232 indicators of SGD rely on vital statistics. In recent years, we have made significant progress in improving CRVS in our country. Lao PDR CRVS system was assessed thoroughly using rapid and comprehensive methods successively in 2011 and 2012; A CRVS Strategy 2016-2025 has been developed and endorsed by the Prime Minister in 2017; Family Registration Law (FRL) has been amended and promulgated in 2018; The Law on Statistics has been amended too in 2017; Laws and related regulations were disseminated countrywide; Coordination mechanism among line-
ministries has been set up at both central and local levels with the Ministry of Home Affairs as core sector for liaison in the country and in the region.

In order to realize the Government’s vision: By 2030 “citizen’s rights will be guaranteed by the state governance by the Law”. By 2025 all Lao citizen will complete at least secondary school. Lao population will have access to universal health coverage. The average life expectancy will be higher than 73 years old and the labor force is developed in quantity and quality, currently Lao PDR is intensively implementing priority programs defined in the CRVS Strategy, the Family Registration Law, and related regulations, with Government and World Bank financing in order to improve the CRVS system, to create, upgrade and pilot electronic CRVS system that allows the sharing of data with line ministries at central and local levels to ensure completeness, accuracy and on time availability of information for civil registration based vital statistics production. We also take data privacy and confidentiality seriously.

In addition to Government funding, development partners and international organizations have also provided financial support to the implement of CRVS activities such as: UNICEF and Plan International have supported in drafting the CRVS Strategy (2016-2025); mobile registration of children affected by natural disaster in Attapeu province; strengthening of Primary Health Care system; the Work Bank provided financial and technical support for the finalization of the CRVS Strategy and amendment of the Family Registration Law, and nutrition; WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in Medical certification of cause of deaths and in the near future UNFPA will support capacity building on gender issue and statistics production. With domestic resources and support from development partners, Lao Government will continue to make progress in achieving targets and universal coverage of registration countrywide to ensure equal access and do not leave anyone behind.

From the improvement and implementation of CVRS activities, and the Asia and Pacific Regional Action Framework in the first half of Decade, the coverage of registration of vital events in the country is still low, civil registration system is not yet modernized, and as a result vital statistics production does not have yet complete, accurate and on time data. We have recently competitively selected an eCRVS software solution to jumpstart the process and make great strides in 2022.

However, as committed to the Ministerial Declaration “Get Every One in the picture”, Lao PDR will do its utmost to achieve its established targets along with contribution towards reaching goals and make the regional common vision come true. Despite challenges and difficulties ahead, Lao PDR will try its best to make civil registration universal, raise awareness of the population on CRVS, reduce and gradually remove barriers and constraints of civil registration so that all citizens in the country regardless of gender, age, and ethnicity could have access to civil registration universally.

We believe that the development of electronic CRVS will provide us complete, accurate and timely civil registration data for analyses and vital statistics production by the end of the Decade. Through good coordination and strong collaboration between 4 key sectors in the country: Health sector as notifier of births, deaths and caused of deaths, that occur in health facilities; Home Affairs sector responsible for registration and certification of births and deaths; Public Security sector responsible for family registration and issuance of national ID card; Planning & Investment sector (Lao Statistics Bureau) responsible for analyses and civil registration based statistics production, we will implement UN 2030 Agenda on legal identity for all.
Lao PDR welcomes lessons from countries that have succeeded in CRVS implementation. Lao Government will continue to cooperate and accept technical and financial support from ESCAP member states, development partners and international organizations for accelerated improvement of CRVS system in Lao PDR in order to be able to provide universal, quick and modern service to the population and ensure the production of accurate vital statistics that could be used effectively and efficiently for socio-economic planning and development, and meeting established targets and goals, and making the regional vision come true.

Honorable guests and delegates,

On behalf of Lao Government, I reaffirm that by 2024 with the ownership of Lao Government together with support from ESCAP member states and assistance from development partners and international organizations, Lao PDR will try to meet its target for birth registration and certification of at least 70% a reality.

Lao Government believes that the Ministerial Declaration of this Second Ministerial Meeting and the Regional Action Framework will further contribute to the implementation of the Declaration “Get Every One in the picture” in Asia and Pacific “without leaving anyone behind” and the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, on behalf of Lao Government, we are pleased to endorse the content of the Ministerial Declaration of this Second Ministerial Meeting, as presented at this meeting.

Thank you very much