

Mr. Nazemi Ardakani

In the Name of God

First, I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to the esteemed **participants** and **dear guests** to the **1st Meeting of the Heads of National Organizations/Centers for Civil Registration of the ECO Member States**.

I also **would like to thank ECO secretariat**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior and my colleagues at **National Organization for Civil Registration** for **organizing** this conference and I do hope this will initiate an **allout effort for more collaboration among** members.

In all countries and political systems, Civil registration organizations are entrusted with the duty of registering vital events, **developing demographic** statistics and **identity and citizenship documentation** for citizens.

No doubt, a balanced and sustainable development and progress could be **accomplished** through planning based on precise and accurate statistics particularly **in terms of** population and relevant changes. **To be identified as** local or foreign nationals, benefiting from the rights as reflected in law including political and civil rights such as participation in elections, **submission of** the case to courts, education and health requires having identity documents. On the other hand, to ensure fulfilling the legal duties for their citizens, **the governments need** to identify their local and foreign nationals in affairs such as military service, tax....

Fair distribution of resources and their **optimum** allocation, as well as **planning and implementation** of infrastructural plans in various economic, political, social, cultural and security areas do require **having accurate** information on population and its changes particularly in immigration arena.

In today's world, the concept of national security has further developed from its original meaning; i.e. to be safe from military attacks and border invasions, into a wider notion that covers the living aspects of nations-states so as economic, political, social, and cultural security have become as important as military security. As security in this overall meaning has human infrastructure and both population and its changes play key and essential role in it, "Modern Civil Registration for Development and Security" has been chosen as the motto of this conference.

In the changing contemporary world that relies on the mutual relations of nations-states, achieving the goals and interests could be possible through regional and international cooperation and in the same way, only those governments and regions that have more suitable and expanded cooperation in issues and problems are more successful in progress, sustainable development and security. Since its establishment, ECO has been trying to have a proper share in the integrity of member states and to pave development ground of these countries through sincere collaboration of its members.

With respect to this important role of ECO and the role of knowledge of civil registration organizations in establishing a suitable ground for sustainable development and security of member states, the National Organization for Civil Registration of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to host the 1st Meeting of the Heads of National Organizations/Centers for Civil Registration of the ECO Member States and it was heartening that the proposal was welcomed by the secretariat and members.

The members initially approved some agenda items and will be discussed and deliberated in the meeting.

It seems that in line with the motto of the first meeting of heads of civil registrations organizations of member states, distinguished participants could discuss joint efforts and cooperation on the following topics:

- To register vital incidents of citizens and nationals of each member state in the specified deadlines with full coverage
- To issue identity documents with high security factors and lowering the risk of forgery and vulnerability
- To create and establish electronic civil registry through using modern technologies in receiving the incidents declaration, design and development of population database, registry, maintenance and updating the information, issuance of intelligent IDs for giving speed and precision in ascertaining the accuracy of citizens' identity and providing prompt and proper services for them.

Having a one- century record of activity, benefiting from services of professional experts and modern facilities and technology, particularly in implementing electronic civil registry, the National Organization for Civil Registration of the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepare to cooperate with other members.

In conclusion, I appreciate your presence at this meeting and hope to witness more extensive, dynamic and effective cooperation among civil registration organizations of the ECO member states.