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Esteemed Minister,

Distinguished Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization,

Honorable Deputy Minister of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Heads of Civil Registration Organizations of Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and their valuable delegations, who are among us representing the Economic Cooperation Organization member states,

Dear Governor of Istanbul,

Esteemed guests,

Distinguished members of the press.

I welcome and salute you all with my deepest respect, as I am very pleased to host the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of National Organizations/Centers of Registrations, after the first meeting we had in Iran in 2011.

The state has the responsibility to keep track of the civil registry records of its citizens, and to monitor all occurring changes.

Keeping these records well and up-to-date is crucial in ensuring that public institutions and organizations can safely plan their future prospects for service delivery as well as determining the safety, speed and efficiency of the services they offer.

Civil registry services in Turkey go way back in time. There are numerous examples of land and population censuses since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, for conscription and tax purposes. The first modern civil registry services began with the census in 1831, and took its current form when the Ministry of Civil Registry was transformed into the General Directorate of Civil Registration.

The MERNIS (Central Civil Registration System) project, which aims to digitally store civil registry events such as birth, naturalization, marriage, divorce, verdicts and deaths, and to evaluate such collected information for public services and citizens in a versatile way and to re-organize the civil registry services under these principles, enables us to perform these actions in a matter of minutes at our civil registration directorates.

Thanks to the identity number assigned to every Turkish citizen under the MERNIS Project, the following goals were achieved: eradicating problems that occur due to similarity in names, perform identity detections in a swift way, use only one number for all procedures after the birth of the person, expedite the exchange of information between public institutions, and provide faster service to the citizens.

In order to electronically grant state institutions and organizations direct and quick access to citizens' ID information, the Identity Sharing System, Republic of Turkey Identity Number

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System, Address Registration System, Republic of Turkey ID Card, Business Continuity Center, and e-Citizenship projects have been realized by the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality, with the idea that these are the most important tools to accelerate Turkey's e-transformation.

Projects such as Spatial Address Registration System, Passport and Driving Licenses and Digital Archive have also neared their end.

To touch briefly on these projects;

Identity Sharing System (KPS):

It is ensured that current data, including identity and address services related to individuals in the Central Database, are shared on-line and in a timely manner with institutions and organizations that provide public services.

Address Registration System (AKS):

The address data disorganized and out of format in various institutions and provincial municipalities have been gathered in one center. All address data are kept updated in a standard way and have been shared with related institutions and organizations.

This way, bureaucratic procedures are simplified and public institutions provide more effective services. The system also reduces the costs of private sector's address related procedures.

Republic of Turkey ID Card Project

As of January 2, 2017, in order to simplify the lives of our citizens and provide better services, ID cards that are first class, safe, portable, durable, inimitable, protected and compatible with e-state applications have been produced. Over 60.000 IDs are printed on a daily basis. Turkey is the first country that can manage to print this many IDs with high quality and standards within a day. As of today, the number of distributed ID cards is about 12 million.

Business Continuity Centre:

In order to provide services without disruption in disasters like earthquakes, floods or in emergency situations like fires the Business Continuity Centre was modernized in accordance with technological improvements in a way that would allow business continuity by providing uninterrupted service.

E-Citizenship Services:

E-Citizenship Services Project consists of two complementing phases. As a result of the first phase, all process related to the acquisition and loss of Turkish citizenship are carried out in

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an electronic environment. Studies are continuing for the second phase regarding the registration of reference documents related to the civil registry events via electronic means.

Spatial Address Registration System (MAKS) Project

With the Spatial Address Registration System Project (MAKS) it will be possible to show the address components (e.g. roads, buildings etc.) on maps. With the realization of this project throughout the country, it will be possible to carry out regional analyses and develop more realistic policies about topics such as transportation, health, disaster and emergency management. Our ministry's aim is to integrate spatial dimensions to address information by the end of 2018.

Passport and Driving Licenses Project:

Projects regarding second-generation passports and driving licenses will be carried out by the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality in the near future.

Digital Archive Project:

With the project that is in tender phase and is planned to be finalized in 3 years family logs, special logs, and other archival documents in Ottoman and present-day Turkish in our General Directorate will be scanned thoroughly and digitalized.

Since its establishment, the Economic Cooperation Organization enabled the realization of various projects and provided cooperation among member countries for transportation, energy, agriculture, tourism, and economic development.

With the decisions taken at the meetings held under the Directorate for Human Resource and Sustainable Development, the Economic Cooperation Organization will start to work on concrete projects, such as harmonization of the population registration systems of the member states, the credibility of documents submitted by citizens to another member state, easy and fast processing capability and technological infrastructure compatibility.

I reaffirm my happiness to see and welcome you in Turkey and in Istanbul and I hope that this meeting will be beneficial for mutual exchange of information and cooperation between the member countries and I offer my respects to you by hoping that our meeting will have good results.