



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
10 December 2014

Original: English

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and  
Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 24-28 November 2014

### Report of the Conference

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## **I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

### **A. Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific**

*We, the ministers and representatives of members and associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific assembled at the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, from 24 to 28 November 2014,*

1. *Reaffirming* the human right of everyone to be recognized everywhere as a person before the law, which is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup>

2. *Recalling* the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>2</sup> the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>3</sup> the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,<sup>4</sup> and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,<sup>5</sup> which stipulate that States Parties should register all children immediately after birth without discrimination, as invoked by resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, the most recent being General Assembly resolution 66/141 of 19 December 2011, and Human Rights Council resolution 22/7 of 21 March 2013,

3. *Also recalling* the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages,<sup>6</sup> which stipulates that States Parties should ensure that all marriages are registered in an appropriate official register by the competent authority,

4. *Further recalling* General Assembly resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014, which endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and General Assembly resolution 64/267 of 3 June 2010, which acknowledged that reliable and timely statistics and indicators measuring a country's progress are an indispensable basis for informed policy decision-making and for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals at the national, regional and international levels, on the understanding that this extends to other internationally agreed development goals and to monitoring at the subnational level,

5. *Recalling* World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.14 of 24 May 2014, in which member States were urged, in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015, to recognize the importance of accountability by strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics and health information systems, which can be used for monitoring health equity by providing disaggregated data that do not reveal information about individuals,

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2220, No. 39481.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 521, No. 7525.

6. *Also recalling* Commission resolutions 67/12 of 25 May 2011 and 69/15 of 1 May 2013, which recognize the importance of civil registration and vital statistics for measuring aid effectiveness and raising the visibility of and improving policy focus on the most vulnerable groups,

7. *Welcoming* World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.10 of 24 May 2014, endorsing “Every newborn: an action plan to end preventable deaths”, particularly the strategic objective that every newborn needs to be registered, and newborn and maternal deaths and stillbirths need to be counted,

8. *Also welcoming* the conclusion on civil registration of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of 17 October 2013,<sup>7</sup> which noted the importance of civil registration and documentation for the protection of refugees and that the lack of civil registration and related documentation makes persons vulnerable to statelessness and associated protection risks,

9. *Recognizing* that civil registration is the continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events in people’s lives in accordance with the national law, including births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimations and recognitions,

10. *Also recognizing* that civil registration and vital statistics systems are, depending on national laws and administrative arrangements, typically the shared responsibility of multiple ministries and government agencies, such as the ministries of the interior, justice, home affairs and health, national statistics offices, and local and provincial governments,

11. *Affirming* that universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems have a critical role in achieving inclusive, equitable and people-centred development, including the following:

(a) Providing documents and a permanent record for individuals to establish their legal identity, civil status and family relationships, and subsequently promoting social protection and inclusion by facilitating access to essential services, such as education and health care, among others;

(b) Enabling good governance and strengthened public administration through greater political participation and accountability, and facilitating public service delivery by providing a basis for national population databases, national identity programmes and e-governance;

(c) Providing vital statistics on the demographics and health of the population and other information that offer an evidence base for policymaking at local, provincial and national levels, including preventative and targeted interventions for addressing social, economic and health inequities, especially among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations;

(d) Assisting the implementation of universal health coverage and providing the most reliable data to monitor and address the causes of mortality, including providing an evidence base for measures to improve newborn, infant and maternal health;

(e) Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through the provision of documents to prove family relations and civil status, and the production of age-, sex- and geographically disaggregated statistics;

<sup>7</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Conclusion on civil registration*, No. 111 (LXIV) – 2013, EXCOM Conclusions, 17 October 2013.

(f) Preventing and reducing the risk of statelessness, human trafficking, child and early marriage, child labour etc., as well as promoting durable solutions for refugees, including by documenting links to the country of origin;

(g) Offering information for humanitarian planning, disaster risk reduction and management, and aiding the response to disasters,

12. *Deeply concerned* that an estimated 135 million children under 5 years of age in the region have not had their birth registered and that millions of other vital events are not registered,<sup>8</sup>

13. *Alarmed* that the majority of countries in the region do not possess universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that meet relevant international standards and recommendations,<sup>9</sup>

14. *Convinced* that a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving civil registration and vital statistics, involving all relevant stakeholders and incorporating civil registration and vital statistics into relevant national development plans, is the most effective and sustainable way to develop and improve civil registration and vital statistics systems,

15. *Recognizing* the need to address disparities in the civil registration coverage of hard-to-reach and marginalized populations, including people living in rural, remote, isolated or border areas, minorities, indigenous people, migrants, non-citizens, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless people, and people without documentation,

16. *Also recognizing* the need for special attention to build national capacities related to death registration and determining causes of death, including medical certification of death and coding causes of death according to the International Classification of Diseases, verbal autopsy and training of health workers,

17. *Underscoring* that the functioning of civil registration and vital statistics systems should be guided by the United Nations' Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System<sup>10</sup> and production of vital statistics undertaken in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,

18. *Emphasizing* that, when universal, civil registration is the best source of vital statistics, and that, while household surveys have considerable value, they cannot replicate the strengths of civil registration as a data source, namely universality in coverage, permanence, continuity, archiving of records and cost-effectiveness over time, and are thus not a long-term substitute for civil registration and vital statistics systems,

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<sup>8</sup> This figure is an estimate provided by the United Nations Children's Fund, *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and Trends in Birth Registration* (New York, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> According to self-assessments conducted by 47 (out of a total of 62) ESCAP members and associate members during the period between 2010 and 2013 using a rapid assessment tool developed by the University of Queensland and the World Health Organization, 36 possessed civil registration and vital statistics systems that were categorized as "dysfunctional", "weak" or "functional but inadequate".

<sup>10</sup> *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System: Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.10). Available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>.

19. *Recognizing* the important role and added value of international, regional and subregional organizations and initiatives to support the development and improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in countries through advocacy, technical assistance, capacity-building, dissemination of information, research, innovation, and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge and best practices,<sup>11</sup>
20. *Also recognizing* that non-governmental organizations, civil society, professional associations, media and the private sector, including those involved in public-private partnerships, can also play a significant role in supporting the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics, in accordance with national priorities and strategies,
21. *Believing* that monitoring and accountability, including the setting of national targets for elements of civil registration and vital statistics, can expedite the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems,
22. *Appreciating* the efforts already made by members and associate members to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems,
23. *Also appreciating* the ongoing support provided by development partners as part of the regional initiative to improve civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific, including recent efforts to strengthen financing for civil registration and vital statistics improvement activities at national, regional and global levels,
24. *Recognizing* the valuable role of subregional programmes to improve civil registration and vital statistics and in the implementation of the present Declaration, particularly for addressing unique subregional challenges,
25. *Acknowledging* that the establishment of a regional network of civil registrars would facilitate information sharing and peer-to-peer technical support to realize universal civil registration,
26. *Welcoming* the growing momentum around civil registration and vital statistics, including the progress achieved through initiatives in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific and other regions, including Africa, Latin America and the Eastern Mediterranean,
27. *Applauding* the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific for its efforts in overseeing the preparations for the Ministerial Conference and the development of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific,
28. *Expressing appreciation* to the co-organizers of the Ministerial Conference and to Thailand as the host Government,
29. *Proclaim* our shared vision that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development;

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<sup>11</sup> Such as the first International Identity Management Conference, held from 23 to 25 September 2014 in Seoul, which recognized that civil registration is a basis for civil identification of individuals and that an organic link between civil registration and identity management is critical.

30. *Affirm* that the realization of our shared vision depends on achieving the following goals:

(a) Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events;

(b) Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, in order to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights;

(c) Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death), based on registration records, are produced and disseminated;

31. *Declare* the years 2015 to 2024 to be the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade for Asia and the Pacific to achieve our shared vision;

32. *Endorse* the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, so as to accelerate and focus the efforts of Governments and development partners and, thereby, to achieve our shared vision;

33. *Commit* to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework so that the shared vision, goals and national targets can be achieved through comprehensive, integrated and concerted efforts by all relevant stakeholders in the following action areas:

(a) Political commitment;

(b) Public engagement, participation and generating demand;

(c) Coordination;

(d) Policies, legislation and implementation of regulations;

(e) Infrastructure and resources;

(f) Operational procedures, practices and innovations;

(g) Production, dissemination and use of vital statistics;

34. *Also commit*, by the end of 2015, to establish an effective and sustainable national civil registration and vital statistics coordination mechanism, develop a national improvement strategy, including monitoring and evaluation, set national targets for 2024 and initiate the other implementation steps of the Regional Action Framework;

35. *Resolve* to give particular attention and take measures to reduce all barriers to civil registration and to ensure the registration of vital events among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations and to build national capacities related to death registration and ascertaining causes of death;

36. *Call upon* development partners to provide technical and financial assistance to countries in a coordinated manner that is conducive to a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving civil registration and vital statistics;

37. *Invite* all concerned development partners, including the following, to join and contribute to the regional partnership supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Framework:

(a) Subregional organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization, and initiatives, such as the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (2011-2014) under the auspices of the Brisbane Accord Group, to promote subregional cooperation for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics;

(b) Development cooperation agencies, to strengthen the effectiveness of their plans and programmes on civil registration and vital statistics and related areas of development assistance in line with national policies and priorities;

(c) Bilateral and multilateral development agencies, banks and other financial institutions, such as the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank, to harness their technical and financial resources for supporting the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics;

(d) The United Nations system, including programmes, funds and specialized agencies, to jointly deliver support for improving civil registration and vital statistics, including through effective use of existing mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels, such as the United Nations Development Group, country teams, and disaster and emergency planning and response teams;

(e) Non-governmental and civil society organizations, to support Governments and foster continuous responsiveness to the aspirations and needs of all people, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations;

(f) The private sector, to promote innovation and strengthen efforts to form public-private partnerships;

(g) Academic and research institutions and professional societies, to collect, develop and disseminate best practices, innovation and technical resources;

38. *Designate* oversight for the Regional Action Framework and custodianship of the Decade to the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific reporting through the Commission;

39. *Call upon* members, associate members and development partners to support the further development of an Asian and Pacific regional network of civil registrars, and, in particular, its contribution to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework;

40. *Encourage* members and associate members to advocate for the inclusion of civil registration and vital statistics in the development agenda beyond 2015;

41. *Recommend* that the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems be included in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks;

42. *Request* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to supporting members and associate members in the full, effective and sustainable implementation of the present Declaration and Regional Action Framework, in cooperation with other concerned entities;

(b) To provide secretariat support for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework;

(c) To oversee regional reviews of progress in implementing the Regional Action Framework in 2020 and 2025;

(d) To mainstream the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems into the work of the secretariat;

(e) To continue engagement with development partners to ensure the ongoing, coordinated and effective operation of the regional partnership;

(f) To submit the outcome of this Ministerial Conference to the Commission at its seventy-first session.

## **B. Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

### **I. Introduction**

1. Through Commission resolution 69/15, countries in Asia and the Pacific requested that further regional action be taken to support the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems. The Regional Action Framework responds to that request as a catalyst for Governments and development partners to focus and accelerate their efforts to realize a shared vision and the three CRVS goals outlined in this document during the proposed civil registration and vital statistics decade for Asia and the Pacific (2015 to 2024).

2. The Regional Action Framework facilitates collaborative action at local, provincial, national and international levels by enabling multiple stakeholders to align and prioritize their efforts, as well as to monitor progress towards achieving shared results.

3. Guided by the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>12</sup> the development of the Regional Action Framework benefited from comprehensive consultations with countries and development partners during 2014. It builds on and offers a practical means for implementing the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>13</sup>

4. CRVS is defined as the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording and production of vital statistics on the occurrence and characteristics of vital events in accordance with national laws, rules, regulations and policies from time to time in force, including births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimations and recognitions.<sup>14</sup>

### **A. Shared vision, goals and action areas**

5. The shared vision is that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development.

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<sup>12</sup> The Regional Steering Group was established in September 2013 pursuant to Commission resolution 69/15, comprising a balance of representatives of the Governments from the five subregions of the Commission and the civil registration, health and statistics sectors, as well as representatives of regional organizations with mandates to support the improvement of CRVS systems in the region.

<sup>13</sup> As endorsed by Commission resolution 69/15.

<sup>14</sup> *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System: Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.10). Available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>.

6. The goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework offer measurable outcomes that reflect progress towards achievement of the shared vision during the course of the decade 2015 to 2024. They recognize core human rights principles of progressive realization, non-regression, non-discrimination and equity, which apply to all countries and areas.

7. The three goals are:

(a) **Goal 1:** Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events;

(b) **Goal 2:** All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights;

(c) **Goal 3:** Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated.

8. The realization of the shared vision depends on coordinated and concerted efforts to develop and enhance the capacities of members and associate members in seven action areas, which are:

- (a) Political commitment;
- (b) Public engagement, participation and generation of demand;
- (c) Coordination;
- (d) Policies, legislation and implementation of regulations;
- (e) Infrastructure and resources;
- (f) Operational procedures, practices and innovations;
- (g) Production, dissemination and use of vital statistics.

## B. Key principles

9. The six key principles for implementing the Regional Action Framework are:

(a) **Countries take the lead.** Activities under the Regional Action Framework should be driven by country demand and address the needs identified in the comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy, if one exists;

(b) **A stepwise approach.** The Regional Action Framework harnesses existing strengths of members and associate members, and facilitates incremental, feasible and sustainable improvements that are supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation;

(c) **Flexibility and responsiveness.** Recognizing that there is no single blueprint for improving CRVS systems in every setting, the Regional Action Framework offers action areas as a broad basis for the activities of Government and development partners with flexibility to accommodate the particular circumstances of each member and associate member;

(d) **Building on local expertise.** In recognition of national and regional diversities, the Regional Action Framework leverages local knowledge and expertise for CRVS improvement;

(e) **Consistency with international human rights and legal principles, and national law.** The Regional Action Framework is consistent

with relevant international frameworks, including article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>15</sup> and article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>16, 17</sup> as well as the principles of universality and non-discrimination. The Regional Action Framework should be applied consistently with the existing national law, rules and regulations;

(f) **Coordination and alignment.** The Regional Action Framework is a platform to facilitate harmonization and avoid duplication of activities of local, provincial, national, regional and international stakeholders, including subregional initiatives,<sup>18</sup> for augmented impact in countries.

## II. Goals and targets

10. The three goals of the Regional Action Framework address the three essential outputs of CRVS systems: the civil registration of vital events, which is a precursor to the other two goals; the provision to individuals and families of legal documentation as evidence of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events; and the production and dissemination of vital statistics based on civil registration records.

11. The targets are designed to enable monitoring and evaluation in ways that are objective, efficient, technically sound and time bound during the decade 2015 to 2024.

12. Members and associate members set their own national target value for each target (either the percentage or the year, depending on the target) based on their ambition and capacity, and in accordance with their comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy, if one exists.

13. Geographic location, gender, religion or ethnicity should not be barriers to civil registration. Many countries experience substantially lower civil registration coverage rates among certain population groups, geographic areas and administrative subdivisions. Members and associate members are thus encouraged to set separate national targets, where appropriate, for civil registration coverage, provision of legal documentation and vital statistics for these subgroups, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations. These targets should be supported by specific activities, ideally as part of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy, to address the inequalities related to CRVS that these subgroups experience.

14. Disaggregated data enable Governments and development partners to continuously monitor civil registration coverage and the provision of legal documentation and vital statistics among all population groups, and facilitate targeted actions to specific groups. Therefore, when members and associate members report on progress in implementing the Regional Action Framework, they are encouraged to provide data that can be disaggregated by age, sex and geographic area or administrative subdivision, as well as by other relevant subgroups.

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<sup>15</sup> General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

<sup>17</sup> Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states "... a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless[,] under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

<sup>18</sup> For example, the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan and initiatives of the World Health Organization, including the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Regional Strategy on Strengthening the Role of the Health Sector in Improving CRVS in South-East Asia.

15. The civil registration of marriages, divorces and adoptions has profound development implications, such as contributing to gender equality and addressing issues related to marriage before the legal age. Each marriage, divorce or adoption registration has the potential to have drastic impacts on the lives of the individuals concerned. Members and associate members are encouraged to make additional commitments with appropriate national targets for the civil registration coverage, provision of legal documentation and vital statistics on marriages, divorces and adoptions.

**A. Goal 1: Universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events**

16. Goal 1 is an expression of the internationally accepted principle of the universal coverage of civil registration. The CRVS system should register all vital events occurring in the territory and jurisdiction of the country or area, including among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations.

17. The focus on universality and equity implies that, in countries where there are significant variations in civil registration coverage by geography or level of social and economic development, it may be necessary to establish special procedures for civil registration. These may include incentives and measures to alleviate barriers to civil registration, such as gender disparities, distance, costs and cultural factors, and may involve utilizing existing infrastructure or public services, including social workers and community health workers, for notifying civil registration authorities of vital events.

18. Civil registration records should contain, for each vital event, the minimum information for judicial and administrative purposes as recommended by the United Nations.<sup>19</sup>

19. Every death should have a medically certified cause associated with it. For statistical purposes, special measures, such as verbal autopsy, may be needed to ensure that all deaths are associated with a defined cause of death, especially in settings where many deaths occur outside of health facilities and without attention from a medical practitioner.

20. The targets for goal 1 are:

- 1.A By 2024, at least ... per cent of births in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.<sup>20</sup>
- 1.B By 2024, at least ... per cent of children under 5 years old in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.
- 1.C By 2024, at least ... per cent of all individuals in the territory and jurisdiction have had their birth registered.
- 1.D By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths that take place in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are registered.

<sup>19</sup> *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System: Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.10), annex I. Available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Given that Member States endorsed, at the sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, “Every Newborn: An Action Plan to End Preventable Deaths” (World Health Organization (Geneva, 2014), annex 1), which contains the strategic objective that “every newborn needs to be registered, and newborn and maternal deaths and stillbirths need to be counted”, members and associate members should aim to register every birth within 28 days of occurrence, and reflect this in their national target for target 1.A.

1.E By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.

21. Members and associate members are encouraged, where appropriate, to add national targets for the civil registration of other vital events, such as marriages, divorces and adoptions.

**B. Goal 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights**

22. Goal 2 reflects that CRVS systems provide legal documentation of civil registration to individuals and families for legal and administrative purposes. Legal documentation is strongly linked with a broad range of rights and activities, in particular legal identity. This goal addresses the distinction between the civil registration of a vital event and the possession of formal proof that it took place, in the form of legal documentation.

23. Legal documentation of civil registration is obtained through paper or electronic certificates or certified copies of registration records that prove the occurrence and characteristics of a vital event. Governments should specify the method of issuing legal documentation for the first time, for replacements and for corrections, and take necessary measures to eliminate discrimination, deter corruption, fraud and forgery, and protect the privacy of individuals and families.

24. Achieving this goal requires that legal documentation should be readily accessible to the appropriate individuals. Aside from physical access, this includes no or low fees for providing the legal documentation and short waiting time between the civil registration of a vital event and the provision of the legal documentation.

25. In order to mitigate risks of discrimination, legal documentation should contain just the minimum set of information required for legal and administrative purposes as the national legal framework dictates. The targets of goal 2 describe the minimum information that should be included on birth and death certificates, according to international standards and recommendations.

26. The targets for goal 2 are:

2.A By 2024, at least ... per cent of all births registered in the territory and jurisdiction are accompanied with the issuance of an official birth certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.

2.B By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths registered in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official death certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex, and age.

27. Members and associate members are encouraged, where appropriate, to add national targets for the provision of legal documentation of civil registration of other vital events, such as marriages, divorces and adoptions.

**C. Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated**

28. Goal 3 highlights the critical importance of civil registration being linked to the production and quality assurance of vital statistics on the occurrence and characteristics of vital events.

29. For many Governments, the routine generation of accurate complete and timely statistics on births, deaths and causes of death will require medium-term strategic and prioritized investment to improve civil registration and the national statistical system. There is thus a need to work progressively towards this goal. In the interim, the need for data to track progress towards improved health outcomes and broader development goals can be met using alternative sources, including censuses, household surveys and sample registration methods. While each method has some advantages, none is able to replicate the key strengths of civil registration as a source, namely universality in coverage, permanence and continuity, and archiving of records.

30. In countries and areas where it is legislated that all births and deaths should be recorded by the ministry of health, the data collected should be seen as a possible valid administrative data source of vital statistics. However, there should be systems in place to ensure that the data are shared with the civil registry and national statistical system.

31. The production of vital statistics should allow for key disaggregation, namely by age, sex, geographic area, administrative subdivisions, other subgroups and characteristics of the vital event, such as cause of death, using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

32. The production of vital statistics should be in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.<sup>21</sup>

33. The targets for goal 3 are:

3.A By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.

3.B By ... (year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.

3.C By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate).

3.D By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014.

<sup>22</sup> The classification of “ill-defined” will depend on the code set adopted by the country, including the version of ICD being used and the level of detail being applied.

- 3.E By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.
  - 3.F By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.
  - 3.G By ... (year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.
  - 3.H By ... (year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.
34. Members and associate members are encouraged, where appropriate, to add national targets for the production and dissemination of vital statistics on other vital events, such as on marriages, divorces and adoptions.

### **III. Action areas**

35. The action areas serve as a basis for Governments and development partners to focus and organize efforts towards developing, implementing and supporting comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategies, including delineating the responsibilities of involved stakeholders.

36. The action areas also facilitate structured reporting on activities and progress by Governments and development partners, which will enable enhanced knowledge-sharing, regional cooperation and learning, and the identification of opportunities for collaboration. If members and associate members have adopted an alternative approach for a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy, it should be ensured that all seven action areas are covered in some manner.

37. The features of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy will depend on the administrative, legal, social, cultural and political structures within national and subnational contexts, and on available or attainable infrastructure and resources. However, progress towards achieving the three goals of the Regional Action Framework will for most countries require efforts in all of the action areas.

38. Examples of activities that can be undertaken in each of the action areas are annexed to this document. The examples are illustrative only and may be highly relevant to some countries but not to others.

#### **A. Political commitment**

39. Sustained political commitment is crucial for the development and continuous functioning of CRVS systems. Political commitment can galvanize all stakeholders and levels of society around efforts to improve CRVS systems, and enable CRVS improvement to be embedded into national development plans. Furthermore, political commitment is critical for ensuring that CRVS systems are adequately resourced and are designed to be inclusive and responsive.

40. Political commitment at the highest levels plays an essential role in ensuring that relevant government stakeholders effectively take on their roles and responsibilities, and unify around a single comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy. It is imperative that all levels of government are engaged in the process of establishing political commitment and development of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy.

#### **B. Public engagement, participation and generating demand**

41. Improving the coverage of civil registration requires individuals and families to know the value of declaring vital events to relevant authorities and to be willing to do so. Universal and responsive CRVS systems are thus dependent on relationships of mutual trust and accountability between authorities and the public, and should be organized and managed in ways that are respectful of cultural and behavioural sensitivities.

42. Public engagement, participation and demand generation involves enhancing public awareness of the importance of declaring vital events and the value of vital statistics, and efforts to remove barriers to registration at all levels. Often, health, education and other public services, as well as the media, social workers and civil society, play a crucial role in providing information about the value of CRVS and encouraging the public to register vital events.

#### **C. Coordination**

43. Since there are so many institutions involved in and benefiting from CRVS, effective coordination is a prerequisite for universal and responsive CRVS systems. Coordination must take place among all relevant responsible stakeholders in countries at all levels of government, among development partners and between Governments and development partners.

44. Within countries, effective coordination among different local, provincial and national stakeholders involved in reporting, recording and registering the occurrence of vital events is essential, particularly for preventing duplication of functions and information and for facilitating the effective use of registration records for statistical purposes. It is therefore imperative that a national CRVS coordination mechanism, such as a national committee or board, functions well and comprises all sectors, including the civil registration authorities, provincial and local governments, the health and education sectors, the statistics authorities and civil society.

#### **D. Policies, legislation and implementation of regulations**

45. A sound legal framework provides the basis for a universal and responsive CRVS system. Reviewing and updating of relevant legislation, regulations and policies is often a first step and common priority in a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy. It is especially important that the legal framework for CRVS does not create discriminatory barriers to civil registration.

46. The legislation or regulations should provide definitions of vital events. The legal framework should make the civil registration of vital events compulsory and define the functions, duties and responsibilities of civil registration authorities and of those who are obliged to register, thus helping to ensure the completeness of registration and to improve the accuracy of information held in civil records. In accordance with international standards, birth registration should be free of charge or a low fee should be charged to

the family for late registration. Incentives should be offered to families for timely civil registration.

47. The legal framework should protect the confidentiality of personal data and ensure that data can be securely shared between approved departments, as necessary, for quality assurance and to produce the required vital statistics. The legal framework should ensure the quality, timeliness and completeness of the vital statistics produced in compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and should contain provisions for the CRVS system.

#### **E. Infrastructure and resources**

48. Registration points should be within a reasonable distance for the whole population, or measures, such as digital registration options, need to be undertaken to facilitate civil registration in remote areas on a routine basis, including for hard-to-reach and marginalized populations.

49. In terms of human resources, CRVS systems depend on a sufficient number of qualified staff. Governments need to consider mechanisms for career development and appreciation, as well as ongoing training to enhance the skills of and retain staff. Special efforts should be made to develop and retain key technical skills, such as training for physicians to accurately determine and record immediate and underlying causes of death, as well as capacity-building of officials to be able to establish, maintain and monitor CRVS systems.

50. Sufficient and sustainable investments are essential to enable incremental improvements in CRVS systems in areas of human resources, infrastructure, equipment and supplies.

#### **F. Operational procedures, practices and innovations**

51. Whereas the existence of a sound legal and institutional framework is central to a universal and responsive CRVS system, by itself it is insufficient. Attention must also be paid to ensure that those frameworks are effectively and consistently applied through the design and implementation of operational procedures and practices.

52. Operational procedures must be designed and implemented so as to ensure the essential function of civil registration in providing legal documentation that can help to establish legal identity, civil status, family relationships, nationality and ensuing rights. Similarly, they should facilitate the transmission of data to approved departments for the production of vital statistics.

53. Digital collection, maintenance and dissemination of data as part of a CRVS system, including online civil registration and service delivery, is a likely long-term ambition of members and associate members since it can support efficient public service delivery and e-government. In addition, advances in technology simplify and reduce the cost of secure storage and protection of civil registration archives from natural disasters, war and cyberattacks. Innovations and the application of information and communications technology, including mobile technology, can also facilitate the civil registration of vital events in areas that are remote or otherwise isolated. However, innovations and technology are effective only when applied within a sound legal and institutional framework, with appropriate operational procedures and practices in place and consistently applied.

## **G. Production, dissemination and use of vital statistics**

54. The administrative data from civil registration, when universal, is the preferred source of vital statistics in terms of accuracy, completeness and timeliness. An advantage of vital statistics based on civil registration is that they can be disaggregated to smaller sections and areas of the population, for example administrative subdivisions. Furthermore, advances in technology and methodology have made it increasingly feasible to overcome technical and logistical challenges related to compiling, ensuring the quality of, analysing and disseminating complete and reliable information on vital events.

55. Governments may need to adopt a phased approach to using civil registration records as a source of vital statistics by ensuring that information on currently registered vital events is compiled in a way to allow the production of vital statistics. Even if civil registration is known to be incomplete and confined to certain areas of the country, for example urban areas, the information should nonetheless be compiled and analysed alongside vital statistics from other sources. In the longer term, the aim is to produce complete, nationally representative statistics using civil registration as the main source.

56. Vital statistics should be made available to key users and in the public domain within a reasonable time frame. Metadata, including information on the content, context and limitation of the statistics, should be provided to users to increase their understanding of the data.

## **IV. Implementation of the Regional Action Framework**

### **A. Governance**

57. The Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific will be responsible for providing regional oversight and guidance for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework, including acting as custodian for the decade 2015 to 2024.

58. The Regional Steering Group shall be responsible for facilitating synergies between the Regional Action Framework and other ongoing initiatives to improve CRVS systems in Asia and the Pacific.

59. The Regional Steering Group shall be serviced by the ESCAP secretariat.

60. Where subregional initiatives exist to improve CRVS, coordination will occur in conjunction with and through appropriate and mandated governance bodies overseeing such initiatives. For example, in the Pacific islands, coordination will continue through the Brisbane Accord Group and the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (2011-2014), which is under the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy 2011-2020.

61. Within countries, the implementation of the Regional Action Framework shall be overseen by the national CRVS coordination mechanism. Development partners operating within national contexts are encouraged to establish working groups to coordinate activities among themselves and with the Government.

### **B. Implementation steps**

62. Implementation of the Regional Action Framework requires members and associate members to undertake the following steps, if they have not done so already:

- (a) Establish an effective and sustainable national CRVS coordination mechanism comprising all relevant stakeholders;
- (b) Conduct a standards-based comprehensive assessment of CRVS in their territory,<sup>23</sup> which is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, for the purpose of identifying gaps and making recommendations that will be the foundation of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy;
- (c) Set the national target value for each target, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, and report these to the ESCAP secretariat,
- (d) Develop and implement a plan for monitoring and reporting on achievement of the targets, including on reporting to the ESCAP secretariat;
- (e) Assess inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations and particular geographic areas and administrative subdivisions, and, where appropriate, set national targets to address those inequalities;
- (f) Develop and implement a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy, aligned, where appropriate, with the action areas of the Regional Action Framework, with political commitment, adequate funding, and a clear delineation of responsibilities for stakeholders to establish accountability for the implementation;
- (g) Assign a national focal point within the Government that is responsible for coordinating with the ESCAP secretariat and development partners;
- (h) Through the national focal point, report relevant information to the ESCAP secretariat or subregional body, as appropriate, in accordance with the reporting structure for the Regional Action Framework.

### C. Reporting and regional reviews

Table

#### Key dates for reporting and reviewing progress on implementing the Regional Action Framework

Year	Activity
2015	Members and associate members submit baseline report to the secretariat
2016	Regional baseline analysis
2019	Members and associate members submit midterm report to the secretariat
2020	Midterm regional review conducted
2024	Members and associate members submit final report to the secretariat
2025	Final regional review conducted

63. In order to facilitate reliable monitoring while respecting the need for flexibility to national circumstances, the reporting structure of the Regional Action Framework is as follows:

<sup>23</sup> Using a tool such as *Improving the Quality and Use of Birth, Death and Cause-of-death Information: Guidance for a Standards-based Review of Country Practices* (World Health Organization and the University of Queensland Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub, 2010).

(a) **Baseline report.** By the end of 2015, members and associate members, through the designated national focal point, will submit to the ESCAP secretariat:

- (i) Most recent nationally representative baseline data for each target;
- (ii) The national target value for each target;
- (iii) A progress report on CRVS improvement activities;
- (iv) The report of any comprehensive assessment conducted in the country, where available;
- (v) Any national CRVS strategy, where available;

(b) **Midterm report.** By the end of 2019, members and associate members, through the designated national focal point, will submit to the ESCAP secretariat:

- (i) Nationally representative data measuring progress towards each target, where available;
- (ii) A progress report on CRVS improvement activities;
- (iii) The report of any comprehensive assessment conducted in the country, where available;
- (iv) Any national CRVS strategy, where available;

(c) **Final report.** By the end of 2024, members and associate members, through the designated national focal point, will submit to the ESCAP secretariat:

- (i) Nationally representative data measuring progress towards each target, where available;
- (ii) A progress update report on CRVS improvement activities;
- (iii) The report of any comprehensive assessment conducted in the country, where available;
- (iv) Any national CRVS strategy, where available.

64. For the purposes of tracking progress and compiling information about CRVS improvement activities that could be constructive to share across the region and with other regions, members and associate members should submit progress reports to the secretariat in the years mentioned above, detailing activities undertaken under each.

65. On a voluntary basis, members and associate members may submit reports and information in other years either on an ad hoc basis or upon request of the secretariat or the Regional Steering Group.

66. The progress reports on CRVS improvement activities should preferably be arranged along the lines of the action areas or the form of any template decided by the Regional Steering Group. Definitions of vital events and key terms used should be provided as a part of the progress reports.

67. In order to prevent duplication, members and associate members with existing similar progress reporting structures may provide their reports arranged as those structures allow, for example as part of their national CRVS strategy or for other international initiatives, as is the case for the Pacific islands under the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (2011-2014).

68. In the years immediately following the three reporting years, the secretariat and development partners, in collaboration with the Regional Steering Group, will synthesize the country reports into a report on regional progress towards achieving the targets set by members and associate members, and publish the result as an overview report of the status of CRVS in the Asia-Pacific region.

69. To support monitoring of the Regional Action Framework, the secretariat and the regional partnership, in consultation with the Regional Steering Group, will develop and make available relevant definitions and guidelines for the collection and processing of monitoring information.

#### **D. Regional partnership and secretariat**

70. International, regional, subregional, national and local development partners, including international organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, academia and professional societies, have a key role to play in supporting members and associate members to realize the shared vision. The implementation of the Regional Action Framework can include advocacy, technical assistance, capacity-building, dissemination of information, application of information and communications technology, research, innovation and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the region.

71. The regional partnership of organizations supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Framework will provide their support in accordance with the key principles. In particular, assistance shall be conducive to a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving CRVS, and delivered in a coordinated and harmonized manner that is aligned with the priorities set by members and associate members through their comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategies. Where subregional or other related CRVS initiatives exist, all involved stakeholders have a mutual obligation to ensure coordination.

72. National civil registration authorities are central to successful implementation of the Regional Action Framework, particularly realization of goals 1 and 2. Recognizing this important role, the regional partnership will, subject to the availability of resources, support the establishment and functioning of a regional network of civil registrars to facilitate information sharing and peer-to-peer technical support, as well as documenting and sharing knowledge and lessons learned.

73. The ESCAP secretariat shall contribute to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework through its regional convening and norm-setting role, facilitating coordination, servicing the Regional Steering Group and overseeing the regional reviews.

## Annex

### Examples of activities in each action area

#### A. Political commitment

- (a) Issuing a high-level declaration on the importance of CRVS for all individuals;
- (b) Developing a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy detailing budget and commitments required for implementation;
- (c) Ensuring that a national CRVS coordination mechanism reports to the highest level of government and includes representation of all levels of government involved in the CRVS system.

#### B. Public engagement, participation and generating demand

- (a) Undertaking national campaigns or drives to encourage individuals and families to declare and register vital events;
- (b) Undertaking national and subnational advocacy and outreach specifically directed to hard-to-reach and marginalized population groups;
- (c) Identifying and removing barriers to registration, in particular those that impede access by persons from marginalized groups;
- (d) Undertaking advocacy on the benefits of vital statistics and sponsoring vital statistics as a theme for national statistics day;
- (e) Reviewing incentives and penalties in relation to the civil registration of vital events and considering ways to make these more effective and avoid unintended effects and adverse impact on the realization of rights, such as access to health and education;
- (f) Including representatives of civil society, such as communities and non-governmental organizations, on national CRVS coordination mechanisms.

#### C. Coordination

- (a) Establishing a representative and functioning multisectoral mechanism responsible for CRVS coordination, such as a national committee or board;
- (b) Assigning the national CRVS coordination mechanism with the task of overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive multisectoral national CRVS strategy and liaising with development partners;
- (c) Ensuring linkages between CRVS improvement efforts and relevant national development plans.

#### D. Policies, legislation and implementation of regulations

- (a) Reviewing and amending legislation, policies and regulations in adherence with international standards, as described by the United Nations, in order to ensure access to registration for all without discrimination;

- (b) Reviewing and amending policies, legislation and regulations in order to ensure that registration of births and deaths is free of charge or with a low fee for late registration;
- (c) Reviewing and amending policies, legislation and regulations to protect the confidentiality of personal data in civil registration records;
- (d) Putting measures in place to protect the integrity of civil registration records and prevent fraudulent registration of vital events;
- (e) Reviewing and amending policies, legislation and regulations pertaining to the certification of deaths, ensuring that they are aligned with international standards as defined by the World Health Organization;
- (f) Ensuring uniform implementation of regulations across the jurisdiction.

**E. Infrastructure and resources**

- (a) Analysing business processes within CRVS systems with a view to identifying options for enhanced cost-effectiveness as well as resource gaps;
- (b) Allocating adequate national financial resources for the implementation of national comprehensive CRVS strategies;
- (c) Introducing measures to ensure availability of registration infrastructure, staffing, and equipment and supplies;
- (d) Investigating the appropriateness of public-private partnerships to address infrastructure gaps;
- (e) Training registration staff in correct registration and certification procedures and practices, possibly through online qualification systems along with periodic retraining;
- (f) Providing staff in the national statistical system with training on using administrative data to produce statistics;
- (g) Introducing courses in medical schools and continuing training for physicians in certification of causes of death and for statistical clerks in ICD coding procedures.

**F. Operational procedures, practices and innovations**

- (a) Reviewing and adapting registration forms and procedures to align with international standards for legal and statistical purposes;
- (b) Implementing measures to ensure the quality and integrity of legal documentation emanating from the civil registration system;
- (c) Implementing actions to safeguard confidentiality and security of registration information and records;
- (d) Introducing operational procedures to ensure that unregistered children are not deprived of access to rights and services;
- (e) Introducing innovations to increase access to registration, such as mobile registration and use of information technology for registration and maintaining civil registration records;

- (f) Conducting thorough technical analysis and risk assessment to establish how digital technologies can best be used to support CRVS processes in a scalable and sustainable way, and ensuring that mitigation strategies are in place when there are possible threats to the rights of individuals, such as privacy;
- (g) Introducing procedures to build and maintain skills of statistical clerks and related personnel for ICD-compliant coding of causes of death and use of automated coding techniques;
- (h) Enhancing the capacity of the civil registration system to produce and deliver certificates to the public in a timely and efficient manner;
- (i) Harnessing the capacity of hospitals, health centres, religious institutions and schools to contribute to civil registration since they can play significant roles in registering vital events;
- (j) Enhancing national capacities to ensure the safe and secure long-term management and archiving of legal records;
- (k) Implementing measures to register the vital events of residents who are temporarily abroad and in a position to access consular facilities;
- (l) Implementing special measures to register currently unregistered populations, for example through facilitating late birth registration.

#### **G. Production, dissemination and use of vital statistics**

- (a) Providing ongoing training for statisticians in the production, dissemination and analysis of vital statistics;
- (b) Introducing quality assurance frameworks for the production of vital statistics derived from civil registration;
- (c) Promoting the use of vital statistics to support decisions in areas of social, economic and health policy, and monitoring progress towards national and internationally agreed development goals;
- (d) Integrating CRVS improvement into the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, if one exists;
- (e) Introducing operational procedures including a data release calendar;
- (f) Using information technology for the speedy compilation, analysis and publication of vital statistics derived from civil registration;
- (g) Taking measures to make vital statistics readily accessible to users, including through issuing summaries and policy briefs, and publishing vital statistics on the Web.

## II. Proceedings

### A. Key issues and perspectives on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific

1. The Conference took note of the key issues and perspectives related to civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific contained in the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 29, No. 1, which was a special edition on CRVS that was published to coincide with the Conference.

2. The Conference took note of the civil registration advocacy video entitled “Voices for CRVS”, featuring statements made at the Civil Society Forum and Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Conference, which were both held in August 2014.

3. Ms. Haishan Fu, Director, Development Data Group, World Bank Group, moderated a panel on key issues and perspectives on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific. The panellists, representing a variety of perspectives on CRVS, included Mr. Kuenga Tshering, Director-General, National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan; Mr. Ardeshir Khosravi, Head, Health Information Systems, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Islamic Republic of Iran; Mr. Som Lal Subedi, Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Nepal; Mr. Alvin Onaka, State Registrar of Hawaii and Director of Health Status Monitoring, Hawaii Department of Health, United States of America; and Ms. Wassana Im-em, Assistant Representative, United Nations Population Fund Country Office, Thailand.

4. Representatives of the following ESCAP members took the floor: Bangladesh; Kyrgyzstan; Malaysia; Philippines; Solomon Islands; Timor-Leste; and Thailand. Representatives of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), Plan International and World Vision India also made interventions.

5. The panel discussed the value of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal national CRVS systems. It was concluded that as civil registration provided proof of birth, death and marriage, it could form the basis for regular, microlevel data to shape national and subnational planning, including for the provision of health care, education and other services. It was agreed that that was particularly relevant for health sector planning, which utilized cause-of-death statistics to assess the health status of the population, develop targeted interventions and evaluate the impact of policies and interventions.

6. The panel discussed some of the main challenges in developing and maintaining a well-functioning CRVS system, including coordination, infrastructure, logistics, the capacity of local and national-level stakeholders and information and communications technology (ICT), financial resources and political will.

7. The Conference noted the importance of ICT in managing the large volume of data produced by civil registration systems. In particular, the Conference recognized the benefits of directly transmitting data electronically from hospitals to the relevant central civil registration offices. The Conference noted the importance of secure electronic transmission, storage and dissemination of data to protect the privacy of individuals. The Conference highlighted the constraints involved in using ICT to integrate information.

8. The Conference stressed that censuses or household surveys could not replace a universal and well-functioning CRVS system. The constraints of censuses and surveys included incomplete or irregular collection, since surveys did not cover the whole population and censuses typically only occurred every 10 years.

9. The Conference highlighted the use of censuses, mid-term censuses, multiple indicator cluster surveys and other household surveys to regularly estimate civil registration coverage, and the potential of using a registration-based census for cutting costs and improving efficiency.

10. The Conference stressed the critical importance of coordination among stakeholders at the national and local levels in order to ensure efficient registration and production of vital statistics. The Conference recognized the role of ministries of health, civil registrars and national statistics offices as key stakeholders in CRVS systems, and agreed that improved coordination would reduce duplication and was necessary for the consistency of statistics published by different government agencies.

11. The Conference stressed the need for advocacy within countries in order to gain the political will and commitment necessary to establish coordination among the different sectors and for national resource mobilization.

12. The Conference stated the role of the United Nations system and other development partners in advocating CRVS, building strategic partnerships, providing technical assistance and mobilizing donor resources to supplement national resources. An example of the value-added of multi-country, multi-agency coordination was the success of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (2011-2014), which had been endorsed by the Pacific health ministers and implemented by countries with coordinated support from the multi-agency Brisbane Accord Group.

## **B. Consideration of the draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific**

13. The Conference had before it the following documents: (a) a draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific; and (b) “Report of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/3).

14. The senior officials decided to forward the ministerial declaration to the ministerial segment of the Conference for consideration and adoption by the ministers.

## **C. Implementation of the regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

15. The Conference had before it the following documents: (a) “Draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/1); and (b) a conference room paper on the draft revised terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/CRP/1).

16. The Chair provided an overview of the draft regional action framework, including a description of its key principles, goals and targets and

how it could facilitate local, national and regional collaboration for the improvement of CRVS.

17. Statements were made by representatives of the following ESCAP members and associate members: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; and Cook Islands.

18. Statements were also made by representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), World Vision International and PARIS21.

## **1. Draft regional action framework**

19. The Conference expressed strong support for the draft regional action framework, noting its relevance and timeliness for harnessing national-level action. The Conference stressed that the implementation steps outlined in the draft regional action framework provided a clear approach to improve national CRVS systems.

20. The senior officials decided to submit the draft regional action framework to the ministerial segment of the Conference for possible endorsement by the ministers.

21. The Conference noted the importance of ensuring that the draft regional action framework would add value and build on existing national priorities and mechanisms. In that respect, the Conference noted that in Pacific island member States the implementation of the draft regional action framework would be aligned with that of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, which was being implemented by the Brisbane Accord Group.

22. The Conference acknowledged that even relatively well-functioning CRVS systems could be improved in terms of quality and coverage, particularly for minorities and indigenous groups.

23. The Conference emphasized the importance of monitoring implementation of the draft regional action framework, adding that monitoring should provide accountability with a minimum response burden. The Conference appreciated the future role of the Regional Steering Group in monitoring and providing directions and oversight for the implementation of the draft regional action framework. The Conference expressed support for the draft revised terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group.

24. The Conference emphasized the value of sharing experiences and lessons learned related to CRVS strategies, technological advancements and data use throughout the region. The Conference highlighted South-South and triangular cooperation as means of implementation for the draft regional action framework.

25. The Conference pointed to the potential of the draft regional action framework to serve as a resource-mobilization tool, including for subregional initiatives.

26. Many delegations requested continued support from development partners and donors in providing technical assistance and financial resources for CRVS, including for their integration into national programmes.

## 2. Commitments toward implementation of the draft regional action framework

27. Delegations shared the achievements and experiences of their respective countries in the context of improving their CRVS systems, such as developing national action plans, establishing national coordination mechanisms, increasing civil registration coverage of births, deaths and marriages, completion of the WHO rapid assessment and/or the WHO comprehensive assessment tool,<sup>24</sup> improving the legislative and regulatory framework, electronic data transmission, data sharing and use of ICT.

28. The Conference noted with appreciation the commitments that several countries had made in national implementation of the draft regional action framework, including in the following areas:

(a) Improving national CRVS systems and achieving the goals of the draft regional action framework;

(b) Embedding CRVS within their national development plans;

(c) Setting national targets under the three goals of the draft regional action framework;

(d) Initiating specific efforts that would support implementation of the draft regional action framework, such as making changes to the legislative framework, including: promoting the use of administrative data; establishing or strengthening coordination among stakeholders; improving national harmonization of data on births, deaths, causes of death and marriages; improving the timeliness of the dissemination of high-quality population and mortality statistics; improving data management; building awareness of the importance of civil registration in government institutions and at the community level; and improving access to and use of CRVS data.

29. The Conference welcomed the commitments made by WHO, World Vision International and PARIS21 to continue to support implementation of the draft regional action framework, specifically: the commitment of WHO to continue to support the role of the health sector in strengthening CRVS, including improvements to mortality information systems; World Vision International to continue to promote public awareness of CRVS, in recognition of the essential role of non-governmental organizations in advocating for universal registration of vital events; and PARIS21 to support implementation of the draft regional action framework though continuing to provide support for national strategies for the development of statistics, advocacy, public awareness, statistics legislation, and coordination among stakeholders.

## 3. Approaches to improve CRVS

30. The Conference noted the importance of a strong legal framework for regulating and facilitating the registration of vital events and the issuance of civil registration and identity documents.

31. The Conference emphasized the need for close collaboration among ministries of health, national statistics offices and civil registrars. The Conference also noted the role of embassies, local civil registrars and non-governmental organizations in supporting the improvement of CRVS.

<sup>24</sup> *Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for Births, Deaths and Causes of Death: Resource Kit* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2012). Available from [www.who.int/healthinfo/CRVS\\_ResourceKit\\_2012.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/CRVS_ResourceKit_2012.pdf?ua=1).

32. The Conference stated that national CRVS coordination committees and national CRVS strategies were necessary for sustainable, efficient and effective improvements to CRVS systems, and recognized the particular importance of national CRVS strategies for countries with decentralized Governments.

33. The Conference recognized the importance of building the capacity of local governments as part of the process for improving CRVS. The Conference noted the value of improving documentation and guidelines for local counterparts.

34. The Conference noted the importance of mainstreaming CRVS in national development planning, including plans for statistical development.

35. The Conference highlighted the potential of using ICT for improving civil registration, and data management, sharing and analysis.

36. The Conference stressed the need for political will in generating the commitment necessary to achieve real results. The Conference elaborated that further advocacy was needed to maintain and increase political commitment.

37. The Conference recognized the importance of widespread and effective advocacy across a wide range of stakeholders both within and outside Government. Advocacy both at central and lower administrative levels is required in order to strengthen the supply of and demand for CRVS.

#### **4. Significance of CRVS for development and related concerns**

38. The Conference reiterated the importance of civil registration in providing proof of identity and civil status, including for minority populations, and that universal civil registration was linked to fundamental human rights. The Conference underlined that registration improved human security and provided the documentation necessary for an individual to access services, including education, health care and social protection.

39. The Conference highlighted the role of CRVS systems in the production of indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. The Conference noted that CRVS systems would also be essential for regular and accurate monitoring of the development agenda beyond 2015.

40. The Conference reiterated the importance of using vital statistics for national development planning, particularly in the health sector. The Conference stressed that utilization of civil registration data was necessary for producing accurate, complete and timely statistics on population demographics and health, which were necessary for evidenced-based decision-making.

41. The Conference recognized the role that academic and research institutions played in conducting research and analysis on development issues; research and analysis that could be strengthened through improved access to accurate, timely CRVS data.

42. The Conference recognized that the draft regional action framework responded well to the challenges that countries were currently facing, including: achieving full civil registration coverage in rural, remote or border areas and for minorities and indigenous groups; awareness of the socioeconomic benefits of registration; timely registration for births and

deaths that occurred outside of health care facilities, including through verbal autopsy; registration of children born to unmarried women; human capacity, particularly in recording the cause of death according to international standards; weak ICT infrastructure, Internet connectivity and capacity in ICT; data sharing between government departments; maintaining the privacy of individuals, while at the same time facilitating the use of administrative data; discrepancies in data across government agencies; and constrained financial resources for initiating improvements and maintaining well-functioning CRVS systems.

43. The Conference expressed concern that unless CRVS data use was improved, the benefits of improving the quality and coverage of CRVS would not be fully recognized.

#### **D. Policy priorities for improving civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

44. The Conference had before it a document entitled “State of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific and overview of supporting initiatives” (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/2).

45. Statements were made by representatives of the following ESCAP members and associate members: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tuvalu; Viet Nam; and Cook Islands.

46. A representative of the Himalayan Human Rights Monitors delivered a statement on behalf of the 16 civil society organizations that had participated in the Civil Society Forum in August 2014, which had been held in preparation for the Conference.

47. A representative of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) delivered a joint statement on behalf of the eight co-organizers of the Conference.

48. A statement was also made by a representative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

49. The Conference expressed strong support for the draft ministerial declaration, including for the draft regional action framework and the “Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024”.

50. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the work of the Regional Steering Group in developing the draft ministerial declaration and draft regional action framework.

51. The Conference expressed gratitude to ESCAP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, ADB and Plan International for organizing the Conference, for their role as advocates for CRVS and for supporting CRVS at the national level. The members of the Brisbane Accord Group were also acknowledged for their work in the Pacific.

## 1. Leave no one behind

52. The Conference recognized the importance of CRVS for inclusive, people-centred and sustainable development. With particular reference to the emerging development agenda beyond 2015 and the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, it noted the role CRVS played in realizing: (a) the right of every person to be legally recognized without distinction; (b) the right of every child to a birth certificate as the basic document for proving identity; and (c) the right of every person to basic social services, including education and health care. The Conference also underlined the need for regular and timely microlevel data on population size, migration, fertility, family structures, life expectancy and cause of death in order to target policy interventions; and the importance of administrative data systems in improving the delivery of social services for enhancing quality of life and ensuring that no one was left behind.

53. The Conference noted the importance of using CRVS systems to produce high-quality mortality and cause of death statistics in order to improve health sector planning. It stressed the importance of up-to-date cause of death statistics in the light of changing mortality patterns, including ageing populations and the growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases in the region.

54. The Conference also noted that CRVS provided microlevel information that could be used to develop targeted national and subnational policy interventions for vulnerable populations.

55. The Conference highlighted the value of well-functioning CRVS systems in responding to disasters, evaluating the impact of disasters, planning for the impacts of climate change, and building climate change and disaster resilience. It also noted the importance of civil registration documents for people displaced by disasters, including slow-onset events, and recognized that that was of particular importance for Asia and the Pacific due to the region's high vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

56. The Conference stressed that national stakeholders, development partners and donors must work together to ensure that "every one is in the picture" and that "no one is left behind". It further elaborated that, in addition to ensuring that "every one is in the picture", full utilization of data could be used to paint a complete picture of the population and health situation of countries, which, in turn, could improve national delivery of services.

## 2. Good governance

57. The Conference noted that one of the core functions of Government was to develop, monitor and evaluate policy interventions for ensuring that sustainable development included all people, including minorities and those in rural and isolated areas. It was also recalled that statistics had been recognized as a means of implementation for sustainable development by the Open Working Group when it called for increased "availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts".<sup>25</sup>

58. The Conference stressed that data and statistics form part of the foundation for policy analysis, developing good policies and monitoring

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<sup>25</sup> See A/68/970, Goal 17.

interventions. It noted that CRVS provided information that was essential for improving good governance and human security, while pointing out that well-functioning CRVS systems relied on good governance mechanisms.

59. The Conference emphasized that CRVS required a whole-of-government approach that not only included ministries of health, civil registrars and national statistical offices, but also entailed engaging local-level stakeholders, including health facilities and local registrars, line ministries, ministries of planning and other stakeholders.

60. The Conference noted that CRVS stakeholders were comprised of data suppliers, as well as data users, including national and local government entities, members of academia and research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It highlighted that improvements in CRVS should include working to increase understanding of the value of using vital statistics.

61. The Conference stressed that a well-functioning CRVS system could benefit from a national steering committee and national action plans. It noted that national action plans should be integrated within national planning frameworks, such as national development plans, health sector plans and strategies for the development of statistics.

62. The Conference emphasized that comprehensive legal frameworks and memorandums of understanding among stakeholders could provide a mechanism for strengthening CRVS governance.

### **3. Setting a path toward universal civil registration and improved vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific by 2024**

63. The Conference recognized the draft ministerial declaration as a milestone in elevating the political commitment for improving CRVS in the region. It stressed that well-functioning CRVS systems depended on sustaining strong political commitment, and that high-level CRVS champions were essential for building commitment.

64. The Conference took note of the long history of civil registration in Asian and Pacific countries, but also accepted that a large number of births, deaths and marriages had still not been registered in the region.

65. The Conference stressed that many gaps still remained in achieving fully functional CRVS systems. It noted that while national actions for improving CRVS must be based on national priorities and use national mechanisms, there was commonality in CRVS across the region. The Conference, therefore, expressed its appreciation of the value of a common framework and regional cooperation on priority areas in Asia and the Pacific in such areas as:

(a) Improving mortality information systems, including capacity related to the International Classification of Diseases and exploring other methods for identifying causes of death, such as telemedicine;

(b) Developing approaches for using CRVS systems for producing statistics relevant for disaster and climate change management;

(c) Continuing to improve CRVS national governance systems through strengthened statistics legislation, coordination and action planning;

(d) Increasing public awareness, including through national CRVS days as appropriate in the national context, and exploring incentives, including free registration, for improving civil registration coverage;

(e) Building civil registration infrastructure that was secure and disaster resilient;

(f) Improving information technology infrastructure and capacity;

(g) Addressing challenges in registering non-citizens and migrants, people living in rural and isolated areas, those with lower incomes and indigenous groups and other minorities;

(h) Using migration information to improve CRVS, for example to enhance the understanding of mortality and causes of death in countries, especially those in the Pacific, from which large numbers of people travel for medical treatment;

(i) Using CRVS data for targeted interventions at the national and subnational levels;

(j) Promoting the integration of different sets of administrative data, and their analysis;

(k) Exploring opportunities for using unique identification numbers, electronic identity cards and/or electronic passports to increase the benefits of CRVS systems for individuals and society, including for better population analysis and for the integration of civil registration systems with other sets of administrative data;

(l) Strengthening research and analysis of population dynamics and health status;

(m) Promoting the use of quality assurance frameworks for CRVS;

(n) Exploring opportunities for reducing costs associated with surveys and censuses by using administrative data.

66. The Conference considered the fact that no organization or unit dedicated to civil registration exists within the United Nations system, and that the need to establish one should be evaluated.

67. The Conference welcomed the regional cooperation initiatives of Australia, Japan and New Zealand. Australia had committed to continue to promote regional and subregional collaboration through its membership of governance arrangements for regional initiatives and to actively support the Brisbane Accord Group; Japan had committed to support capacity-building through training carried out by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific; and New Zealand had committed to actively support the Pacific Civil Registrars' Network, which had recently become a member of the Brisbane Accord Group.

68. The Conference noted with appreciation offers from delegations to share their technical expertise with other countries in the region.

69. The Conference welcomed the commitment of the co-organizers of the Conference to continue and strengthen their partnership and to support countries implementing the draft regional action framework. It further expressed appreciation of the commitment by civil society organizations that had participated in the Civil Society Forum to contribute to efforts aimed at achieving effective, comprehensive and rights-based CRVS systems and increasing awareness of the benefits of CRVS systems for better development data.

70. The Conference noted with appreciation the commitment by SPC to continue to support the Brisbane Accord Group and to provide scaled-up support to the development of administrative databases and associated information management systems.

#### **E. Other matters**

71. No other matters were brought to the attention of the Conference.

#### **F. Adoption of the ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific**

72. The Conference had before it the draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.3) and the draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/1) for its consideration.

73. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific, and endorsed the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

#### **G. Adoption of the report of the Conference**

74. The Conference had before it the document entitled “Draft report of the Conference” (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.2), which it adopted by consensus on 28 November.

#### **H. Ceremony to proclaim the “Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024”**

75. The ceremony to mark the proclamation of the “Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024” and to close the Conference was held on 28 November 2014.

76. The ceremony included a closing statement from Mr. A H M Mustafa Kamal, Minister of Planning, Bangladesh, and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

### **III. Organization**

#### **A. Objectives**

77. The objectives of the Conference were as follows: (a) agree on priorities for improving CRVS in Asia and the Pacific; and (b) make a commitment towards accelerating and focusing the efforts of Governments and development partners to achieve universal and responsive CRVS systems in all Asian and Pacific countries by 2024.

78. The Conference was co-organized by ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, ADB and Plan International.

#### **B. Attendance**

79. The Conference was attended by the following ESCAP members: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands;

Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

80. ESCAP associate member: Cook Islands.

81. Observer State: Canada.

82. United Nations bodies: UNDP; UNFPA; UNHCR; and UNICEF.

83. Specialized agencies and related organizations: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); WHO; and World Bank Group.

84. Intergovernmental organizations: ADB; International Organization for Migration; PARIS21; SPC; and South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children.

85. Non-governmental organizations: Himalayan Human Rights Monitors; Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services, Inc.; Intervida/Educo; Plan International; World Vision India; World Vision International; and Zomi Innkuan USA, Inc.

## **C. Senior officials segment**

### **1. Opening and duration**

86. The senior officials segment of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was convened in Bangkok from 24 to 26 November 2014.

87. The Conference was inaugurated by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

88. Ms. Nobuko Horibe, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of UNFPA, gave a statement on behalf of the co-organizing partnership for the Conference, which was comprised of ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, ADB and Plan International. Ms. Lisa Grace Bersales, Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics and National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippines, gave a statement at the opening.

### **2. Election of officers**

89. The Conference elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Chandramouli Chandrasekaran (India)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Eric Tayag (Philippines)  
Mr. Peter Harper (Australia)

Rapporteur: Mr. Jeff Montgomery (New Zealand)

### 3. Agenda

90. The senior officials adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Conference:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Key issues and perspectives on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Consideration of the draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific.
4. Implementation of the regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

### D. Ministerial segment

#### 1. Opening and duration

91. The ministerial segment of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was convened in Bangkok on 27 and 28 November 2014.

92. The ministerial segment of the Conference was inaugurated by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

93. Mr. Daniel Toole, Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF, gave a statement on behalf of the co-organizing partnership for the Conference. General Anupong Paojinda, Minister of the Interior, Thailand, delivered welcoming remarks on behalf of the Government of Thailand.

#### 2. Election of officers

94. The Conference elected the following officers:

- Chair: Mr. A H M Mustafa Kamal (Bangladesh)
- Vice-Chairs: Mr. Ekramuddin Yawar (Afghanistan)  
 Mr. Lyonpo Thinley Gyamtsho (Bhutan)  
 Mr. Nandi Glassie (Cook Islands)  
 Mr. Kiren Rijiju (India)  
 Ms. Veena Bhatnagar (Fiji)  
 Mr. Didik Suprayitno (Indonesia)  
 Mr. Mohammad Nazemi Ardakanni (Islamic Republic of Iran)  
 Ms. Tangariki Reete (Kiribati)  
 Mr. Saisy Santivong (Lao People’s Democratic Republic)  
 Dr. Aishath Rameela (Maldives)  
 Mr. David Kabua (Marshall Islands)  
 Mr. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Malaysia)  
 Mr. San Lwin (Myanmar)  
 Mr. Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell (Samoa)  
 General Anupong Paojinda (Thailand)  
 Mr. Dionisio Babo (Timor-Leste)  
 Mr. Satini Manuella (Tuvalu)  
 Mr. Khanh Ngoc Nguyen (Viet Nam)
- Rapporteur: Mr. Jeff Montgomery (New Zealand)

### 3. Agenda

95. The ministers endorsed the agenda adopted by the senior officials and adopted the following agenda for the ministerial segment:

1. Opening of the ministerial segment:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Policy priorities for improving civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Other matters.
4. Adoption of the ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
6. Ceremony to proclaim the “Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024”.

### E. Special events

96. The following special events took place:

(a) A special session, “Innovations for CRVS”, was organized by UNICEF, WHO and Plan International on 24 November;

(b) A special session, “Civil registration in the context of emergencies, displacement and to prevent statelessness”, was organized by UNHCR on 24 November;

(c) A breakfast reception on civil registration in the Pacific was hosted by the Pacific Civil Registrars’ Network, with support from UNHCR and UNICEF, on 25 November;

(d) A special session, “Leave no data behind: CRVS and the data revolution”, was organized by PARIS21 on 25 November;

(e) A special session, “The role of CRVS in preventing child marriage in the Asia-Pacific region”, was organized by UNFPA and UNICEF on 25 November;

(f) A special session, “Youth voices matter: Get us in the picture!”, was organized by ESCAP, UNICEF and Plan International on 26 November;

(g) A special session, “Strengthening vital statistics systems: strategies to improve knowledge about causes of death in Asia and the Pacific”, was organized by the Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies on 26 November;

(h) A dinner reception for the regional consultation on the Global Financing Facility for Every Woman Every Child was organized by ESCAP, WHO and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health on 26 November;

(i) A ministerial round table on civil registration and the development agenda beyond 2015 was organized by ESCAP on 27 November;

(j) A special session, “Modernising the role of the health sector in improving CRVS”, was organized by WHO on 28 November;

(k) A special session, “Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan: experiences and lessons for the Asia-Pacific region”, was organized by the Brisbane Accord Group on 28 November;

(l) A lunch reception and poster exhibition of CRVS achievements in the Pacific was organized by the Brisbane Accord Group and SPC on 28 November;

(m) A special session, “Moving forward: civil registration and identification systems as smart investments”, was organized by the World Bank Group on 28 November.

**Annex****List of documents**

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>
<i>General series</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/1	Draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific	4, 8
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/2	State of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific and overview of supporting initiatives	6
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/3	Report of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3
<i>Limited series</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.1/Rev.1	Annotated provisional agenda (revised)	1(c), 5(c)
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.2	Draft report of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	9
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.3	Draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific	8
<i>Conference room paper</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/CRP/1	Draft revised terms of reference for the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	4
<i>Information document</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/INF/2	List of participants	