

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

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SD/CRVS

13 February 2015

Sir,

Implementing the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific:*(a) Appointing a national CRVS focal point**(b) Nominations for the Regional Steering Group on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific*

It is my honour to write to you regarding initial follow-up actions to the landmark Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Bangkok last November under the theme "Get every one in the picture."

The outcomes of the Conference – the Ministerial Declaration to "Get every one in the picture" in Asia and the Pacific, and the Regional Action Framework for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific – are the most comprehensive and progressive internationally-agreed documents related to CRVS and the official registration of individuals' vital events. To support sustained action, Governments of the region agreed to declare the years 2015 to 2024 as the "Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade."

Please find attached the report of the Conference, which contains these outcome documents.

Universal and responsive CRVS systems will be a key tool for achieving the goals and measuring implementation of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, particularly in living up to the promise to leave no one behind. Governments and development partners must now move forward in earnest to ensure that millions of people in our region are provided with the legal identity to which they are entitled, and are included in the population registers and official statistics that form the evidence base for policy decisions and monitoring of development progress.

I would therefore appreciate your assistance in facilitating the appointment of a national CRVS focal point and the nomination of a senior official for the Regional Steering Group on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific. You may wish to consult with the following departments:

- Ministry of Interior
- Management and Planning Organization
- Ministry of Health and Medical Education
- Statistical Centre of Iran
- Cabinet Secretariat

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The Department of International Specialized Agencies
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

(a) Appointing a national CRVS focal point

Member States recognized the importance of having a national CRVS focal point to coordinate engagement with international development partners and provide clear leadership for national CRVS improvement strategies. This focal point should be from the department or ministry responsible for, on behalf of all CRVS stakeholders in the country, leading effective and efficient interaction with development partners and liaising with the ESCAP secretariat to report and monitor progress in implementing the Regional Action Framework.

Your Government may appoint a national CRVS focal point using the attached form. In deciding the focal point, I encourage your Government to undertake a formal process and consider utilizing the national CRVS coordination mechanism, if one currently exists.

(b) Nominations for the Regional Steering Group on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific

The Conference tasked the Regional Steering Group to oversee implementation of the Regional Action Framework, including its monitoring and periodic review mechanism, and to act as custodian of the "Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade." Through this role, the Regional Steering Group will also provide strategic guidance to governments and development partners to foster further cooperation and coordination at national and regional levels. In this sense, the Regional Steering Group will be continuing its good work, having been first established in 2013 under the capable leadership of Dr. Neil Sharma, former Minister for Health of Fiji, to provide guidance to the preparations for the Ministerial Conference.

The composition of the Regional Steering Group should reflect the wide and diverse nature of CRVS, with a balance of members representing each of the civil registration, health and statistics sectors, as well as a balance of the subregions of Asia and the Pacific.

Please find attached the draft terms of reference for the Regional Steering Group. It is anticipated that the terms of reference will be adopted and the membership of the Regional Steering Group will be decided by the Commission in May 2015, following a review by the Committee on Statistics at its fourth session, which is scheduled from 25 to 27 March 2015.

Your Government may submit its nomination of a senior official to be a member of the Regional Steering Group using the attached form. In order to be ready for the review of the Committee on Statistics, the nomination must be submitted by **13 March 2015**.

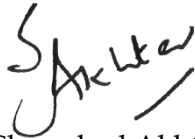
Other follow up actions

Through the endorsement of the Regional Action Framework, member States have agreed to set national target values for the 15 targets of the Regional Action Framework and submit a baseline report by the end of 2015. To support this process, I am pleased to inform you that the ESCAP secretariat is currently developing guidelines to support member States' monitoring and reporting on progress for these targets, including defining possible indicators and providing an overview of potential sources of data. It is anticipated that these guidelines will be ready in mid-2015, following consultations with development partners and the re-constituted Regional Steering Group. Once the guidelines are ready, they will be circulated to member States through national focal points and official channels.

For any questions concerning these follow-up actions, I encourage you to contact Mr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Director, Statistics Division, at chowdhury4@un.org or +66 2288 1486.

I thank you in advance for disseminating this communication to the appropriate stakeholders and look forward to receiving the details of your government's national focal point and nomination to the Regional Steering Group. Together we can make the ambitions of the "Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade" a reality.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Shamshad Akhtar
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP