**Leave No One Behind: The importance of CRVS for Social Development and the 2030 Agenda**

***30 March 2016, 11:30-13:00***

***UN Conference Center***

**Objectives:**

1. Clearly identify the importance of vital statistics for policies addressing hard-to-reach and marginalized sub groups of the population
2. Propose actions to improve registration amongst hard-to-reach and marginalized sub groups of the population to ensure their inclusion in vital statistics
3. Raise awareness of the regional initiative to ‘get every one in the picture’

**Organized by:** ESCAP Statistics Division

**Format:** Launching of the CRVS website followed by a panel discussion

**Background:**

The 2030 sustainable development agenda will require responsive statistical systems with the capacity to track the social development progress of countries across a much broader spectrum of social development challenges and priorities compared to the previous MDG Framework. It is imperative that with the well-being of people at the forefront of national and international development efforts, **no one is left behind** and everyone is counted.

The vision of social inclusion is consistent with the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific which sets three goals for all member States in the region, including universal registration of births, deaths and other vital events, provision of legal documentation to individuals, and the production of accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) based on civil registration data. These goals should be achieved by the end of the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024)

CRVS is also about a person's legal identity and a right to recognition as a person before the law and their formal relationship with the State. It provides individuals with documentary evidence, for example a birth certificate, to prove their name, age, family relationships and the nationality of their parents, which can be important for accessing essential services such as healthcare, education and social protection. This also has implications for other ensuing rights and empowering activities such as political participation, recourse to justice, nationality, property ownership, formal employment, using banking and financial services and inheritance.

Evidence abounds that improvements in the registration of vital events and the issuance of identity documentation have widened access to public services and other opportunities. A study in Indonesia found that for the poor and marginalized, women and children and persons with disabilities, birth, marriage and divorce certificates play a critical role in their ability to access education, health services, social assistance programmes and legal protection. [[1]](#footnote-1) Other examples include access to employment by the indigenous population in Australia and foreign fishermen and their dependents working in Thailand. For the elderly, access to pensions, social allowances and inheritance rights often require registration documents. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Despite this, registration coverage is often lower in hard to reach and marginalized communities, which can aggravate existing social exclusion. Many countries experience substantially lower civil registration coverage rates among certain population groups, geographic areas and administrative subdivisions. For this reason, the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia-Pacific, which contains an implementation step highlighting the need for assessing and addressing inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations and particular geographic areas and administrative subdivisions.

Relevant, disaggregated and useful data must be made available and accessible on a timely basis. It is particularly critical to ensure the comprehensiveness of data that would measure and count the invisibles. While censuses and surveys would continue to be reliable sources of data, the necessity for comprehensive, regular, and timely information to effectively address national and global issues such as poverty, hunger, migration, social protection, safety, schooling, and displacement of people will require more regular data from additional sources. Administrative databases and associated management information systems, such as civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), would allow for total population coverage.

The CRVS system is an important source of administrative data on vital events, providing information on the entire population that is comparable across time and space and allows for disaggregation by age and sex. It is the only source of universal and continuous demographic and health data that has the potential to provide information for multiple sectors (e.g., health, education, labor, social welfare, etc.) and help local and national governments to plan the provision of services, design social development programs, and assess whether these have met their intended objectives.

The level of disaggregation possible with data stemming from well-functioning CRVS systems is in particular important for sub groups of the population, who may not be well represented in sample surveys.

In implementing the Regional Action Framework, members and associate members are further encouraged to set separate national targets, where appropriate, for civil registration coverage, provision of legal documentation and vital statistics for these subgroups. 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.

**Questions for panelists:**

1. What country cases or examples of usefulness of vital statistics to governance, policy, and planning for subgroups can be shared?
2. What can be done to stimulate demand for registration, in particular among sub groups of the population? What type of advocacy is needed from a policy standpoint to get stakeholders actively involved?
3. What are the particular obstacles to registration experienced by various groups and how can these be overcome?

**Participants:**

Panelists would include civil society organisations working with increasing civil registration in countries, members of the Regional Steering Group on CRVS, and partners who can provide institutional and country perspectives in the discussions.

Panelists will include:

World Vision

UNICEF

Plan International

UNHCR and possibly the Regional Support Office for the Bali process

1. Gonzalez Lopez et al (2014) Civil registration, human rights, and social protection in Asia and the Pacific, Asia Pacific Population Journal Vol 29, No 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)