

**UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
(UNESCAP)
Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital
Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, November 16 – 19, 2021
U.S. Permanent Representative Edwin Sagurton, Jr.**

**Session 4: Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for
implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and
ensuring no one is left behind**

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the United States Government, I am pleased to participate in this discussion to ensure we leave no one behind. The prevention and reduction of statelessness is critical to achieving this goal.

Statelessness is a global problem affecting millions of people around the world. Stateless people experience marginalization, lack of access to essential services, discrimination, and often forced displacement and serious human rights abuses. Whether by intention or neglect, stateless people suffer exclusion and remain under-recognized. Events like this are critical to shine a spotlight on statelessness and to galvanize our efforts to prevent and address it.

The United States has long championed efforts to eradicate statelessness. We believe statelessness is a problem that can be solved – actually solved – through political will and technical know-how, including civil registration. Birth registration is especially important to prevent statelessness for children and avoid perpetuating statelessness across generations.

We commend the actions by so many governments here today to prevent and resolve situations of statelessness, and we encourage others to join these efforts. The United States is a strong supporter of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees - the agency mandated to address

statelessness – and its #iBelong Campaign and Global Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024. We also strongly encourage efforts by UNICEF, and other international and non-governmental organizations to combat statelessness throughout the region.

Two years ago, at UNHCR's High Level Segment on Statelessness, we pledged to engage in strong U.S. diplomacy to advocate for the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to provide robust U.S. humanitarian assistance to help protect stateless persons. This is an ongoing commitment that the U.S. government has and will continue to implement, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

In Tajikistan, our funding supports UNHCR's work with local NGOs to identify and register an estimated 4,000 stateless or undocumented persons to be eligible for legal status. We believe that it is within our reach to eradicate statelessness in Central Asia by 2024 and we welcome efforts by states and non-governmental partners toward this goal.

In Thailand, we are proud to support UNHCR and local NGOs as they help older stateless persons apply for Thai nationality. We commend the Royal Thai Government for expanding the number of stateless persons eligible to apply for Thai nationality or residency and encourage the allocation of more resources toward adjudicating such applications. We are also pleased to support UNHCR and academics who are researching the extent and causes of statelessness in Indonesia.

On behalf of older stateless persons here in Thailand, Rohingya in Burma, and millions of stateless individuals throughout the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, we must impart a sense of urgency to addressing the problem of statelessness. We must not leave stateless persons behind.

Let us strengthen civil registration to prevent statelessness and provide stateless persons with documentation to facilitate their acquisition of

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legal status or their ability to confirm citizenship. Let us all drive momentum toward the goal of ending statelessness during our lifetimes.

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