Representative of the Vietnamese General Statistics Office’s Address at the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Data collection, usage and publication of vital statistics for decision-making in Viet Nam

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Since the reunification in 1975, Viet Nam has given special attention to civil registration and management because it not only provides inputs for decision and policy-making on socio-economic development, national defense and security, but also contributes to ensure human rights and fundamental rights of citizens as stipulated in the Constitution. Up to now, Viet Nam has promulgated numerous policies and legal documents on civil registration and vital statistics in line with the requirements for each period and development stage of the country.

In particular, since 2014, Viet Nam has committed to prioritize implementing the decisions of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific held in Thailand from 24 to 28 November 2014. The Prime Minister of Viet Nam endorsed the National Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics of Viet Nam for the period 2017-2024 on 23 January 2017, which demonstrated our active effort to turn the Ministerial Declaration of the abovementioned Conference into practice.

The National Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics of Viet Nam for the period 2017-2024 has specified the goals as well as implementation roadmap of Viet Nam for each period to ensure all civil registrations of the Vietnamese citizens, foreign citizens residing in the Vietnamese territory, and Vietnamese citizens residing abroad are timely, comprehensive, accurate and in accordance with law; all citizens are provided with civil-registration documents in correspondence to the events they register such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates; vital statistics are thoroughly, accurately and promptly recorded, and publicized with transparency to meet the state management requirements and in line with Viet Nam's commitments at the 2014 Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific.

In addition, the Action Plan also aims to establish a unified coordination mechanism between relevant sectors from central to local levels to step-by-step improve and enhance the efficiency of CRVS.
To perform the tasks assigned by the Prime Minister in the National Action Plan on CRVS, in recent years, the National statistics office of Viet Nam (which known as the name: General Statistics Office of Viet Nam) has closely coordinated with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and relevant agencies to actively carry out tasks to enhance the effectiveness of national activities in CRVS. Such tasks include:

- Reviewing the legal framework and guiding documents on civil registration and management, management of issuance of birth certificates, death notices and causes of death to propose amendments and supplements to existing regulations, thereby ensure convenience for the people and improve the quality of civil registration data in Viet Nam.

- Piloting the electronic civil registration program then applying the program to all civil registration offices across the country that helps to strengthen the work of civil registration management and vital statistics in Viet Nam. Before 2016, most vital events at Vietnamese competent agencies were only recorded manually in civil registration books instead of being digitized. Therefore, the data collected were very limited, which affected the process for compilation and analysis of vital statistics generated from civil registration and made it hard to provide evidences for policy-making on issues related to civil registration, health, education, etc. Since 2017, after the piloting program was successful, the electronic civil registration program has been applied nationwide. Furthermore, this program is also connected to the national database on population and children’s personal identification number that are assigned at birth; public service portals, electronic information system at localities. As a result, the program contributes to ensure the receipt and return of results on civil registration in an online format at different levels, and consequently to minimize the time spent for the people. This is the basis to guarantee the production of vital statistics derived from adequate civil registration data.

- Studying to integrate questions related to vital statistics indicators into Population Census and Surveys for the provision of additional evidences to better monitor the implementation of the Action Plan's goals. Since 2018, besides the statistics indicators on live births, deaths, and marriages, the General Statistics Office has designed questions to collect information on the birth of children under 5 years old into the Population Census and Survey. The vital statistics have been calculated and disseminated by the General Statistics Office along with the results of the abovementioned surveys. Such statistics indicators are representative to the provincial-level for the annual population survey and to the commune-level for the Population Census every 10 years and have been published in the mass media and on the website of the statistical sector.
- Organizing and actively participating in workshops and international forums on CRVS to learn and share experiences, aiming to improve the solutions to strengthen the implementation of the National Action Plan on CRVS for the period 2017-2024.

For over 3 years of active coordination and implementation, the CRVS of Viet Nam have achieved some initial results: birth registration events in the civil registration database have been reported and disaggregated in line with different management requirements; marriages and divorces events have also been thoroughly compiled and recorded; death and causes of death registration have gradually improved.

Nevertheless, despite our big effort to implement the commitments on CRVS, we have not yet achieved the expected results due to many objective factors in terms of experience, techniques and resources. In fact, the compilation of vital statistics generated from civil registration data is still very limited. Several basic statistical indicators recommended in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System have not yet been determined. Viet Nam still has a long way to achieve the goal: “Improve the quality and efficiency of civil registration for accurate, comprehensive and timely vital statistics, and to ensure their dissemination is in line with to the recommendations roadmap of the Regional Action Framework for 2015-2024”.

Viet Nam, however, is still fully aware of the importance of a comprehensive CRVS system. It is the core source of information that provides essential grounds for the development and implementation of national policies in the fields of health, social protection, education, population and human rights assurance. Viet Nam highly appreciates the initiative to strengthen CRVS in the Asia-Pacific region. We respects the commitments in the Ministerial Declaration of the Ministerial Conference as well as in the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in the Asia-Pacific region, and we ensure to continue furthering our efforts to prioritize the resources needed to achieve the Goals set forth in the strategic Action Framework. Viet Nam wishes to receive more support, cooperation and experience sharing from other countries and international organizations, especially UNESCAP, to accelerate the process of change towards a modern and progressive CRVS system, in which vital statistics will be shared and utilized for the purpose of developing and implementing evidence-based decision-making and policies.