

STATEMENT AT THE SECOND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

SESSION: VITAL STATISTICS PRODUCTION, DISSEMINATION AND USAGE: HARNESSING CIVIL REGISTRATION DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING

Statement by Gurpreet Rai, Vital Strategies

Thank you Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Complete and timely vital statistics are crucial for policymakers and government officials as a basis for planning and policies. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for strong civil registration systems that regularly produce vital statistics and data to assess important indicators such as excess mortality due to the pandemic.

The midterm review of the core vital statistics targets of the Regional Action Framework has provided sobering results. In 2015, between 41% to 51% of the 58 countries or areas in the region met the targets and this increased to between 48% and 57% in the midterm reviews in 2020. Country initiatives were likely hampered by the pandemic but we need to invest now, more than ever, in sustainable civil registration and vital statistics systems.

As part of this goal to strengthen systems and turn data into action, Vital Strategies, under the aegis of Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, has collaborated with various partners including UNESCAP, UNECA, APAI-CRVS, Statistics Norway, the former Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems, and the Pacific Community to produce several publicly available resources and tools.

One such resource is the CRVS Systems Improvement Framework, which offers governments a collaborative and end-to-end guide to examine their current CRVS processes and determine areas for improvement. We are now in the process of developing a complementary technical guide to assess, identify gaps and propose improvements in the production, dissemination and use of vital statistics, which will apply an adapted version of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model. We anticipate that this will be released in 2022.

A resource kit titled the “Production of a Vital Statistics Report” was published in 2020. The kit has been used by various countries globally, such as Cambodia, Bhutan, Rwanda and Zambia. Earlier this week we launched a virtual, interactive course on the “Analysis and Use of Vital Statistics” that teaches participants how to conduct and interpret basic vital statistics data analysis.

Chair, vital statistics using civil registration records are a key step in identifying health and social sector priorities, providing transparency and accountability for progress against health, demographic, and social indicators—such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—and identifying health

inequities. Understanding the completeness and quality of data can enable improvements in the overall CRVS system.

To harness these benefits, Vital Strategies continues to work with countries to build their capacity for producing and using routine and timely vital statistics.

I thank you for the opportunity to present.