

Agenda item 6

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

Agenda item 6: Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach

Ms. Sarah Knibbs
Deputy Regional Director , a.i.
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



Agenda item 6: Documentation

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

**Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach
(ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/6)**

Agenda item 6: Findings

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

Women and girls face critical barriers and structural impediments from birth and throughout the life cycle in registering their vital events, such as birth, marriage, divorce and death.

Life cycle approach to civil registration and vital statistics highlighting the issues from a gender perspective:

- Birth registration provides certification of **identity for a newborn child** and entry into the identity management system.
- **Marriage and divorce registration** have implications for inheritance, the status of children and women's rights.
- **Death registration** is used to ensure deaths are reflected in the population register and the identity management system, which has implications for inheritances and understanding causes of death.

Agenda item 6: Findings – Birth Registration

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

A gender perspective in **birth registration** supports efforts towards the completeness of birth registration for both boys and girls; the identification of sex imbalances at birth; and creation of multiplier effects for inclusive development.

- Besides reflecting under-registration of girls' births, **higher-than-expected numbers of newborn boys reflected in the sex ratio at birth** may indicate female infanticide, abandonment, prenatal sex selection and sex-selective abortion.
- Current evidence indicates **no significant differences in registration** rates between girls and boys in the Asia-Pacific region. **Surveys** are a useful data source for estimating registration completeness; their limited sample size could **hide disadvantages affecting girls in some subgroups of the population**.
- Birth registration is the foundation for **identity documentation**. Gender gaps in birth registration and therefore legal identity are a challenge because they may create barriers to access public services, private sector services (inc. financial services), protection from the State for illegal migrants abroad, registration of births of children from migrant women etc.

Agenda item 6: Findings - Marriage and Divorce Registration

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

A marriage certificate provides women and girls with the necessary legal documentation required to claim rights to assets, inheritances, family benefit schemes and citizenship when married to a foreign national.

A divorce certificate facilitates access to pension benefits, alimony, custody, child support and the distribution of assets acquired during the marriage.

In many countries across Asia and the Pacific, marriage registration is not compulsory and marriage ceremonies are often only customary. This contributes to alarmingly high levels of child, early and forced marriage in the region.

Recording of marriages and divorces is typically the most unreliable recording of vital events, with the lowest data availability and the lowest priority for improvement in many countries.

Agenda item 6: Findings – Death and Causes of Death registration

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

Sex-disaggregated mortality data are necessary to provide quality information on diseases and health patterns, and gender patterns in causes of death are relevant to the design of public health policies.

Women's deaths are less likely to be registered than births because there are fewer incentives to do so - fewer assets than men, inheritance rights are less relevant.

Incentives to hide the causes of certain deaths in women, such as femicides and dowry deaths, contribute to the problem of under-registration.

Accurate, reliable and timely mortality statistics are also critical, especially during health emergencies such as COVID-19. Existing gender biases in death registration systems could be obscuring the pandemic's gendered impacts.

Agenda item 6: Purpose

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

The Conference may wish to discuss:

- **Plans and strategies in place** to incorporate a gender perspective when improving CRVS, to achieve the shared vision by 2024
- Provide suggestions on the **way forward to strengthen a gender-inclusive approach** to CRVS to ensure universal registration for all.
- Recognize, in particular, **the importance of marriage and divorce registration** for addressing gender issues and to discuss possible improvements in that regard.
- The **urgent need for further disaggregation of birth and death registration data** in order to support good governance, health and development and give governments important tools to respond to future crises in an effective way.

Agenda item 6: Programme

Thursday, 18 November 2021 (11:00-12:00 hours, UTC+7)

Speaker:

Ms. Sophie Shugg, Senior Advisor, Child Protection and Legal Identity System, **Plan International**

Country Statements: