Unlocking the Power of Civil Registration Data for Effective Governance

Side Event of the 9th Session of the Committee on Statistics

Concept Note

11 December 2024, 13:00-14:00 hrs., UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

Registration:

In-person participation: All in-person participants must complete the registration form to attend the 9th session of the Committee on Statistics via Indico

Background:

Digitalization is a key enabler of sustainable, inclusive and resilient CRVS system and a digitized CRVS system can provide the backbone for eGovernment. Increasingly, Member States rely on data from civil registration to establish digital legal identity systems as part of Digital Public Infrastructure. The linkage between such initiative and CRVS needs to be ensured to develop a safe, comprehensive and interoperable legal identity ecosystem.

As stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expanded upon by the Un Legal Identity Agenda , civil registration provides the basis for legal identity. Further, good quality vital statistics based on civil registration records plays a crucial role in monitoring progress towards the SDGs. In fact, 67 of the 230 SDG indicators can be effectively measured by data from a well-functioning CRVS system, and they cover 12 of the 17 SDGs .

In 2014, Ministers from the region unanimously proclaimed the Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024) to guide countries towards achieving “universal and responsive CRVS that facilitate the realization of [individuals’] rights and support good governance, health and development” . Although significant progress has been made during the Decade, universal registration of vital events is yet to be achieved and millions of people are born and die without any legal tender of their existence – this has been termed the scandal of invisibility.

In 2021, Ministers adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive CRVS identifying digitalization as the key to unlock more inclusive and resilient CRVS systems. Digitalized systems also has the potential to provide the backbone for data integration and efficient public service delivery.

Objective:

The side event will facilitate discussion on the importance of digitalization to achieve universal registration of vital events. It will further, discuss ongoing efforts of countries to advance the digitalization of simplified and proactive CRVS business processes as part of government wide digital transformation efforts. Participants will also learn about ongoing use of civil registration data for evidence based policies. Further, the side event will provide participants with an overview of plans for the Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS to be held 24-26 June 2025.
Background

Organization & speakers

The event will be organized in a hybrid setting with participants attending in-person at the United Nations Conference Centre and online participants joining via Teams. The modality of the event will be a combination of presentations and a question-and-answer session. The speakers will include representatives from Maldives, Fiji and the World Bank.

Distinguished Speakers

- H.E. Mr. Ali Haidar Ahmed, Minister of Housing, Land and Urban Development, the Maldives.
- Hon. Siromi Turaga, Minister for Justice, Fiji
- Ms. Haishan Fu, Chief Statistician World Bank.
- Ms Tanja Sejersen, Statistician, Statistics Division, ESCAP

Moderator

- Ms Petra Nahmias, Chief, Population and Social Statistics Section, Statistics Division, ESCAP

Discussion questions

There will be one round of short presentations on experiences with digitalizing CRVS systems and using civil registration data for good governance. Following the short presentations there will be time for questions and answers from the audience.

Presentations

It would be appreciated if our distinguished speakers could please stay within 7 minutes for the intervention.

- **H.E. Mr. Ali Haidar Ahmed, Minister of Housing, Land and Urban Development, the Maldives**
    - In recent years, the Maldives have transformed the civil registration system through digitalization. What has this meant for the production of vital statistics and integration with other government departments?
    - What specific strategies you have been using in the Maldives to facilitate these changes?

- **Hon. Siromi Turaga, Minister for Justice, Fiji**
    - Asia Pacific has agreed to work towards universal registration of vital events. In recent years, Fiji has been leading several initiatives to deliver on this promise. Can you please give us an overview of these activities and how they have been used to improve registration processes and the production of vital statistics?

- **Ms. Haishan Fu, Chief Statistician of the World Bank and Director of the World Bank's Development Data Group**
    - What are the improvements needed in data governance to fully unleash the power of civil registration data?
    - How can development partners best support countries in this endeavour?
- **Ms Tanja Sejersen, Statistician and CRVS lead, ESCAP**
    - ESCAP and development partners are currently preparing for the Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific 24-26 June 2025. What should countries expect?
- **Questions from the floor to the presenters**

Conclusion

The panel will finish with the moderator highlighting key issues and thanking the speakers.

Short bio details of moderator and speakers



Moderator: Petra Nahmias, Chief of the Population and Social Statistics Section at ESCAP.

Petra Nahmias leads work at ESCAP Statistics Division **on a range of topics including CRVS, gender statistics, migration and displacement statistics, population and housing census, and data integration.** She has worked in both international and national statistical systems for over 20 years and holds a PhD in Sociology and Demography.



H.E. Mr. Ali Haidar Ahmed, Minister of Housing, Land and Urban Development obtained his Bachelor in Town and Country Planning from the University of Manchester and his PhD in Planning Studies from the University College London. He has worked in various roles in the Government of the Maldives and was appointed as the Minister of Housing, Land and Urban Development in 2023.



Hon. Mr. Siromi Turaga, Minister for Justice, Fiji, appointed in June 2024, and previously served as Attorney General and Minister for Justice since December 2022, is a lawyer and politician who brings over 30 years of legal and public service experience. He has served as a Resident Magistrate, Principal Legal Officer, and legal consultant, specializing in criminal, civil, family, and land matters. A practicing Barrister and Solicitor since 1999, Hon. Turaga holds a Bachelor of Law and Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice from USP, along with specialized diplomas in Litigation and Refugee Law. He is also a Methodist Lay Preacher, actively engaged in community programs, and is married with four children.



Haishan Fu is Chief Statistician of the World Bank and Director of the World Bank's Development Data Group. She leads the development and implementation of the World Bank's data agenda, overseeing initiatives like the World Development Indicators, Statistical Performance Indicators, and the Development Data Hub. Haishan co-chairs the Data for Countries and Global Priorities working group and oversees the Global Data Facility. She has played key roles in global statistical efforts, including the UN Data Revolution group and the International Statistical Institute. Before joining the World Bank, she held leadership positions at UNESCAP and UNDP. She holds a Ph.D. in Demography from Princeton University and a B.A. in Economics from Peking University.



Tanja Brøndsted Sejersen is a Statistician at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

She leads the Asia- Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) initiative to 'Get Every One in the Picture'. Her work involves capacity building activities and collaboration with partners to support country action to improve national statistical systems. She has academic qualifications in demography, statistics and political science. She has conducted research on citizenship legislation and various aspects of civil registration and vital statistics.

Contact details

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