

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and
Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok and online, 16–19 November 2021

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (section I) and the annotations thereto (section II).

I. Provisional agenda**A. Senior officials segment (16–18 November 2021)**

1. Opening of the Conference:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the progress and existing challenges in accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.
3. The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics systems and the role of civil registration and vital statistics in the response to and recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic.
4. Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring no one is left behind.
5. Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making.
6. Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach.
7. The relationship between civil registration, identity management and vital statistics, and their role in ensuring legal identity in Asia and the Pacific.
8. Other matters.

B. Ministerial segment (19 November 2021)

9. Opening of the ministerial segment:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
10. Towards a shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health and development.
11. The importance of civil registration and vital statistics and legal identity for all to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda.
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the ministerial declaration.
14. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

II. Annotations

A. Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the Conference

(a) Opening statements

The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and senior dignitaries will deliver opening statements.

The programme for the senior officials segment will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2021/second-ministerial-conference-crvs-asia-pacific.

(b) Election of officers

The Conference will elect a chair and vice-chairs for the segment.

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2021/second-ministerial-conference-crvs-asia-pacific.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.1)

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.2)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Conference, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Review of the progress and existing challenges in accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Summary of Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1)

Support from development partners in the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2)

Development partners involved in civil registration and vital statistics improvement in Asia and the Pacific: profiles and support activities (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1)

Economic costs and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/3)

Annotation

The Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) has reached its midpoint. The Decade is dedicated to the achievement of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems. Civil registration and vital statistics systems provide individuals with a legal identity, facilitating access to public services, the realization of a number of rights and privileges and the production of better data to support and guide governments in decision-making. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has further revealed the inequalities and fragility of health-care and social protection systems and highlighted the importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems in improving access to life-saving assistance.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1 provides a summary of the ESCAP publication entitled *Getting Everyone in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade*. The document contains an overview of national progress towards the three goals of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (i.e. universal civil registration, provision of legal documentation and production of vital statistics from civil registration) as well as towards the 15 targets supporting them, the values of which are set at the national level by individual members and associate members. Activities conducted by governments to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems are described, and their success stories are showcased. The document is based on the responses to questionnaires submitted by 45 ESCAP members and associate members at the midpoint of the Decade, in 2019 and 2020, and shows that the Asia-Pacific region is on the right path to achieve universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems. With a further acceleration of efforts, governments can secure the catalytic change required to reach those furthest behind and ensure that all life events are systematically recorded and registered.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2 contains an outline of development partners' support for countries between 2015 and the beginning of 2021. Information document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1 contains a description of development partners' involvement in civil registration and vital

statistics improvement in Asia and the Pacific, including organization profiles and information on their activities to support countries during the same period.

In information document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/3, the costs and benefits of utilizing a universal civil registration and vital statistics system are weighed, and a case is made for increased national investments in stronger systems capable of producing high-quality vital statistics.

The Conference may wish to provide further information on national progress towards the shared vision that, by 2024, everyone in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health and development. The Conference may also wish to renew its commitment to the shared vision of the Decade and provide guidance on how to overcome the remaining challenges. The Conference may further wish to comment on development partners' support for members and associate members and provide further guidance on their work.

3. The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics systems and the role of civil registration and vital statistics in the response to and recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic

Documentation

The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3)

Verbal autopsy and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific: operational procedures, practices and innovations (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2)

Annotation

Civil registration and vital statistics systems are strengthened through productive collaboration between civil registration authorities and health sector stakeholders. A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics system generates a continuous stream of data on births and deaths to support decision-making at the national and subnational levels.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3 contains a description, drawing upon guidance issued by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, of the proactive role that the health sector can play in ensuring that births and deaths are officially registered in national civil registration systems. The description also covers the role of the health sector and of civil registration and vital statistics not only in tracking specific diseases, such as COVID-19, but also in ongoing efforts to track all-cause mortality and causes of death.

Information document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2 serves to explain the role of the verbal autopsy in the context of civil registration and vital statistics systems, as well as its relevance for the Regional Action Framework.

The Conference may wish to take note of the documents and provide further guidance and advice on how to strengthen productive collaboration between civil registration authorities and health sector stakeholders and how to ensure better data on all-cause mortality and causes of death.

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

Documentation

Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring that no one is left behind (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/4)

Annotation

Progress in civil registration and vital statistics can be used as an accelerator for progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Two key and mutually reinforcing components of civil registration and vital statistics are critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. First, the strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems in and of itself constitutes progress, as it is an element of the Sustainable Development Goal targets on providing a legal identity for all and on supporting statistical capacity-building. Second, civil registration and vital statistics are an essential source of data for assessing progress towards many Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, both directly and indirectly, by enabling more reliable and timely population estimates, including with the necessary disaggregation. A legal identity is crucial to the ability of all individuals to prove who they are and realize their fundamental human rights.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/4 serves to highlight the importance of minimizing barriers to the registration of hard-to-reach and marginalized groups and the role of civil registration and vital statistics in their inclusion. Progress in the implementation of the Regional Action Framework is assessed through this lens, in particular taking into account the need to address disparities in civil registration coverage affecting hard-to-reach and marginalized populations, including people living in rural, remote, isolated or border areas, minorities, indigenous people, migrants, non-citizens, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless people and people without documentation. In addition, persons with disabilities face particular barriers to civil registration, and the direct or indirect cost of registration creates barriers to registration as well, in particular among low-income groups, which are currently experiencing significantly lower registration rates in many Asia-Pacific countries.

The importance of civil registration and vital statistics for the provision of social protection is highlighted, and examples of engagement with hard-to-reach and marginalized groups are presented. The possible role of non-governmental and civil society organizations in identifying areas where greater progress can be made to reach such groups is also highlighted.

The Conference may wish to take note of the document and provide further guidance and advice on how to overcome barriers and ensure that no one is left behind in civil registration and vital statistics to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making

Documentation

Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5)

Annotation

Vital statistics produced from civil registration records are of paramount importance to continually measure the births and deaths of a population over time. Quality statistics are also a primary source of information for decision makers considering policies designed to address the health and well-being of national populations. In addition, quality statistics play a fundamental role in socioeconomic and health-care planning.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5 contains an overview of the current status and recent evolution of vital statistics production, dissemination and usage in Asia and the Pacific, with particular emphasis on the role that vital statistics have played during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also contains a description of how vital statistics support the ability of members and associate members to track progress towards the targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The Conference may wish to take note of the document and provide further guidance and advice on how to ensure that all members and associate members achieve the goal of producing and disseminating accurate, complete and timely vital statistics, including on causes of death, based on registration records.

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

Documentation

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

Annotation

Civil registration and vital statistics can play a significant role in providing individuals with a legal identity, thus enabling their access to rights and services, and in providing data for analysing gender inequalities and assessing progress towards gender equality in Asia and the Pacific. Under the agenda item, the Conference will assess progress towards addressing gender-specific barriers to civil registration, in particular among marginalized groups. Emphasis will be placed on adopting a life cycle approach to the registration of all vital events, and the importance of such an approach with regard to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Conference will also assess the effectiveness of measures to address barriers to civil registration based on gender inequality and gender-based discrimination. In addition, the Conference will build on the results of the midterm review of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework.

In document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/6, the role of civil registration and vital statistics in assessing gender inequalities is discussed, and the importance of adopting a life cycle approach to the registration of all vital events is highlighted. The importance of addressing gender-specific barriers to civil registration is noted, and the essential role that civil registration gender data can play in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is underscored.

The Conference may wish to take note of the document and provide further guidance and advice on how to ensure gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems in Asia and the Pacific.

7. The relationship between civil registration, identity management and vital statistics, and their role in ensuring legal identity in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Intersection between civil registration and identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/7)

Legal identity systems in Asia and the Pacific: civil registration, vital statistics and identity management (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/4)

Privacy and confidentiality in the context of civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/5)

Annotation

Governments in Asia and the Pacific are increasingly implementing identity management systems in which they issue national identity cards and numbers as well as digital credentials with or without the use of biometric recognition for establishing uniqueness and enabling secure identity verification.

Document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/7 contains a discussion on the role of civil registration in national identity management systems, on how civil registration is a key basis for systems that promote inclusion and on how civil registration facilitates access to services and the production of timely and accurate vital statistics. The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda is introduced, and consideration is given to how it may inform further actions to improve civil registration and vital statistics efforts in the second half of the Decade and support accelerated action to implement the 2030 Agenda.

In information document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/4, the relationship between civil registration and legal identity in Asia and the Pacific is described, as are practices for developing interoperable and holistic approaches to civil registration and identity management systems, with coordinated investments in both.

The focus of information document ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/5 is on the importance of protecting privacy and methods for keeping data confidential as they are shared among ministries and agencies.

The Conference may wish to take note of the documents and provide the secretariat and development partners with further guidance and advice on how to implement the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The Conference may also wish to share experiences and discuss efforts for continued improvement during the second half of the Decade.

8. Other matters

The Conference may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

B. Ministerial segment

9. Opening of the ministerial segment

(a) Opening statements

The Executive Secretary of ESCAP and senior dignitaries will deliver opening statements.

The programme for the ministerial segment will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2021/second-ministerial-conference-crvs-asia-pacific.

(b) Election of officers

The Conference will elect a chair and vice-chairs for the segment.

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2021/second-ministerial-conference-crvs-asia-pacific.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.1)

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.2)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Conference, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

10. Towards a shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health and development

Documentation

Summary of Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1)

Support from development partners in the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2)

The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3)

Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5)

Development partners involved in civil registration and vital statistics improvement in Asia and the Pacific: profiles and support activities (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1)

Verbal autopsy and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific: operational procedures, practices and innovations (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2)

Annotation

In 2014, members and associate members of ESCAP agreed to proclaim the shared vision that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific would benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitated the realization of rights and supported good governance, health and development.

The Conference may wish to provide the secretariat and development partners with insights on the progress achieved so far in meeting the commitments contained in the Regional Action Framework.

The Conference may also wish to make commitments to the facilitation of progress in the second half of the Decade by enhancing collaboration between the civil registration authorities and the health sector; harnessing high-quality vital statistics for public policy; and protecting the rights of everyone to be registered and have access to official documentation at all times, including during disasters, pandemics and other crises.

11. The importance of civil registration and vital statistics and legal identity for all to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda

Documentation

Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring that no one is left behind (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/4)

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

Intersection between civil registration and identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/7)

Economic costs and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/3)

Legal identity systems in Asia and the Pacific: civil registration, vital statistics and identity management (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/4)

Privacy and confidentiality in the context of civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/5)

Annotation

The 2030 Agenda provides a major impetus to consolidate and accelerate development in civil registration and vital statistics systems. Similarly, civil registration and vital statistics are an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda. A legal identity is crucial to the ability of all individuals to prove who they are and realize their fundamental human rights, and is therefore relevant to the commitment to leaving no one behind as expressed in the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the dual and interlocked issues of legal identity and reliable and timely data.

Under the agenda item, the Conference will have an opportunity to share experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems to support resilience to disasters and ensure strategies for inclusive recovery from COVID-19 and other crises, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

Member States may wish to provide guidance and affirm their commitments to implementing the shared vision of universal civil registration and vital statistics in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the principle of leaving no one behind. Member States may also wish to provide guidance on how to optimize financial investments in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

12. Other matters

The Conference may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

13. Adoption of the ministerial declaration

Documentation

Draft ministerial declaration (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.4)

Annotation

The Conference will consider and adopt the ministerial declaration, which will be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-eighth session, in 2022.

14. Adoption of the report of the Conference

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.3)

Annotation

The Conference will consider and adopt its report, which will be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-eighth session, in 2022.
