Agenda Item 4 (c): Is everyone in the picture? Civil registration in the middle of the coronavirus disease pandemic

The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to achieve the goals of the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific, specifically on: 1) universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, 2) legal documentation for all individuals of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, and 3) accurate, complete, and timely vital statistics (including causes of death), based on registration records. These goals operationalize the vision of the said Declaration.

The Philippines also affirms that in order to achieve these goals, a definitive and comprehensive plan of action is necessary. Hence, we emphasize the importance of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific to facilitate collaborative action at local, provincial, national, and international levels to align and prioritize the efforts of stakeholders and to monitor progress towards achieving shared results. The Philippine Statistics Authority, in its conduct of the Data Dissemination Forum on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, presented “Updates on the CRVS Decade,” which included discussions on Public Engagement, Participation and Generating Demand, Coordination, Policies, Legislation and Implementation of Regulations, Infrastructure and Resources, to inform stakeholders about the recent development of civil registration and the vital statistics generated in the country.

Despite the setbacks caused by COVID-19, the Philippine Statistics Authority has continued in its efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems. These include: release of timely and accurate death statistics in 2020 as a response to the urgent need for data to monitor COVID-19-related mortality; data sharing agreement with the Department of Health to validate data on COVID-19 cases; and coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs in providing civil registration documents to assist overseas Filipino workers and their families affected by the pandemic. The PSA also decentralized processing of civil registry documents affected by administrative proceedings.
The imposition of lockdowns or community quarantine has not hampered the delivery of efficient civil registration services. The Philippine Statistics Authority renewed and strengthened its partnerships to provide efficient online services and facilitate cashless and contactless payment methods for civil registry documents. Further, spearheading the celebration of the 31st Civil Registration Month, with the theme, “Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics’ Digital Information: The Ways to Manage the New Normal,” PSA conducted briefings and webinars on CRVS, prepared reference materials for Philippine Foreign Service Posts, and facilitated drafting of the guidelines for the Simulated Birth Rectification Act, among others.

Finally, the Philippines wishes to recognize the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific for the progress made in the region despite the current pandemic during the first half of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade.