

# ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2017

"Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Asia-Pacific"

29-31 March 2017 | UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE, BANGKOK, THAILAND

## SIDE EVENT

### *The importance of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)*

#### *To eradicate poverty in Asia and the Pacific*

**Venue:** MR-F, UNCC

**Date:** 30 March 2017

**Time:** 12:15 - 13:30, lunch will be provided

**Organizers:** CRVS Partnership in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP (SD)

#### **Background**

The overall theme of the fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Asia-Pacific." The Forum will engage Member States, United Nations and other institutions, major groups and other stakeholders in a dialogue on regional priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. It will address scientific and technological innovation for sustainable development and focus attention on poverty eradication whilst fostering prosperity, through a discussion on achieving SDG 1 in the region.

Eradicating poverty for all is only possible if everyone is visible to the governments of the region. The vision of social inclusion is consistent with the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific which sets three goals for all member States in the region, including universal registration of births, deaths and other vital events, provision of legal documentation to individuals, and the production of accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) based on civil registration data. These goals should be achieved by the end of the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024).

CRVS is also about a person's legal identity and a right to recognition as a person before the law and their formal relationship with the State. It provides individuals with documentary evidence, for example a birth certificate, to prove their name, age, family relationships and the nationality of their parents, which can be important for accessing essential services such as healthcare, education and social protection. This also has implications for other ensuing rights and empowering activities such as political participation, recourse to justice, nationality, property ownership, formal employment, using banking and financial services and inheritance.

Evidence abounds that improvements in the registration of vital events and the issuance of identity documentation have widened access to public services and other opportunities. A study in Indonesia found that for the poor and marginalized, women and children and persons with disabilities, birth, and marriage and divorce certificates play a critical role in their ability to access education, health services, social assistance programmes and legal protection. Other examples include access to employment by the indigenous population in Australia and foreign fishermen and their dependents working in Thailand. For the elderly, access to pensions, social allowances and inheritance rights often require registration documents.

Despite this, registration coverage is often lower in hard to reach and marginalized communities, which can aggravate existing social exclusion. For this reason, the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia-Pacific, which contains an implementation step highlighting the need for assessing and addressing inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations and particular geographic areas and administrative subdivisions.

Relevant, disaggregated and useful data must be made available and accessible on a timely basis. It is particularly critical to ensure the comprehensiveness of data that would measure and count the invisibles. CRVS is the only source of universal and continuous demographic and health data that has the potential to provide information for multiple sectors (e.g., health, education, labor, social welfare, etc.) and help local and national governments to plan the provision of services, design social development programs, and assess whether these have met their intended objectives. Thus, while censuses and surveys would continue to be reliable sources of data, a well-functioning national CRVS system is well-positioned to provide comprehensive, regular, and timely information to effectively address national and global issues such as poverty, hunger, migration, social protection, safety, schooling, disaster risk reduction and displacement of people.

Governments in Asia and the Pacific have committed to ‘Get Every One in the Picture’ through improving registration, the provision of legal documentation and improving vital statistics during the Asia Pacific CRVS Decade. This side event is organized by the partnership of development organizations supporting countries in achieving their national targets for CRVS. The event will showcase some of the mechanisms and experiences to improve civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific to ensure no one is left behind.

## **Scope**

The CRVS Partnership in Asia and the Pacific is composed of multiple developing partners, whose mandates are to help countries achieve CRVS improvement and the goals for the CRVS Decade (2015-2024).<sup>1</sup> The partnership includes multiple UN organizations, other international organizations and CSOs.

The coordination between ESCAP and developing partners is fundamental for the organization of CRVS activities and for implementation of the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific. The side event will showcase experiences of improving CRVS in Asia and the Pacific and highlight the strong partnership approach to supporting countries in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the CRVS Partnership in Asia and the Pacific <http://getinthepicture.org/institutional-partners>

## **Key Questions**

- In which ways are civil registration supporting service delivery in countries?
- What can be done to ensure hard to reach and marginalized groups are included in CRVS systems?
- Why is improving CRVS so essential to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the SDGs?

## **Tentative programme**

- 12:15- 12:20: Welcome, Statistics Division ESCAP: What is the CRVS Decade and an introduction to the work of the Asia Pacific CRVS Partnership
- 12:20-12:25 Video highlighting the need for CRVS (UNICEF video from Solomon Islands <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEs50GiZ4T0>)
- 12:25-13:05: panel discussion
- 13:05-13:25: questions and answers
- 13:25-13:30: wrap up and closing

## **Panelists/discussants**

- Mr. Nick Oakeshott, Senior protection specialist, UNHCR regional office
- Mr. Abid Gulzar, Advocacy and Justice for Children Director, East Asia Region, World Vision
- Ms. Meimei Leung, Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Director, East Asia Region, World Vision
- Ms. Bernadette Balamban of the Social Sector Statistics Service of the Philippine Statistics Authority
- Dr. Boonchai Kijsanayotin, Health Informatics Expert, Thai Health Information Standards Development Centre, Ministry of Public Health
- Dr. Karen Carter, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Specialist, Statistics for Development Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

**Moderator:** Ms. Margarita Guerrero, Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP

## **For more details and information contact:**

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