

Agenda item 3(c): Vanuatu

E/ESCAP/CST (5)4

Mr. Chairman, Vanuatu on behalf of the Pacific Island Countries who are represented here at the fifth session I would like to welcome the report on the regional steering group for CRVS. Mr. Chairman this is the biggest source of vital statistics which are the fundamental inputs in the analysis of fertility and mortality and off course migration.

- CRVS is very important to the Pacific Islands, particularly in light of the small populations, challenges around premature mortality associated with the NCD crisis, and an ongoing need to improve life expectancy, maternal and child health outcomes, and social inclusion. Vanuatu and the broader Pacific have strongly committed to “getting everyone in this picture”
- Work has been underway in our sub-region since the introduction of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan in 2011- and there have been a number of important commitments within the region to improving CRVS over this time through the Ministers of Health, and the Heads of Planning and Statistics. There has been significant progress in the region over this time- much of which was highlighted at the Pacific CRVS meeting in February of this year – “however there is still significantly more to be done “(repeat)
- The Regional Action Framework has added significant value to this work through increased political visibility as part of the UN Decade for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, and the accountability of setting and reporting targets through the Regional Steering Group for CRVS. It has also provided a forum for a broader exchange of ideas and experiences across the Asia-Pacific region.
- The Pacific Statistics Steering Committee has resolved to encourage all member countries to formalise their national committees and targets under the RAF where this has not already been done. There is also a strong commitment from the committee to ensure that CRVS is represented in national development strategies and national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) - and therefore noted as an integral component of both providing data for development planning and monitoring, but also as an important tool for achieving the SDGs in its own right.

- In Vanuatu, we have been working through a national, multi-sectoral task force to improve CRVS in Vanuatu over the last few years. With assistance from Brisbane Accord Group agencies - we have undertaken a comprehensive national assessment and developed a national CRVS improvement strategy (due to be formally launched early in 2017), started developing additional reporting and analytical capacity with the completion of a national vital statistics report due for release early in 2017, and commenced a review of our current CRVS legislation in line with the assessment outcomes.
- Over the last several years, we have also managed to extend birth registration coverage from an extremely low baseline to essentially national coverage through IT improvements and roll outs, partnerships with other sectors such as health and education, and through targeted community outreach following Cyclone Winston. Some of our upcoming challenges are now to expand these processes to improve death registration and to strengthen the evidence requirements for registration to support stronger identity linkages.
- BAG partners and the Regional Action Framework and supporting bodies, have an important ongoing role to play in supporting countries such as ours meet the targets which we have set.
- I would like to conclude by re-confirming Vanuatu's support for the regional program and our commitment to continue to work towards "getting everyone in the picture" and achieve our nominated targets under the RAF.

Thankyou Mr. Chairman