

## **County Statement – New Zealand – by Jeff Montgomery**

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen – Kia Ora and warm greetings.

New Zealand has been honored to be part of the Regional Steering Group and to work on the action plan for the last 12 months. We commend ESCAP, partner agencies and country members of the Steering Group for the excellent job done so far.

New Zealand is in the fortunate position of being able to meet or almost meet 100% of the targets by 2015. However, we still have a contribution to make.

At home, our focus is on moving to the next level. This will see civil registration transform from the issuing of certificates into the delivery of digital, online services to parents and children. We will be building an online identity that will enable children to interact with government and non-government agencies to access the services that they need throughout their life.

Like many countries, we have now formed a national CRVS working group. Led by the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages from the Department of Internal Affairs, this cross agency group also includes the New Zealand Statistics agency and the Ministry of Health.

New Zealand is a Pacific nation. We have very close relationships with the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau whose people are also New Zealand citizens and hold New Zealand passports. We also have special relationships with Samoa and Tonga as well as with other nations in our region.

We support the work of the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and the Brisbane Accord Group in implementing the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan. By working together, in a coordinated way with development partners, much more can be achieved than working in an individual or even bilateral way.

It is the value of working together that has encouraged the formation of the new Pacific Civil Registrars Network. New Zealand is pleased to actively support the network. All 19 Pacific nations plus a number of development partners and private sector supporters have now joined the network. The Pacific Civil Registrars Network is now a member of the Brisbane Accord Group, and is actively supporting the implementation of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan.

A key issue in the Pacific is the impact that migration has on death recording. Many Pacific people die in a different country from their birth. This is especially so for those who are terminally ill and travel for treatment. This means that mortality statistics are incomplete and inaccurate. Also, there is an increased risk of identity fraud and to national security as birth records remain open longer than they should. New Zealand, through the Pacific Civil Registrars Network, will work to address this important issue.

To conclude, New Zealand endorses the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Action Plan. We look forward to doing all that we can to work across the region during the Decade for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

Thank you.