

Youth Call For Action on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

Who we are

We, the youth advocates of the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, support a common call from young people across Asia-Pacific to ensure that youth voices are heard and listened to as the region's governments finalise the CRVS Regional Action Framework to launch a Decade of CRVS.

What we believe

While recognising the committed efforts of the region's governments and partners to get every one in the picture, we believe that until now, young people have played a small role in planning for the Decade of CRVS. While those youth represented at the Ministerial Conference may be small in number, they speak up for the voices of the more than 135 million children under 5 whose births have not been registered in Asia-Pacific. As CRVS champions and following the Convention on the Rights of the Child stating that all children have the right to a name and to acquire a nationality, we commit to:

- Speak up about CRVS importance and engage with our peers.
- Work for and with the most marginalized, making sure their voices are heard and helping governments reach out to the most vulnerable while responding to their needs.
- Encourage collaboration between multiple stakeholders around development and implementation of national CRVS Plans.
- Participate in the development of national CRVS strategies and implementation plans.
- Advocate for CRVS to become a priority in the post-2015 development agenda

Why this call?

Children without a legal identity will grow up to be young people who will face constant challenges in their daily lives. They are more likely to miss out on opportunities like education, healthcare, employment, political participation, land ownership and freedom of movement.

People from minority groups are especially restricted in accessing these rights and realising their dreams and ambitions. Unregistered people become entrapped in a cycle of poverty and are more vulnerable to exploitation such as forced labour or trafficking.

With Asia facing the growing challenge of youth unemployment, inefficient CRVS systems are compounding the disillusion and exclusion faced by people in the region. This becomes most apparent in fragile states where jobs and opportunities are already hard to come by. The aspirations and expectations of young people will never be met in a world that does not take CRVS seriously.

Our call

We call on governments, youth networks, development partners and the private sector to take the following actions:

1. Guarantee that every child is registered and able to fully access their rights by 2024.
2. Develop specific plans to register children from the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.
3. Make every effort to facilitate late registration for those not registered at birth without them having to incur fees or penalties.
4. Ensure any incentives intended to increase birth registration do no harm and do not have adverse impacts on other rights. Efforts aimed at increasing birth registration rates should focus on addressing the barriers to birth registration, simplifying procedures and integrating registration within other interventions.
5. Increase investment and resource allocation for free and inclusive CRVS systems.
6. Bring registration services closer to the people and make them accessible for all. Governments should ensure local registration facilities have adequate capacity (e.g. are provided with relevant materials and supplies as well as the means for safe and efficient storage of documents) to meet local needs and that are decentralised and accessible to all.
7. Listen to, consult with and involve youth when making decisions and developing and implementing national CRVS plans.
8. Implement country-specific communication strategies to focus not just on informing people but compelling them to act and rethink their approach to registration of life events.
9. Invest in innovative platforms for CRVS systems by also including the use of digital technologies.
10. Governments should take measures to store and safeguard documents and data (both digital and hard copy) related to birth registration in order to protect the records and ensure confidentiality.