



Role of the Health Sector in Accelerating Improvements in CRVS Systems: Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic

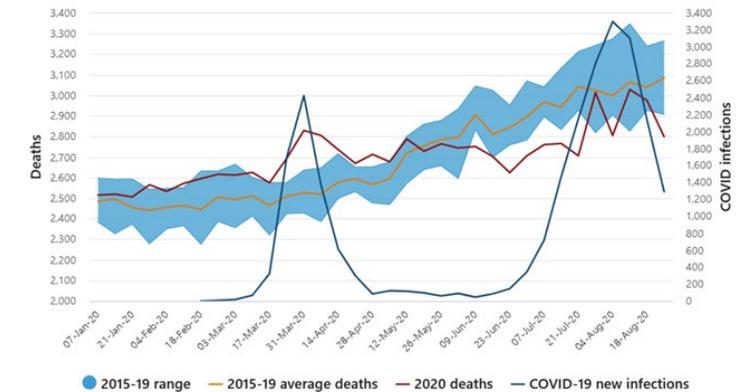
Concept Note for the Special Topic Session of the Ministerial Conference



Background to the Session

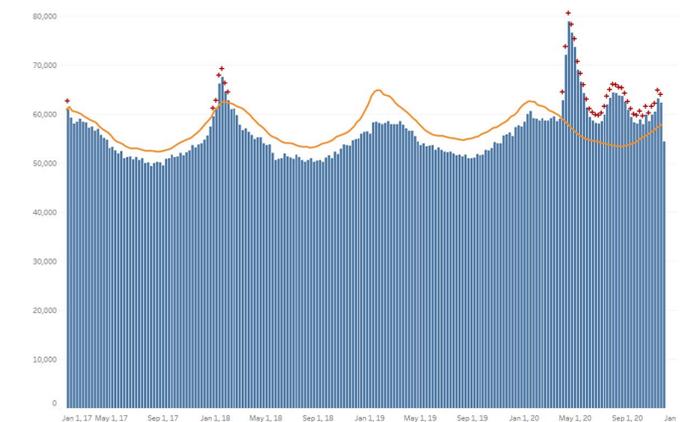
- Untapped potential for civil registration of **births and deaths known to the health sector**; see high **immunization rates** and efforts to **reduce maternal mortality**
- Involving the health sector can **also address inequalities** in civil registration, for example:
 - under registration of **women** with whom the health sector has close contacts, especially during reproductive ages
 - under registration among **lower socioeconomic groups** which are targeted in immunization and universal health coverage effort
- Excess mortality analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic re-emphasizes the **critical need for timely mortality data**; increasing needed to track excess mortality associated with shocks to population health (including climate change)

Doctor certified deaths, COVID-19 infections, Australia, 1 Jan - 25 Aug 2020 vs 2015-2019 benchmarks



<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/provisional-mortality-statistics/latest-release>

Weekly number of deaths (from all causes)



https://public.tableau.com/profile/dataviz8737#!/vizhome/COVID_excess_mort_withcauses_12022020/WeeklyExcessDeaths



World Health Organization





Objectives of the Session:

- Make the case to use the broad network of **health sector staff as informants** for the civil registration of live births, stillbirths and deaths, given their **routine involvement during these vital events**
- Emphasize the key essential role of the health sector for the **determination of causes of death**
- Stress the critical **role of mortality surveillance** as a function of the health sector, especially during health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Showcase **country examples with high-level political engagement** and close collaboration that demonstrate the benefits and experiences in linking health and CRVS and disseminate emerging guidance (for example, WHO-UNICEF guidance).

WHO is finalizing the CRVS strategy which reinforce the support from the health sector to civil registration.



Expected High-Level Recommendations from the Session:

- Welcome the **initiative for close/closer collaboration** between the civil registration system and the health sector with a focus on death registration and causes of death data.
- Commit to accelerated efforts to **harness the contribution of the health sector** by building on lessons learned in the region.



Format of the Session:

- **Opening** by ESCAP or a member of the Regional Steering Group
- **Moderated panel** discussion with country stakeholders reporting on **recent initiatives** to integrate health and CRVS, success and challenges encountered, and identification of key elements needed to achieve coordination and collaboration between health and CRVS
- **Open discussion with country statements** about:
 - **Experiences and lessons learned** in collaborating with the health sector for CRVS strengthening and implementing the Regional Action Framework.
 - Recommendations and lessons learnt on collaboration with the health sector for CRVS strengthening, including **lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic**.



Outline Background Paper for the Session (to be developed):

- **Current status** of registration of births, stillbirths and deaths, including causes of death, in the Asia-Pacific region, drawing attention to outstanding gaps.
- Role of the health sector as a **robust and committed partners for improving** CRVS systems, especially during the pandemic.
- Central role of CRVS systems in **tracking the COVID-19 pandemic** and monitoring and achieving the SDGs.
- Strategies for tapping into **information routinely available through the health sector** to increase the registration of vital events and the availability of high-quality cause of death information.
- Steps to **enhance interoperability** between the health sector and CRVS system and mutual benefits for both the health and CRVS systems.
- **Country experiences** in building upon interlinkages between the health and CRVS systems: essential elements for success.