

Children and Youth in the Picture
Young People's Forum for the Third Ministerial Conference on
Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Background

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) is about a person's legal identity, including their right to recognition as a person before the law and their formal relationship with the State. For example, a birth certificate provides individuals with documentary evidence proving their name, age, family relationships and nationality; documentation of which is important for accessing essential services like healthcare and education. Legal identity through civil registration also implicates additional rights and activities such as political participation, recourse to justice, property ownership, formal employment, financial services and inheritance.

Additionally, recording every life event is also an opportunity to produce accurate, complete and timely vital statistics on the health and demographics of the population, as well as maintain a national civil registry or population database. While producing vital statistics through sample surveys can function as a means for highlighting the possible scale of a situation, these methods cannot be localized, can be costly, uncertain and may not cover vulnerable population groups. Ultimately, these methods are not a long-term substitute for vital statistics derived from a CRVS system with universal coverage.

Moreover, registering, documenting and recording life events enhances good government and sustainable development. Knowing the population of a country and its subdivisions, leading causes of death, fertility rates and life expectancy enhances public administration by informing effective, efficient and directed policies.

In 2014, countries in Asia and the Pacific attended the *First Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific* and proclaimed the *Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade (2015-2024)*. The governments also adopted the Ministerial Declaration to 'Get Every One in the Picture', accompanied by a *Regional Action Framework for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific*. In 2021, the *Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific* was held, marking the midpoint of the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade.

In the *Second Ministerial Conference*, children and youth engaged in various participation platforms to inform the outcome of the Ministerial Conference. They participated in in-country consultations and an online regional forum and its follow up activities to develop their joint statement about civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS).¹ They also took part in a side-event and warm-up session to disseminate their statement² which presents the

¹ <https://www.crcasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CRVS-Report-Final.pdf>

² <https://youtu.be/kf2eNLWLgNQ>

various ways in which these legal documents affect the enjoyment of their rights, the challenges they face when accessing these legal documents, and their recommendations to achieve a universal and responsive CRVS in the region.

In their statement, one of the recommendations is to involve children and youth in decision-making processes and discussions. They said, “We do not only want to share with other children and youth the importance of getting registered. We [also] want to have a dialogue with our governments.”

Building on these, spaces for children and youth participation will be provided again to inform the *Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics* on 24-26 June 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.

II. Objectives and expected outputs

The overall aim of the Young People’s Forum is to:

- Improve the accountability of States in ensuring a universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics system through meaningful engagement with children and youth

Specifically, the Young People’s Forum aims to:

1. Co-create participation spaces and actions with children and youth to contribute to the *Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics* in 2025
2. Gather the views of children and youth on the progress on addressing the points raised by children and youth for the *Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics* in 2021
3. Provide a platform for children and youth to share their experiences and views on specific topics related to CRVS, such as violence against children, education, travel and movement, gender, climate change and extreme weather events, and armed conflict
4. Support the development of a set of recommendations from children and youth
5. Facilitate a process among children and youth to select their own representatives to the regional platforms

The Young People’s Forum targets to develop the following outputs:

1. A one- to two-page summary coming from the set of activities
2. A joint statement from children and youth to be shared during the *Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics* (As part of the child participation process, the format of the statement—whether it will be in video, written, or other format—will be co-decided with the children and young people)

III. Overview of the Young People’s Forum

The Young People’s Forum will encompass a series of activities that include the following:

1. Country/local-level preparations (preferably before the end of 2024)
2. In-person regional meeting on 4-6 March 2025 in Bangkok (with joint sessions with civil society organizations)

3. Follow up sessions (virtual) leading to/during the Third Ministerial Conference

In conducting these activities, separate forms of engagement for children (below 18 years old) and youth (18 to 24 years old) will be conducted as appropriate.

1. Country/local-level preparations (preferably before the end of 2024)

This process will be done in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific to prepare for the succeeding activities.

Taking off from the *2021 Report on the Consultations with Children and Young People on the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific*³ which includes their joint statement, a set of consultation questions will be developed to get the views of children and youth if these points remain valid and if there are other points that need to be raised in the *Third Ministerial Conference*. These consultation questions will be informed by a rapid scoping of what has been done so far in relation to the children and young people's recommendations.

The consultation questions will also deep dive on specific topics related to the unique and emerging experiences of children and youth in the CRVS system. These include their perspectives on the impact of CRVS on violence against children, education, and their freedom of movement and travel. On the topic of gender and CRVS for instance, the questions will surface the views and experiences of girls, boys, LGBT+ children, children with LGBT+ parents, and young people in the process of gender transition. The impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, as well as armed conflict, will also be asked to get the children and youth's perspectives on how these situations, which are becoming prevalent in the region, affect their access to the legal documents.

As part of this process, children and youth will be asked about their proposed format for the joint statement. Furthermore, they will be supported to elect their own representatives to the in-person regional meeting on 4-6 March 2025. Guidance will be provided on whether the representation will be per country or supporting organization.

2. In-person regional meeting on 4-6 March 2025 in Bangkok

Following the country/local-level preparations, an in-person regional meeting will be held in Bangkok to consolidate the results and start the development of the joint statement.

The design of the meeting will take into consideration the proposed formats for the joint statement. For example, if the children and youth would like to create a video statement, the 3-day meeting will include the process of writing the script and/or video recording.

During the regional meeting, children and youth will also be facilitated to select their own representatives who will attend the available sessions leading to/during the Third Ministerial Conference.

³ <https://www.crcasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CRVS-Report-Final.pdf>

This in-person regional meeting will have joint sessions with civil society organizations, with the intergenerational dialogue being the highlight. In this intergenerational dialogue, children and youth will present their statement and recommendations and adult representatives of civil society organizations will have the opportunity to have an exchange with the young people. The engagement of civil society will be supported by different development partners.

3. Follow up sessions leading to/during the Third Ministerial Conference

These sessions may include virtual follow up activities, side events, warm up sessions, or the main session of the Third Ministerial Conference.

IV. Selection of children and youth

Taking into consideration the series of activities comprising this Young People's Forum, the children and youth delegates to be engaged should ideally be supported by CRC Asia member organizations, World Vision, and other partners who expressed commitment to this process.

The Young People's Forum will make an effort to involve groups of children and youth that are particularly disadvantaged or structurally discriminated against in accessing the CRVS system, such as those who are stateless, those in refugee situations, those who belong to ethnic and indigenous communities, those who identify as LGBT or who has parents who are LGBT, etc.

V. Link to other regional platforms

The Young People's Forum will link with the CSO Forum of the Third Ministerial Conference to ensure alignment and holistic approach.

ESCAP representatives working on the *Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development* (APFSD) will be invited to observe during the in-person regional meeting on 4-6 March 2025 in Bangkok to encourage more children and youth participation in the APFSD's Official Programme, aside from the Side Events.