



Outcome of the Regional Preparatory Meeting:

Governments agree on steps to 'Get Every One in the Picture'

'It's time to get everyone in the picture,' was the clear message from last week's regional preparatory meeting ahead of November's Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia-Pacific, where 32 countries came together to review and reach consensus, in advance of potential endorsement at the Ministerial Conference, on a Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Framework to help governments know their population and achieve inclusive development by bolstering country-level systems to register life events like births, deaths and marriages.



"CRVS is a critical development issue," explained Mr. Shun-ichi Murata, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. "It is the basis for so many activities that are the core of inclusive, well-functioning and participatory societies, whether those are activities as obvious as a child going to school or being vaccinated, or as unseen as being included in the population figure that determines how much money is distributed to that child's local government.



"By recording the cause of death, CRVS is also the foundation for us to use a human tragedy as an opportunity to improve the health and quality of life of subsequent generations," he added.

The Chair of the Meeting, Dr Chandramouli Chandrasekaran, Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, reaffirmed India's vision to achieve national universal birth and death registration by 2020: "Through this vision, we can share our experiences in seeking to create a demand for CRVS and in strengthening capacity in establishing a sustainable system."

Dr. Lisa G. Bersales, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippines (and Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics) added: "Our shared vision is that of babies in Asia and the Pacific born in an environment which assures them of recognition of their legal identity and all the dignity and benefits that this recognition brings with it.

"We agree that this vision can be actualized by a universal and responsive CRVS system which records important life events in a person's life from birth to marriage to death and other life events in between."



In opening remarks, Dr. Isiye Ndombi, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office highlighted: "At first glance, many countries in Asia and the Pacific have high registration coverage, but after taking a closer look at registration by region, disparities become apparent.



"We need to encourage the use of innovations and harnessing the use of open source and inter-operable technology to reach the hardest to reach."

The Regional Preparatory Meeting was convened by ESCAP from 28 - 29 August in Bangkok, in partnership with UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO, ADB and Plan International to review preliminary draft outcome documents to be adopted at the upcoming Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific.

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