Best wishes for a productive 2018 from the ESCAP CRVS Team

The ESCAP CRVS team wishes every one of you a happy 2018 and look forward to working together to improve CRVS in Asia and the Pacific.

2017 was a great year for CRVS improvements globally and in our region. Hopefully 2018 will bring us even closer to achieving our shared vision for all people in Asia and the Pacific to benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development.

Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, 4-8 December 2017, Mauritania

The Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, was held on the theme: ‘Accelerating a coordinated improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for implementation and monitoring development in Africa: Review of progress and the way forward’.

The meeting was preceded by an Expert Group Meeting to review progress made in the region including priority areas such as registration in emergencies and conflicts, and vital statistics production. Many organisations from the Asia-Pacific CRVS Partnership were represented at the Ministerial Conference.
Improving medical certification and coding in the Pacific

The Brisbane Accord Group (BAG), led by SPC, WHO, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Fiji National University (FNU) conducted a regional workshop on the medical certification of causes of death on 28-30 November 2017 in Suva, Fiji. The workshop was attended by 19 participants including Medical doctors and Health Information Personnel from six Pacific Island countries, namely: Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The workshop aimed at reviewing a set of training materials developed by BAG on medical certification of causes of death which had earlier been piloted through two national workshops held in Samoa and Tuvalu in September and October 2017, respectively.

The workshop introduced the participants to existing training tools on cause of death certification and further went through key topics that should be covered in teaching certification, including an overview and presentation of each topic, and review of training material and case examples. The workshop also discussed regional approaches to building capacity in medical certification, including the importance of cross-country knowledge and experience sharing.

National training on coding causes of death was organised by the BAG in Fiji 4-8 December 2017. The training was led by the World Health Organisation, the Australian Bureau of statistics and the Queensland University of Technology.

The 19 participants included health information staff and IT professionals from the Ministry of Health of Fiji. The training focused on building knowledge and capacity in the application of mortality coding rules, in alignment to international standards for the classification of diseases (ICD) and the application of IRIS—an automated system for coding of causes of death. Participants undertook practical coding exercises using medical certificates of cause of death from Fiji—applying both manual and automated coding processes. The training will support Fiji in improving the quality of cause of death data and in expanding the pool of human resources available to undertake cause of death coding. Fiji is the first Pacific Island country to adopt IRIS for cause of death coding.

Improving the quality of cause of death data in the Pacific is a core priority for BAG and was underlined by the recently held Pacific Heads of Planning and Statistics Meeting. The BAG plans to strengthen its support and engagement in this area, particularly through providing more opportunities for training and south-south exchanges among Pacific Island countries and Territories.

Facilitated by the BAG, in November 2017, the registrar from Tokelau visited Niue’s Civil Registration office for one week to share knowledge and experiences on civil registration practices and process.
New one-stop-shop for Data for Health
CRVS strengthening information and resources

A CRVS Knowledge Gateway (www.crvsgateway.info) has been launched. The Gateway provides technical tools, evidence-based information and country experiences for people working in health, information systems and government in low- and middle-income countries that are offered for free in an approachable and user-friendly way.

The Gateway and the majority of resources was developed by the University of Melbourne as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative. Watch this video to see it in action, or visit www.crvsgateway.info to explore the CRVS Knowledge Gateway for yourself.

Training for selected countries on national CRVS strategies and the Regional Action Framework held in Bangkok

ESCAP organized a workshop for selected National CRVS Focal Points, 12-14 November 2017, in Bangkok. The focus of the workshop was to strengthen participants’ capacities for setting national targets and collecting, compiling and disseminating information on the targets of the Regional Action Framework. Further information on the workshop, including presentations, are available here.

The workshop equipped National CRVS Focal Points and other CRVS professionals from Afghanistan, Brunei Darussalam, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Georgia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam to be champions to 'Get Every one in the Picture' within their countries, thereby supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Framework. The Focal Points were trained on tools to lead the process of developing national multisectoral CRVS strategies in their countries and setting up national CRVS coordination mechanisms.

49 members and associate members of ESCAP have assigned National CRVS Focal Points to support the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on CRVS, and 39 countries have submitted their baseline reports for the Asia Pacific CRVS Decade. Lately, several countries have been finalizing their national CRVS strategies, including Kiribati, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

A recent information note, developed by ESCAP and partners,
outlines the key considerations when establishing national CRVS coordination mechanisms. 38 countries have established national CRVS coordination mechanisms with a few more countries having less comprehensive technical working groups or informal coordination mechanisms.

Events & Media

**International Conference on CRVS, 2018**
23-25 January 2018
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Harnessing the Power: CRVS Systems for 2030 Global Agendas**
27-28 February 2018
Ottawa, Canada

**49th session of the Statistical Commission**
6-9 March 2018
New York, USA

A Call For Contributions

Do you have anything you want to share? We welcome contributions to the newsletter and website. If you have a story on CRVS insights, events, information or tools, please send them through to sejersent@un.org

For more information contact the Statistics Division of United Nations ESCAP at stat.unescap@un.org or +66 2288 2593, or visit www.getinthepicture.org

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