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CRVS Insight Newsletter

October 2025

Leveraging Administrative Data for Inclusive and High-Quality Official Statistics: Tools from the CAD

27 October 2025
12:30-14:00 h (UTC+7)

Asia-Pacific Stats Café
(organized in collaboration with the Collaborative on Administrative Data)

This session aims to showcase the practical tools and resources developed by CAD. It will provide participants with insights into the application of these tools, share country experiences, and foster dialogue on scaling up administrative data use for gender-responsive and inclusive statistics.

Moderator:



Afsaneh Yazdani
Statistician,
Statistics Division,
ESCAP



Isabella Schmidt
Regional Gender
Statistics Specialist,
UN Women ESEA



Sylvia Malina
Gender statistics
communications
specialist, UN
Women ESEA

Speakers:



Aishath Shahuda
Deputy Chief
Statistician,
Maldives Bureau of
Statistics



Silja Emmel
Senior advisor,
Statistics Norway



Oyunbileg Delgersalkhan
Director of Data,
Research and
Analysis Division,
NSO, Mongolia

Register here:
<https://forms.office.com/K19h6CEps>



Join the meeting:
<https://bit.ly/42HqUR>



**ESCAP**
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

STATS CAFÉ
Food for Thought on Statistics
and Development



Asia-Pacific Stats Café: Leveraging Administrative Data for Inclusive and High-Quality Official Statistics: Tools from the CAD

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is hosting the next Stats Café on 27 October 2025, focusing on the theme: “Leveraging Administrative Data for Inclusive and High-Quality Official Statistics: Tools from the Collaborative on Administrative Data.”

The webinar will showcase practical tools developed by the [Collaborative on Administrative Data \(CAD\)](#), a global initiative led by the UN Statistics Division, UN

Women, and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. These tools aim to help national statistical offices (NSOs) and policymakers improve the quality, usability, and integration of administrative data into statistical production.

The session will feature speakers from UN Women, Statistics Norway, the Maldives Bureau of Statistics, and the National Statistics Office of Mongolia, sharing country experiences and practical applications of CAD tools. If you miss it, a recording will be made available on the same page.

Date: Monday 27 October 2025

Time: [12:30 - 14:00 Bangkok time](#)

Registration: [Here](#)

Venue: [MS Teams](#)

Event page: [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)



CART Cohort 3 applications closing soon

There is only 2 weeks left to apply for the third cohort of the CRVS Applied Research Training! This one-year programme builds research and analytical skills for CRVS practitioners to develop in depth research to improve their national systems. Participants receive mentorship, e-learning, and face to face workshop opportunities to conduct applied research that improves CRVS data quality and use in their home country.

A Stats Café was held on 9 October, with testimonies from previous CART participants and to learn more about how CART is empowering practitioners across Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The recording and presentations from the Stats Cafe are available [here](#).

Apply by 9 November 2025 to join the next cohort starting in January 2026. Click [here](#) for more details.



New Global Grants Round to Strengthen Health Data Systems

Bloomberg Philanthropies' Data for Health Initiative has opened a new funding round under its Global Grants Program (GGP), targeting improvements in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and the strategic use of public health data.

Government agencies and NGOs with government partnerships are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 for 12–15-month projects commencing around 1 April 2026. Priority areas include CRVS governance, verbal autopsy implementation, and data integration for health planning.

The application process begins with concept submissions from 27 October to 14 November 2025, followed by full proposals due 8 December 2025 for shortlisted applicants.

Since 2019, the GGP has supported over 60 countries. The initiative is sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Gates Foundation, with partners including WHO, SPC, ESCAP, Johns Hopkins University, and Vital Strategies.

More information is available [here](#).



Photo credit: UNFPA

Global experts convene at the Expert Group Meeting on Population Registers to strengthen standards

As governments digitize civil registration, identity management, and data systems, the need for shared standards, safeguards, and interdisciplinary dialogue is more urgent than ever.

This was the focus of the Expert Group Meeting on Population Registers: Consolidating Lessons from the Field and Synthesizing International Technical Standards on Population Registers and Their Usability (13-14 October 2025), was co-organised by several members of the [Community of Practice on Population Registers](#), co-chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) , National Institute of Statistics, Uruguay (INE), Statistics Norway in collaboration with the International Union for [the Scientific Study of Population \(IUSSP\) and its scientific panel on population registers, ethics and human rights](#) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

This meeting brought together government experts from National Statistics Offices and related line ministries alongside technical advisors and researchers from international and regional organizations, as well as academic institutes. The presentations, panel discussions and world cafe tables kick started efforts to update the international technical standards and benchmarks for assessing the completeness, quality and usability of population registers.



Photo credit: UNFPA

4th Global CRVS and Gender Symposium champions Inclusive Data Systems for Gender Equality

UNFPA and its Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems, in collaboration with IDRC, Canada, the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children, and Adolescent's, UNICEF, UNECA, and Open Data Watch hosted the 4th Global CRVS and Gender Symposium in Nairobi, Kenya between 15-17 October 2025. The event brought together **114 participants from 42 countries**, representing governments, UN entities, development partners, academia and civil society organizations. The [symposium background Paper](#).

Making Everyone Count: Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Inclusive CRVS Systems, situated CRVS strengthening as a human rights imperative to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 3-day symposium centred around 7 key action themes:

- (i) strategically framing CRVS system strengthening around a life course approach via a gender lens;
- (ii) consolidating the multiple CRVS assessment frameworks and tools,
- (iii) expanding inequality assessments,
- (iv) advancing data systems integration underpinned by human rights principles,
- (v) expanding data usage of CRVS data,
- (vi) promoting a culture of implementation science and operations research across CRVS systems scale-up efforts, and
- (vi) joining up financing and coordination of CRVS systems efforts, especially with the private sector and local community groups.

In the coming weeks, the slides and plenary session video recordings from the 4th Global CRVS and Gender Symposium will be posted to the symposium portal: www.crvs-gender.com. An updated discussion paper that synthesizes the core messages and key follow-up actions will also be released in early December.

High-level advocacy event co-organized by the WHO and the OIF to strengthen Civil registration and vital statistics systems

Date & Time Nov 3, 2025 20:00 in [Bangkok](#)

Description Accelerating investments in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in the French-speaking world through strategic partnerships and digital innovation – high-level hybrid advocacy event co-organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)
Type of event: Hybrid. Online in Zoom and in person in Room XII, Palais des Nations, Geneva



WHO and OIF to Host High-Level Roundtable on Strengthening CRVS in Francophone Countries

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) will co-host a high-level roundtable on accelerating investment in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems across the Francophone world. The event takes place on 3 November 2025 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, aligning with the 50th session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.

The roundtable will explore strategic partnerships and digital innovation for CRVS transformation. It features two sessions: one with country-level discussions (including Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal, Switzerland, and Togo), focusing on investment mobilization with global institutions (e.g., World Bank, Vital Strategies, WHO).

CRVS systems are crucial for legal identity, service delivery, and public health. The hybrid event offers simultaneous French-English interpretation, with registration via Zoom/Indico and a live stream on YouTube.

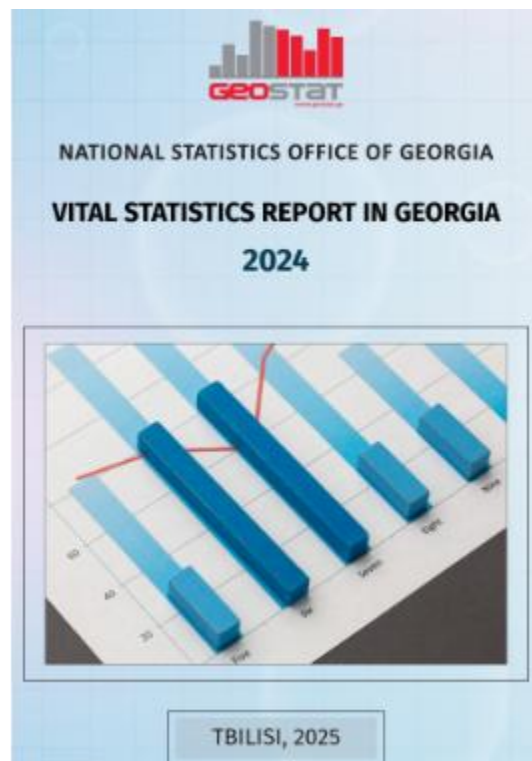
Details of the high-level roundtable is as follows:

Date: 3 November 2025

Time: 14:00 - 17:00 Geneva time

Registration: [Here](#)

Live stream: [YouTube](#)



Georgia releases the 2024 Vital Statistics Report

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) has published its annual Vital Statistics Report in Georgia 2024, offering a detailed overview of key demographic indicators and life events across the country.

The report presents comprehensive data on births, deaths, marriages, and divorces, along with regional breakdowns and trends. The publication also includes insights into

child mortality rates, maternal age trends, and demographic shifts, contributing to evidence-based policymaking and public health planning.

The full report is available for download on [Geostat's official website](#).



Sri Lanka advances Mortality Data Quality through ICD Coding Training

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and Vital Strategies, launched a 10-day training programme in October 2025 to enhance national capacity in ICD-based mortality coding. Targeting coders from the Registrar General's Department, the initiative forms part of the OneRegistry program, supported by the UN Sri Lanka SDG Fund and Bloomberg's Data for Health initiative.

The training aims to standardize and improve the accuracy of mortality data, supporting timely vital statistics and evidence-based health policy planning.



Photo credit: UNHCR

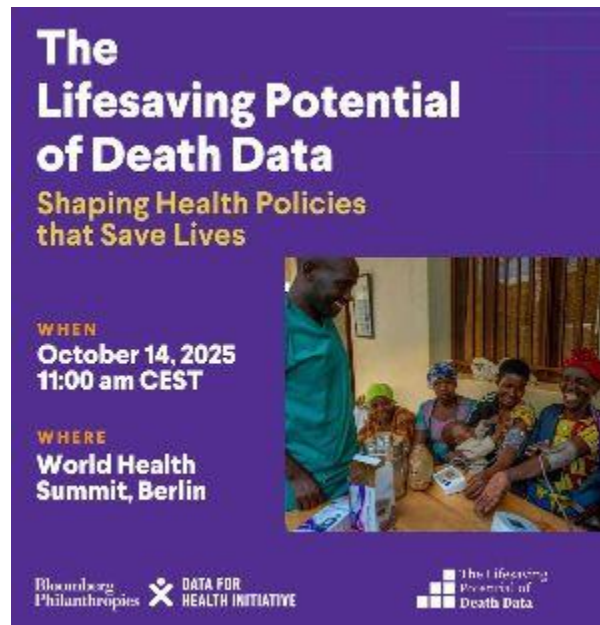
Bangladesh releases First National Mortality Reports

Bangladesh's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has published the country's first-ever national mortality reports, drawing on data from the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) (2019–2023) and Verbal Autopsy (2023) systems.

Enabled by the expansion of MCCD to 594 hospitals, the findings highlight a major shift in public health: non-communicable diseases now account for the majority of deaths, with 68% in communities and 57% in facilities, while child mortality remains a concern, with 18% of facility deaths among children under five.

DGHS Director General Prof. Dr. Md. Abu Jafor emphasized the importance of comprehensive mortality data for health system reform during the launch. The reports also note challenges in data quality and gender disparities in death reporting.

Click [here](#) for the news.



World Health Summit Panel addresses gaps in global mortality data

A significant portion of global deaths remains unregistered, limiting the effectiveness of public health planning and policy. Improving the quality and coverage of mortality data is increasingly recognized as a priority for health systems worldwide.

At the [World Health Summit](#), representatives from organisations, national governments, and CRVS experts discussed strategies to strengthen death registration systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Speakers shared practical insights and country experiences in improving data collection and use.

Bloomberg Philanthropies' [Data for Health Initiative](#) emphasized that investing in mortality data systems is a cost-effective approach to support evidence-based decision-making and build more resilient health systems.

Please find details of the event [here](#).



Malaysia allocates budget for myDigital ID expansion

The Malaysian government has emphasized digital economy development in Budget 2026, with targeted allocations to support national digital infrastructure. A key focus is the expansion of the myDigital ID initiative, aimed at enhancing secure access to public services.

The budget includes dedicated funding to advance the program, which seeks to register 15 million users by the end of 2026. The initiative is positioned as a foundational element in Malaysia's broader digital transformation strategy.

By facilitating digital identification, the government aims to improve service delivery, promote efficiency, and strengthen the country's digital ecosystem.

Read full news report [here](#).

CRVS Champion



Dr. Lakshmi Somatunga - Sri Lanka

*Our community newsletter puts a spotlight on people who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support CRVS programmes in Asia and the Pacific, raise awareness of CRVS issues or lead CRVS improvement efforts in their home country or in the region. This month, we would like to dedicate this issue of Insight to **Dr. Lakshmi Somatunga**.*

What is your current title and role?

I held the post of Additional Secretary (Public Health Services) in the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka and retired in July 2025 after 25 years of service as a senior Medical Administrator out of my total period of 36 years of medical Profession. I continue to serve as a public health professional where my expertise is required.

Can you please share with us a particular experience which highlighted the importance of CRVS to you?

As the person overseeing both disease control and health promotion at the policy level in the health sector, it was of utmost importance that I recommend and take policy actions based on evidence. And the health sector has a greater responsibility to prevent all premature deaths and contribute to the sustainable development goals.

Therefore, CRVS improvement is a major subject area and a prioritized task under the Public Health Services because of the reason that the strengthened CRVS system is critical for effective governance, public health policy, and socio-economic development. Also, like many other public health subjects, CRVS has many stakeholders and goes beyond the boundaries of health but output of improved CRVS is essential for health sector to improve the health status of the nation by utilizing the data, derived from the CRVS system to yield impactful outcomes. Invariably, I had to lead the programme ensuring the participation and contribution by relevant stakeholders within and outside the health sector and to improve the CRVS situation and to steer the system towards progress.

How are you currently involved in CRVS improvements?

CRVS improvement in Sri Lanka was supported by Vital Strategies which was a great strength, and we were able to expedite many activities utilizing the opportunity. I performed as the Technical Head of the programme and when we commenced the programme, relatively good data coverage was present in the country but quality, timeliness and cooperation by all relevant stakeholders were not satisfactory. Therefore, taking the lead we, health sector invited main stakeholders, namely, Registrar General's department, Department of Census & Statistics and Ministry of Justice to take part in working together. With everyone's support and contribution, we were able to form a steering committee for Data for Health with several working committees under the main committee.

My guiding principle was assuring sustainability. Hence, all steps taken were within the system and capacity building was carried out at every step so that the institutionalization was ensured.

Starting with the health sector more emphasis was given to proper death declaration, and the intervention was started from the undergraduate education by developing a uniform curriculum for all the medical faculties with the support of the Ministry of Higher Education. The formats that have been used from last century to certify deaths for both institutional and community deaths were updated to capture proper death declaration as recommended by WHO. We have only one format left to be upgraded. A legal review of CRVS system of the country was done which is a milestone of CRVS improvement of Sri Lanka and not many countries of the world have carried out. Simultaneously, training of Medical Officers and Coroners (Inquirers into Sudden Deaths) was conducted. Monitoring vital statistics data and its usage was commenced and capacity building of district staff under the Registrar General's Department is being carried out. Collaboration of all relevant stakeholders at the district level is being facilitated and continued technical support has been assured. The necessary instructions, guides and offline tools were developed and are being used for capacity building. And we are happy

that our coordinated efforts led to the upliftment of our CRVS index of Sri Lanka to the next better level due to our dedicated teamwork for a decade since 2015.

Which advice would you give to others trying to improve CRVS systems?

First of all, a mechanism of collaboration with the participation by all relevant stakeholders at the national level should be established (e.g. CRVS advisory/ steering Committee or a task force). In order to give due attention to all the different components of CRVS, it is advisable to have working committees reporting to the national committee (e. g. MLDI, Digitalization/ one registry and monitoring etc.).

One sector should be taking the leading role, coordinating the collaboration. Most appropriate is the health sector with the leadership by Public Health component (Health sector is geared to chase targets like disease elimination and service coverage etc, therefore it is easy to lead the coordinated action).

Political commitment should be assured. Country level advocacy is essential. It should be mentioned here that the ministerial conference conducted by UNESCAP is highly effective in view of assuring political support and it should be continued.

A comprehensive review of the CRVS system should be carried out and a plan of action should be developed accordingly.

Events

- [UNSD: Global calendar of statistical events](#)

- [27 October 2025: Asia-Pacific Stats Café: Leveraging Administrative Data for Inclusive and High-Quality Official Statistics: Tools from the CAD](#)
 - [3 November 2025: High-level round table: Accelerating Investment in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics \(CRVS\) System in the Francophone World through strategic Partnerships and Digital Innovation \(Hybrid\)](#)
 - [30 March - 1 April 2026: 2026 CRVS Research Forum](#)
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Resources

- [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#)
 - [LinkedIn: Asia and Pacific Collaborative - Global Network](#)
 - [CRVS eLearning courses](#)
 - [Recording: Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series: Building Resilient CRVS Systems](#)
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Professional Opportunities

- [ESCAP: Intern-Statistics Division](#)
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