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Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure
of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP
regional institutions: Statistics**

Resolution 67/12

Improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹ and the Declaration on the Right to Development,²

Noting the importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems for improving development outcomes, enabling the observation and assessment of a country's progress towards nationally and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Stressing the significant role of civil registration within a country's legal systems for recognizing the rights and privileges of individuals and enabling the progressive realization of those rights,

Recognizing that civil registration systems capable of generating reliable and timely vital statistics contribute significantly to improved evidence-based planning and increased efficiency in resource allocation,

Recognizing also the importance of civil registration and vital statistics in raising the visibility of and improving policy focus on the most vulnerable groups, including women and children in poverty, migrants and other marginalized groups, and providing a basis for designing social protection schemes that reduce risks and vulnerabilities,

Emphasizing the fundamental responsibility of members and associate members in establishing, operating and maintaining reliable civil registration and vital statistics systems,

¹ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² General Assembly resolution 41/128, annex.

Recognizing the role of knowledge creation, strategic research and analysis in supporting health and social development, especially for capacity-building, the transfer of technology, the sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and South-South cooperation,

Underlining the need for sustained investment in civil registration and vital statistics systems,

Noting the need to build greater understanding and appreciation of the benefits of civil registration and vital statistics on the part of national authorities and development partners,

Recognizing the important role of civil society organizations and communities in advocacy and community mobilization for civil registration,

Acknowledging the wide differences in the level of development of the civil registration and vital statistics systems of countries in Asia and the Pacific,

Expressing deep concern that:

(a) Countries in the region continue to face major challenges in assessing progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those related to health and the reduction of child and maternal mortality;

(b) While the region has experienced rapid economic growth, and improvements in development indicators have been achieved at the national level, inequalities between population groups and geographic areas have grown in many countries, and currently many national statistical systems are inadequately equipped to observe and assess such inequalities;

(c) There is a lack of sustained high-level political commitment and resources for improving civil registration and vital statistics in some countries, leading to underinvestment in and neglect of this fundamental governance responsibility to a certain extent;

(d) There is a lack of awareness among families and communities of the potential benefits of civil registration and the importance for development of reliable and timely vital statistics;

(e) In many countries in the region, there is inadequate coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders involved in civil registration and vital statistics, resulting in duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources;

(f) In many countries in the region, health-information and statistical systems are constrained by weak institutional capacity, resulting in incomplete coverage and poor quality of civil registration and vital statistics;

(g) The potential of information and communications technologies to improve the efficiency of the collection, compilation, sharing, dissemination and analysis of data on vital events, especially births, deaths and causes of death, has yet to be fully realized,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee on Statistics on its

second session;³

2. *Also takes note* of the outcome statement of the Regional Forum on the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration in Asia and the Pacific,⁴ held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June 2010, which brought together officials of national statistical organizations, civil registration offices and ministries of health as well as international development partners, to develop a regional programme for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics;

3. *Encourages* all members and associate members to review and assess the current functioning of the civil registration systems and the quality of the vital statistics produced internally within each country;

4. *Recommends* that the results of country assessments be utilized by members and associate members and stakeholders to develop and implement comprehensive and costed national strategies and plans to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems;

5. *Calls upon* members and associate members to strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions to improve civil registration and vital statistics in their countries;

6. *Calls upon* the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, other global, regional and subregional development partners and agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector entities to increase their support to countries for the development and strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, where practicable and in accordance with the domestic law and policies of the respective countries:

(a) To convene a high-level regional meeting of decision makers from national statistical organizations, civil registration offices, ministries of health and other relevant stakeholders to raise awareness and foster increased commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics;

(b) To facilitate the formation of a regional platform aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information on strategies and plans to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems, which would, through the secretariat, report on its accomplishments, compile lessons learned and foster South-South and peer-to-peer cooperation for improving civil registration and vital statistics;

(c) To take a lead role in the region, in partnership with regional knowledge hubs and technical agencies, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Statistics Division and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in developing and disseminating standards, evidence, tools and guidelines for civil registration and vital statistics;

³ E/ESCAP/67/12.

⁴ See E/ESCAP/CST(2)/3/Add.1.

(d) To facilitate, in close collaboration with technical partners and United Nations agencies, technical assistance, including training and advisory services, to build national capacity in civil registration and vital statistics;

(e) To mainstream attention to civil registration into the subprogrammes on social development and subregional activities for development of the ESCAP programme of work, as appropriate, and work with relevant stakeholders to support and enhance commitment for civil registration and vital statistics;

(f) To consider collaborating closely with relevant partner agencies, especially the World Health Organization, the Health Metrics Network, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, to coordinate and harmonize support and mobilize global, regional and country resources for civil registration and vital statistics;

(g) To enhance the capabilities and capacity of the secretariat to respond to the requests of members for technical assistance and support in their efforts to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(h) To support members and associate members in the region, in partnership with countries and drawing on regional resources, in monitoring progress in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems upon countries' requests, if any;

(i) To report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.
