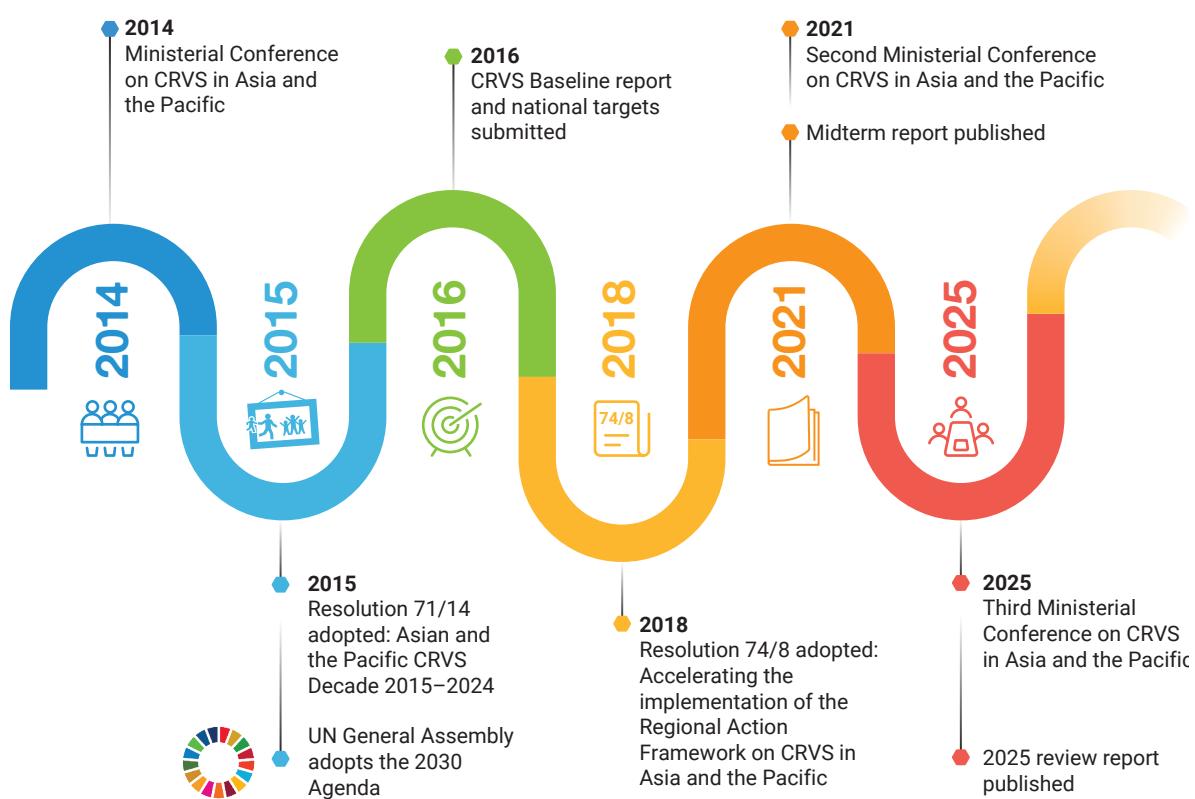


INTRODUCTION

Civil registration is fundamental throughout an individual's life. Birth registration establishes legal identity, affirming a person's right to recognition before the law and formalizing their relationship with the State. A birth certificate provides permanent legal proof of identity and is essential for accessing rights and services such as education, healthcare, social protection, marriage registration, participation in political and economic life, asset ownership and financial services. At the end of life, death registration formally closes a person's legal identity. A death certificate is required in many jurisdictions to authorize burial or cremation and facilitates inheritance and the resolution of other legal and family matters.

Beyond legal functions, civil registration data underpin the production of timely and accurate vital statistics on births, deaths and causes of death. When comprehensive and disaggregated, these statistics support targeted policymaking and resource allocation in health, education and disaster risk reduction. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) data also contribute to monitoring 67 indicators of 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs), making robust CRVS systems critical to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Strengthening these systems enables Governments to take informed action toward achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Asia-Pacific region has a long-standing commitment to CRVS. In 2014, members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and development partners convened at the Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific and adopted the Ministerial Declaration to 'Get Every One in the Picture', launching the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade (2015–2024). The shared vision was that by 2024, all individuals would benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems, enabling the realization of rights and supporting governance, health and development.

In 2015, ESCAP members and associate members adopted resolution 71/14, endorsing the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.⁶ The Framework supports coordinated action at subnational, national and international levels by aligning priorities and enabling progress monitoring. It defines three overarching goals, 15 nationally determined targets, eight implementation steps and a set of action areas to guide the enhancement of CRVS systems.

In line with resolution 71/14 and guided by the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP facilitated a baseline review in 2015 and a midterm review in 2019/2020. Midterm findings showed encouraging progress toward the goals and targets but also revealed the need for accelerated action. In response, the Second Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific was held in 2021, and the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics was adopted, calling for renewed momentum in the second half of the CRVS Decade. In 2022, ESCAP adopted resolution 78/4, endorsing the declaration and agreeing to convene a Third Ministerial Conference in 2025 and initiate a comprehensive 2025 review.

BOX 1

GUIDING MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SHARED VISION: THE REGIONAL ACTION FRAMEWORK ON CRVS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

By adopting the *Ministerial Declaration to 'Get every one in the picture' in Asia and the Pacific*, Ministers endorsed the Regional Action Framework on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific as a catalyst for governments and development partners to focus their efforts toward achieving the shared vision of universal and responsive CRVS systems. The Framework promotes coordinated action at subnational, national and international levels, ensuring stakeholders align their efforts and priorities around mutually agreed goals and targets.

The Framework guides members and associate members on developing CRVS improvement approaches and measuring their progress towards the shared vision. It outlines implementation steps and action areas to guide members and associate members to improve

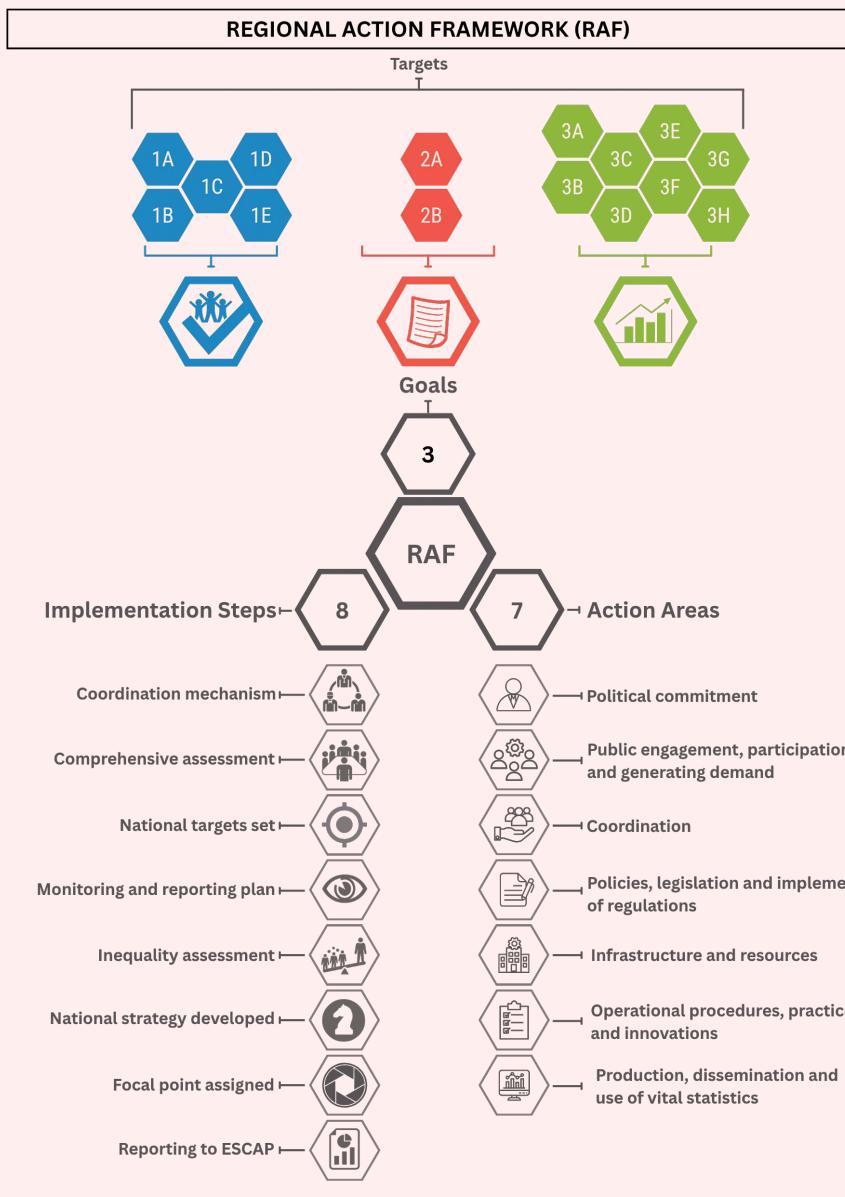
core elements of CRVS systems, namely registration of vital events, issuance of legal documentation following civil registration and production and dissemination of vital statistics. Structured around three overarching goals and 15 nationally determined targets that support objective and timely monitoring and evaluation of national progress in implementing the Framework throughout the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015–2024, they incorporate universally applied human rights principles including non-discrimination, inclusion and equity. Since members and associate members established their own values for the targets at the onset of the CRVS Decade based on their specific contexts, the values vary accordingly.

For more information on the targets, see Annex II.

⁶ More information on the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific at: <https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/regional-action-framework>.

BOX 1 *continued*

GUIDING MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SHARED VISION: THE REGIONAL ACTION FRAMEWORK ON CRVS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



The Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific developed a questionnaire for the 2025 review, and it was distributed to ESCAP members and associate members in June 2024. A total of 50 responses were received with reporting on progress toward national targets for birth and death registration and certification, cause-of-death recording and implementation of the Framework's action areas. The ESCAP secretariat reviewed and validated the data, requesting clarifications where needed, to produce this regional progress report.

This report presents the progress made since the beginning of the CRVS Decade (2015–2024), highlighting key achievements, success stories and ongoing challenges. It explores approaches members and associate members can adopt to sustain momentum and address persistent gaps.

This report has five chapters, each focusing on a critical aspect of CRVS systems:

- 1 Realizing universal birth registration
- 2 Registering all deaths and causes of death
- 3 Harnessing civil registration records for vital statistics
- 4 Following the implementation steps of the Regional Action Framework
- 5 Accelerated actions to realize universal and responsive CRVS systems in Asia and the Pacific

Chapters 1–3 assess progress toward targets related to birth and death registration and the production and dissemination of vital statistics. These include indicators such as the percentage of births registered within one year and the use of verbal autopsy. Each chapter identifies key achievements and remaining gaps and identify potential approaches for members and associate members to consider in their efforts to close them.

Chapter 4 reviews the status of the Regional Action Framework's eight implementation steps, including system assessment, multi-sectoral coordination and inclusive strategy development.

Chapter 5 offers insights on emerging priorities and provides actionable recommendations to strengthen CRVS inclusivity and resilience and to accelerate the achievement of targets and the regional vision.

The Third Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in June 2025, will provide an opportunity for regional leaders to reflect on the achievements of the CRVS Decade and chart the future of CRVS. This report will serve as a critical input to inform deliberations, including discussion of a potential extension of the CRVS Decade to 2030. It aims to support members, associate members and development partners in focusing efforts and resources on the most pressing priorities to achieve universal, inclusive and resilient CRVS systems.



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