



# Horizons for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific

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Recognition of the importance of universal and responsive CRVS systems has increased since the beginning of the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade. The 2030 Agenda, launched after the declaration of the Decade, acknowledges civil registration as a basis for legal identity and requires good quality vital statistics to monitor progress towards the SDGs. Multiple countries have begun to implement identity management systems, often founded on civil registration. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic underlined the need for accurate, complete and timely vital statistics, including on causes of death, for which civil registration is recognized as the best source. By progressing towards the goals of the Regional Action Framework, that is Goal 1 on universal registration, Goal 2 on the provision of legal documentation from civil registration, and Goal 3 on the production of vital statistics based on civil registration, countries are also supporting their achievement of the SDGs, facilitating the implementation of identity management systems and preparing to monitor and respond to future pandemics.

As presented in the report, countries have, to a large degree, taken advantage of the Decade and the momentum created around CRVS to strengthen their systems. Following recommendations from the Regional Action Framework and with the

support of development partners they have implemented key steps for improvements. Most importantly, an increasing number of countries are addressing CRVS issues in a coordinated and multisectoral manner rather than through ad hoc, siloed activities. This is a testimony to increased national leadership and political commitment facilitating action at local, provincial, national and international levels by enabling multiple stakeholders to align and prioritize their efforts, as well as monitor progress towards achieving shared results.

Thanks to these efforts, the region has made tremendous progress with respect to the three goals of the Regional Action Framework. The birth and death registration gaps in the region are rapidly closing, and countries that had low birth and death registration completeness at the beginning of the Decade are rapidly improving. Moreover, the use of civil registration records for vital statistics is continuously being enhanced to respond to the needs of the users, as proven during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, this midterm assessment of progress also highlighted areas in need of further action, including some areas that are relevant to a few countries only and others that are more widely relevant.

Although its timeframe goes beyond the Decade, the 2030 Agenda set the target to strengthen national statistical systems, specifically by achieving the registration of 100 per cent of births and 80 per cent of deaths by 2030. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda places a strong emphasis on leaving no one behind. In terms of civil registration, it means all vital events should be registered. To ensure every one is in the picture it is critical that countries conduct assessments of inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including hard-to-reach and marginalized populations. The assessment of inequalities is an implementation step of the Regional Action Framework, and it has been completed by only a few countries so far. Assessing inequalities, therefore, needs to be prioritized in the second half of the Decade if countries wish to ensure

they achieve Goal 1 of the Regional Action Framework on universal civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events and fulfil the pledge set out in the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind.

An increasing number of countries are implementing identity management systems to improve the delivery of governmental programmes to the population and facilitate access to services, such as banking. The provision of legal identity is included in the SDGs, with target 16.9 on legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030. To support the achievement of this target, the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda was launched in 2019 (see Box 4). It defines civil registration as the basis for legal identity. Providing all individuals with legal documentation of civil registration, Goal 2 of the Regional Action Framework, is therefore all the more relevant for countries moving towards implementing identity management systems founded on civil registration. Indeed, identity management systems should be implemented in conjunction with investments in civil registration, otherwise there is a risk of further marginalizing subgroups of the populations not necessarily covered by civil registration.

Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics, including on causes of death, are crucial to monitor the SDGs. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further underlined the importance of vital statistics for evidence-based policymaking. Civil registration, unlike other systems conferring identity documents, can provide data on vital events, including causes of death. Nonetheless, to this day there are still at least 17 countries in the region that do not use registration records to produce vital statistics, including on causes of death. Further, even when countries are able to produce vital statistics, specifically cause of death statistics, a low proportion of deaths have a medical certificate of cause of death and the information provided or the coding practices applied are of poor quality. Nevertheless, the use of verbal autopsy in the region helps alleviate this issue by providing a temporary solution to the lack of information on causes of death. More efforts

are needed to improve the recording of causes of death and to harness registration records for statistics to provide timely vital statistics and accurate statistics on causes of death by the end of the Decade in the region. This will facilitate the monitoring of the SDGs and future health crises. Increasing the involvement of the health sector in CRVS systems will be one of the necessary steps for countries to achieve this.

The Second Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, which will take place in November 2021, will be an opportunity for governments and development partners to come together and celebrate the success of the first part of the Decade described in the present report. More importantly, they will be able to discuss the challenges ahead and identify common solutions to address them. These solutions will need to

consider the renewed importance of CRVS for the SDGs, the implementation of identity management systems and the need to monitor health crises. The recommendations from the Conference will be key for the region to achieve its shared vision that by 2024 all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems that facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development. The achievement of the shared vision will, in turn, strengthen sustainable development, facilitate the implementation of identity management systems founded on civil registration and improve preparedness for future health crises.

## THE SECOND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON CRVS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**WHEN** 16-19  
NOVEMBER 2021

**WHERE** BANGKOK  
& VIRTUALLY

**WHY**

- Review the progress made toward meeting the goals of the CRVS Decade
- Promote civil registration systems as the foundation for legal identity management
- Emphasize the importance of civil registration and vital statistics for achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Focus on the essential role of CRVS systems in the response to pandemics and the recovery from COVID-19

**WHO**

- Heads of Government
- Ministers of Interior, Health, Planning and Justice
- International development partners
- Senior officials from civil registration; health and statistics
- Media
- Academia
- Civil society and non-governmental organizations

**SESSIONS ON**

Picture of progress

Health & COVID-19

Vital Statistics

Legal identity

Gender

Economics of CRVS

Leaving no one behind

To lead to a Ministerial Declaration

**Co-organizers**

For more information, please visit <https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/second-ministerial-conference>