# The Potential for Cross-Border Collaboration Between Civil Registrars in South Asia
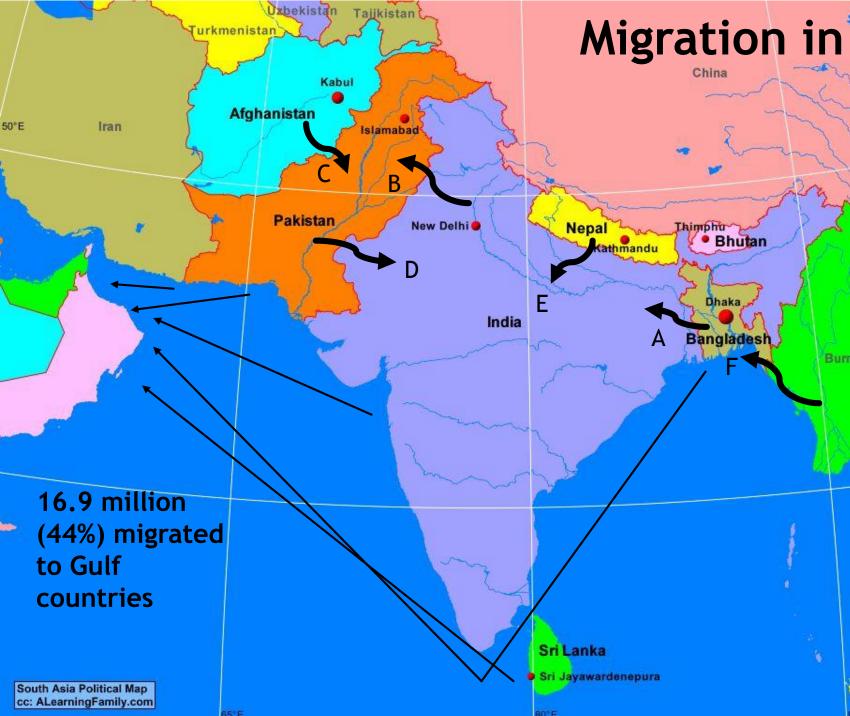
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ESCAP Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific set forth the goal of **universal registration** of births, deaths, and other vital events.

But what does this mean for the Region?

# Migration in South Asia, 2017

- 38.4 million South Asian emigrants

- 10.9 million international immigrants in South Asia
  - 9 million from other South Asian countries

**Intra-regional**

A: 3.1 million Bangladeshis in India

B: 1.87 million Indians in Pakistan

C: 1.5 million Afghanis in Pakistan

D: 1.1 million Pakistanis in India

E: 537,000 Nepalese in India

F: 882,676 Rohingyas in Bangladesh

**16.9 million (44%) migrated to Gulf countries**

# As people cross-borders, the daily tasks of life do not cease, and neither does the occurrence of vital events such as births, deaths, and marriages.

▶ Cross-border movement can result in a person being born in one country, getting married in another country, and perhaps even dying in a third country.



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# Registering vital events with an international element adds complexity

- **For births, the registrar may need to verify:**
  - The parents' marriage certificate if it was issues overseas
  - The child's birth certificate if it was originally issued overseas
- **For marriages, the registrar may need to verify:**
  - That a foreign individual is not currently married
  - Previous marriage and associated divorce records
- **For deaths, the registrar may need to contact a foreign civil registry office to:**
  - Request a copy of a death certificate to close out a record, transfer property or funds, terminate a pension etc.
  - Request a copy of a birth certificate or marriage certificate to list next of kin when the deceased was born or married overseas



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# Benefits to civil registrars of cross-border collaboration

▶ Establishes a network for points of contact – Who do ask I ask to verify this certificate?

▶ A formal registrars' network can also facilitate:

   ▶ Sharing of knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned

   ▶ Sharing innovations in IT and other arenas

   ▶ Coordination of inputs and information collection where application

▶ Can facilitate a formal agreement and establishment of a framework for:

   ▶ Which data can be verified and/or shared

   ▶ Whom information can be shared with

   ▶ How data can be shared

   ▶ SOPs for information requests

# Examples and characteristics of regional civil registrars' networks

| | Pacific Civil Registrars Network (PCRN) | Latin America and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV) | European Association of Civil Registrars (EVS) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Membership** | Civil registrars in the Pacific Region (TOR) | Member States of the OAS (by-laws) | 10 EU countries with several others closely contributing |
| **Purpose** | • Share information, lessons learned and good practices;<br>• foster coordination and peer-peer relationships and<br>• support in tackling common challenges | Facilitate:<br>• coordination, support, and cooperation of member states;<br>• modernization and incorporation of technologies;<br>• bilateral, multilateral, and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms to improve registration | • Facilitate sharing of information, best practices, and legal developments within member countries;<br>• Advise EU policy makers on the need for harmonization of laws |
| **Meetings** | Aim: every 2 years | Annually | Annually |

# Examples of regional cross-border collaboration projects

# PCRN – bilateral agreements to share death and name change records



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▶ Births, deaths, and marriages occurring overseas not being registered on home island

  ▶ Pacific Island citizens travel overseas for work, education, and medical treatment- many pass away in New Zealand and Australia

▶ Data sharing trial of death records and name changes was implemented between New Zealand and the Cook Islands in 2016

▶ New Zealand now has five data sharing agreements either in place or in the works with New South Wales, Australia; Victoria, Australia; the Cook Islands; Tokelau and Niue

# OAS: Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas (PUICA) to improve civil registration



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▶ Supported El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in improving birth registration in the border regions where these three countries meet

▶ Established:

   ▶ civil registration offices in border points

   ▶ common criteria for the registration of births in border areas

   ▶ information campaigns about the importance of civil registration targeted to border populations

   ▶ technical committee comprised of the civil registry offices of these 3 countries

# European Union's European Civil Registry Network (ECRN)

- Many Europeans migrate to other European countries for work, education, and even healthcare

- European Union recognized the need to share and verify data across civil registries

- Developed an interoperable system for civil registry offices to contact one another and request and verify certificates

- Governed by the Vienna Convention on multilingual extracts from civil-status acts which:

  - outlines the minimum information to be filled out for a valid birth, death, and marriage record, and

  - sets up a standard template which can be translated to many different languages

# Comparison of key characteristics of regional data sharing and/or verification projects

| Characteristics | PCRN: Bilateral agreements with New Zealand | OAS: PUICA facilitated civil registries of Colombia and Ecuador to verify ID information* | EU: ECRN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legislation | Bilateral agreements for data sharing between New Zealand and each country | Bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries are created for data sharing and collaboration | 34 conventions regarding data exchange or the issuance of civil documents signed by various EU countries; Vienna Convention on multilingual extracts from civil-status - signed by most EU countries - acts as the basis |
| Type of data verified and/or shared | Death and name change information relating to a person whose birth is registered in the State in which the foreign registration authority has jurisdiction | Confirmation of a match of: a) biometric and biographical data; b) biographical data (when there is no biometric information and all biographical data match); c) Some biographical data match (when the result is a partial coincidence) or; d) no match. | Birth, death, marriage data and certificates as requested |

| Characteristics | PCRN: Bilateral agreements with New Zealand | OAS: PUICA facilitated civil registries of Colombia and Ecuador to verify ID information* | EU: ECRN |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Method of data transfer | Secure on-line computer connection or an encrypted CD | Email as needed | Electronic submission as needed, systems are interoperable in that they connect to a database to "talk to each other" and send information |
| Response time | N/A: Data transferred on a predetermined timeframe i.e. every 12 weeks transfer all relevant data | 2 days to 4 weeks | 2-3 days |

# Cross-border collaboration has supported civil registrars in improving registration

▶ Foster relationships between civil registrars

▶ Facilitate sharing innovations and good practices

▶ Development of a framework for data verification and/or sharing to improve registration of vital events with an international element, working towards the goal of **universal registration**

Thank you