



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-fourth session**

Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018

Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda*

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: statistics**Report on the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific on its third meeting****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The report on the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific on its third meeting, which was held from 18 to 20 October 2017, was prepared with the guidance of the Regional Steering Group and contains a number of recommended actions to strengthen the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. At the meeting, the Regional Steering Group reviewed the progress that countries had made in implementing the Regional Action Framework, as well as challenges in achieving the vision of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024).

The Regional Steering Group provided guidance on how to improve the reporting process for the Decade, and adjusted its programme of work and established a set of task forces to accelerate the implementation of the Regional Action Framework.

The Commission is invited to review and provide guidance on the recommendations of the Regional Steering Group, including the convening of a midterm review of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework at the ministerial level in 2020. The Commission is also invited to express views on ways to further support the achievement of the goals defined in the Regional Action Framework.

* ESCAP/74/L.1.

I. Matters calling for the action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Matters calling for action

1. The following recommendation of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific is brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its consideration and possible action:

Recommendation 3/1

The Regional Steering Group recommends that the Commission consider convening a midterm review of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific at the ministerial level in 2020. The ministerial conference would review the progress made towards the goals of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024), to be assessed during the review of progress scheduled for 2019 as outlined in the Regional Action Framework. The ministerial conference would also consider the potential of ensuring linkages between national identity management systems and national civil registration and vital statistics systems, as well as the benefits to service delivery in countries, as these are major emerging topics that countries in the region are addressing as they work towards the goals of the Regional Action Framework.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

2. The Regional Steering Group made the following major recommendations to member States and development partners regarding the acceleration of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework:

Recommendation A

Member States are encouraged to reaffirm their political commitment to the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Those countries that have yet to submit their national target and baseline reports are particularly encouraged to finalize this process. Development partners are requested to continue supporting member States in the implementation of the Regional Action Framework and align activities with the goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework and national civil registration and vital statistics strategies.

Recommendation B

Member States are encouraged to recognize the many tangible benefits and real impact of national civil registration and vital statistics coordination mechanisms and strategies, as seen across the region. Establishing and supporting these national coordination mechanisms and strategies should therefore be a priority for improving national civil registration and vital statistics systems. Collaboration should be a continuous and iterative process among civil registries, national statistical offices, agencies responsible for national identity management, ministries of health and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that

facilitate the realization of their rights and support good governance, health and development, as outlined in the Regional Action Framework.

Recommendation C

Member States are encouraged to continue to incorporate improvements to civil registration and vital statistics systems into national development strategies and national strategies for the development of statistics, to promote the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Development partners are called upon to continue their support to include strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems in global and regional Sustainable Development Goal processes, including through the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the Statistical Commission and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as other relevant forums. This is important, in particular, in recognition of the important role of civil registration and vital statistics for the achievement of many of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, most notably target 16.9 on providing legal identity for all.

Recommendation D

Member States should incorporate routine registration completeness assessments as part of their ongoing quality assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics system. Development partners are encouraged to compile and share existing resources for assessing registration completeness and are called upon to support countries by providing technical assistance on completeness assessment for quality assurance.

Recommendation E

Member States are encouraged to link identity management with civil registries, health information systems and statistical production, as stand-alone systems have significant drawbacks in terms of inclusiveness, sustainability, use for governance functions and vital statistics production. To prevent fragmented and parallel identity management systems, countries should work towards integrating and linking systems where possible, with due consideration for critical issues such as data security, privacy and confidentiality. This may include issuing unique and random personal identification numbers at birth.

Recommendation F

Member States are encouraged to ensure that the goal 3 of the Regional Action Framework, which focuses on the production and dissemination of accurate, complete and timely vital statistics, is reached by institutionalizing the routine production of such reports. This includes commitment from the relevant government agencies to dedicate staff time and other resources to the production of the reports, as well as regular consolidation and reconciliation of data through a technical group on data integration and quality assurance, ideally as part of the national civil registration and vital statistics coordination mechanism. Civil registration authorities are encouraged to share micro-level data instead of aggregated data on vital events with national statistical offices, while being mindful of data security, privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, civil registration authorities are encouraged to establish a feedback loop with national statistical offices for data improvement, including regular assessments of registration completeness.

Recommendation G

Member States should conduct inequality assessments to ensure that hard-to-reach and marginalized groups are registered, as agreed under the Regional Action Framework, and that these groups are identified and considered in efforts related to completeness assessment and registration. Development partners are called upon to provide sufficient technical assistance on identification and outreach to marginalized communities. Development partners are encouraged to compile and share existing resources for identifying marginalized populations.

Recommendation H

Member States are encouraged to continue the modernization of civil registration and vital statistics systems, including digitization and integration with existing administrative and survey data, while recognizing the importance of system planning for information and communications technology (ICT). Development partners should facilitate the identification, documentation and sharing of best practices and consolidate guidelines and recommendations on modernization and integration.

Recommendation I

Member States should develop continuity plans to ensure that civil registration and vital statistics systems can operate as effectively and efficiently as possible in the occurrence of an emergency or disaster, including ensuring that civil registration data are properly backed up and that laws and policies are in place to enable the continuity plan. This could be supported by including civil registration and vital statistics in national disaster contingency planning across Governments, including integration into the humanitarian cluster response system, and involving national disaster management authorities in the work of the national civil registration and vital statistics coordination mechanisms.

Recommendation J

Member States should continue efforts to improve cause-of-death data and produce vital statistics, including analysis of the data even when they are incomplete or there are issues concerning their quality, as the analysis can be used for system improvements. Development partners are encouraged to increase capacity-building activities to improve countries' ability to produce accurate, complete and timely cause-of-death data and analyse existing data.

Recommendation K

Member States and development partners are encouraged to support efforts to increase the knowledge base for and accelerate actions to improve civil registration and vital statistics by establishing ten task forces under the Regional Steering Group. Development partners and member States are encouraged to participate actively in the task forces. The task forces are being established to focus on the following areas: preparing for the midterm review of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024); examining the linkages and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems to service delivery; considering practices for increasing birth registration and death registration, including the use of incentives; continuously supporting coordination efforts at the country level, including providing guidance on setting up coordination mechanisms and developing national civil registration and vital statistics strategies; developing costing

analysis and business cases for ICT systems in particular; using civil registration and vital statistics for service delivery; linking civil registration and vital statistics with identity management systems; conducting further analysis and providing guidance on guarding the confidentiality, privacy and safety of registration records; formulating guidelines for navigating options for assessing completeness and coverage, including with respect to hard-to-reach and marginalized populations; and using vital statistics for policy improvements and capacity development on the supply side, primarily on causes of death.

II. Summary of proceedings

A. Realizing the vision to “Get Every One in the Picture”

3. Political commitment at the highest levels played an essential role in ensuring that relevant government stakeholders effectively took on their roles and responsibilities, and that civil registration and vital statistics systems were adequately resourced and designed to be inclusive and responsive.

4. There was agreement that the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific that had been held in 2014 had contributed to three main developments: (a) increased national political commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics; (b) increased partner commitment to support countries in that endeavour; and (c) increased linkages between civil registration and vital statistics and national, regional and global development plans, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. The Regional Steering Group discussed the potential modalities for the midterm review of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024). The Regional Action Framework specified that members and associate members should submit baseline, midterm and final reports to the secretariat during the Decade to track progress and compile information about activities to improve civil registration and vital statistics that could be constructively shared across the region and with other regions. Immediately following submission of the midterm reports, the secretariat and development partners, in collaboration with the Regional Steering Group, would synthesize those country reports into a regional report on progress towards achieving the targets set by members and associate members. The resulting synthesis report would then be published to provide an overview of the status of civil registration and vital statistics in the Asia-Pacific region, and would serve as a basis for the midterm review of progress, to be held in 2020. The midterm review would subsequently be reported to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session, in 2020.

6. The Regional Steering Group agreed that it would be beneficial for the purposes of accelerating progress on civil registration and vital statistics improvements if a ministerial conference was held in 2020, and emphasized that the necessary links between identity management systems and civil registration and vital statistics provided substantial advantages and could be highlighted during such a conference.

B. Civil registration and vital statistics as a priority, integration with national plans and the Sustainable Development Goals, and action to accelerate progress

7. The Regional Steering Group was briefed on the major progress and challenges in implementing the Regional Action Framework. Most countries had established ambitious targets for improvements throughout the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024). By themselves or with support from development partners and donors, some countries had been able to make good progress in undertaking the implementation steps as recommended in the Regional Action Framework, in particular in developing comprehensive multisectoral national civil registration and vital statistics strategies and establishing national coordination mechanisms. At least 18 countries had now developed national strategies, while 38 countries had established national coordination mechanisms. To support those efforts, the Regional Steering Group endorsed two information notes advising countries on how to establish national coordination mechanisms and develop national strategies.¹

8. The Regional Steering Group took note of the different levels of progress across the region in implementing the Regional Action Framework, although continuous progress was apparent. While it was worth celebrating that 39 member States had submitted national target and baseline reports for the Decade, 14 member States had yet to nominate a national focal point, which might mean that further follow-up was required with respect to progress on other implementation steps as recommended in the Regional Action Framework.

9. Presentations by the representatives of Armenia, Cambodia, Fiji, the Philippines and the Economic Commission for Africa highlighted the need for improvements to civil registration and vital statistics to be embedded in national development plans, including with respect to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and national strategies for the development of statistics.

10. The Regional Steering Group agreed on the need for national coordination mechanisms to include all relevant stakeholders and work to foster enthusiasm and commitment at the highest levels of bureaucracy to ensure alignment across sectors. There was also agreement on the importance of establishing clear procedures and reporting mechanisms, including a timetable of meetings, agendas, allocation of responsibilities, mechanisms for prioritization of activities, reporting and information-sharing.

11. Most importantly, the Regional Steering Group agreed that continued political support and country ownership were crucial to maintaining the momentum generated by the Ministerial Conference in 2014 and to accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework.

12. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendations A, B and C.

¹ See <http://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-national-multi-sectoral-crvs-coordination-mechanisms> and <http://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-comprehensive-multi-sectoral-national-crvs-strategies>.

C. Achieving universal registration of births and deaths

13. The Regional Steering Group was informed of the ongoing work of the Statistics Division of the Secretariat to expand the international methodological framework for civil registration and vital statistics. Various methods of assessing registration completeness were debated, and the need for further work in that area in Asia and the Pacific had been highlighted by the difficulties that many countries had experienced in establishing their baseline figures for the Decade.

14. Presentations by the secretariat, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Solomon Islands and the Brisbane Accord Group emphasized the improvements over recent years in registration completeness and practices and highlighted strong country initiatives, an increased level of in-country cooperation between relevant stakeholders and improvements in legal frameworks, as well as partnership support and political support for improvements across the region. The Regional Steering Group further noted existing challenges, including a lack of routine measurement of registration completeness. Routine assessment of completeness was a key element of ongoing quality assessments of countries' civil registration and vital statistics systems, and inequality assessments of registration completeness was a key step towards ensuring that no one was left behind and not registered.

15. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation D, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

D. The need to ensure strong linkages between civil registration and vital statistics and identity management

16. Findings from the national target and baseline reports showed that, in most countries, individuals automatically received certificates when births and deaths are registered. There was, however, some room for improvement, as highlighted by the fact that 30 per cent of reporting countries did not currently issue certificates at the time of registration and had targets to improve that practice. The Regional Steering Group agreed that some country practices might create barriers, such as payment for certificates and cases where multiple visits to registration offices were needed to complete the registration and certification process.

17. Presentations by Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand and the World Bank highlighted the many benefits of well-functioning identity management to governance and the provision of transfers and service delivery in countries, such as with respect to pension distribution, the delivery of health and education services and the provision of legal identity in general. Linkages between civil registration and vital statistics and the day-to-day lives of citizens could be emphasized more frequently to make a stronger case for improvements to civil registration and vital statistics systems. During presentations, it was highlighted how systems involving identity management that built on civil registration were used for service delivery in the region, including for the provision of universal health care in Thailand, cash transfers for female-headed households in Pakistan, a broad range of social protection provisions in Indonesia and improved disbursement of payments to specific groups in Bangladesh.

18. Presentations and discussions highlighted that identity management systems, while responding to several needs, were often incomplete and lacked coverage for certain population groups, in particular infants, children and deceased people. As such, identity management systems should be designed to complement civil registration and vital statistics systems, but by no means serve as an alternative. Civil registration and vital statistics should be seen as the foundational system upon which the identity documentation was built. The civil registration and vital statistics and identity management communities should advocate the integration of both systems, including the issuance of unique personal identity numbers at birth as an integrated part of the birth notification and registration process and using death registration to ensure the accuracy of the identity management system. The integrity of the identity management system was strengthened when built on timely, secure and accurate birth data provided by the civil registry.

19. In practice, the link between civil registry, national population register and identity management system involved individuals born in the territory having their birth registered in the civil registry and being given a unique personal identity number, associated with the personal identity numbers of their parents. From birth, that individual was then included in the national population register, a reliable single source of data related to the individual throughout their lifetime. When the individual died, the death was registered, and the individual's profile could be quickly identified and deactivated within the national population register, so that functional registers could be informed and associated benefits such as pensions no longer paid.

20. The Regional Steering Group agreed that unique identifiers had multiple benefits, and that national discussions on ethical and privacy concerns should determine the inclusion of biometric information in identity management systems. The identity management cycle and the identity infrastructure should be effectively managed and should be secure to ensure public confidence and trust. The implementation of an integrated system should therefore be accompanied by any necessary legal changes and awareness campaigns. A digital identification system was only as useful as the completeness and accuracy of its underlying database (such as the national population registry), a point that further highlighted the benefits of integrating identity management with the civil registration and vital statistics system. An information note on electoral registration and civil registration and vital statistics provided background to the present discussions.²

21. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation E and the suggested focus of the midterm review of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) as outlined in recommendation 3/1. The deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

E. Producing and disseminating accurate, complete and timely vital statistics based on registration records

22. Presentations by the secretariat, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Statistics Division of the Secretariat and Statistics Norway highlighted the benefits of producing vital statistics reports based on civil registration data and that significant improvements were needed in countries to achieve goal 3 of the Regional Action Framework. The Regional Steering Group recognized that

² See <http://getinthepicture.org/resource/information-note-using-crvs-systems-electoral-registration>.

national coordination mechanisms had a key role in ensuring that the production of vital statistics was harmonized so that different agencies did not produce different vital statistics reports and population statistics.

23. The production of vital statistics reports could be used to improve data quality, as the production of the report was likely to highlight issues in the overall civil registration system and processes. There should be a positive feedback loop between the generation of vital statistics and civil registration, which necessitated collaboration between the relevant agencies involved in data collection and the generation of vital statistics.

24. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation F, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

F. Improving the registration of hard-to-reach and marginalized groups

25. Presentations by Australia, Thailand, the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Vision highlighted the need for registration of all. It was highlighted that universal registration included registration of hard-to-reach and marginalized groups independent of factors such as refugee or migrant status, ethnicity or parents' situation. The Regional Steering Group recognized the importance of ensuring that local registrars were aware of national legislation in that regard in order to overcome a lack of implementation of inclusive legal frameworks. The necessity to review legal frameworks to ensure that registration was accessible for all was also agreed upon, and good practices for registration of hard-to-reach and marginalized groups were shared.

26. The Regional Steering Group discussed the implementation step of the Regional Action Framework that focused on inequality assessments, and agreed that it was critical to identifying and assisting marginalized and hard-to-reach groups and enhancing the coverage and completeness of civil registration and vital statistics. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for target 17.18 on disaggregated data, inequality assessments could guide policies to ensure inclusive development that would leave no one behind.

27. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation G, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

G. Digitization of civil registration and vital statistics

28. Presentations by Armenia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and Plan International highlighted that ICT could provide transformative improvements in civil registration and vital statistics systems in a cost-effective manner, improving coverage and completeness, protecting data and presenting data in a meaningful way. ICT was therefore a valuable tool to assist countries to achieve the targets established under the Regional Action Framework. The Regional Steering Group noted the opportunities provided by data-enabled civil registration and vital statistics — such as interoperability, performance management, standardized processes, accessibility, scalability, security and usability — and identified key challenges and risks that countries faced when planning and implementing sustainable and effective ICT systems or upgrades,

including the risk of vendor lock-in, data protection, secure data storage and overall stability, scalability and sustainability.

29. The Regional Steering Group recognized the importance of system planning for ICT and agreed that good ICT systems were built on a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and system processes, and that the systems must be developed to address an agreed vision based on the national strategic plan. Countries should undertake business process mapping or update their business process maps to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the vision and priorities were clearly articulated in an endorsed national plan, to ensure that ICT developments were coordinated, sustainable and fit for purpose. The importance of a holistic approach to civil registration and vital statistics systems as part of a broader government ICT strategy was also noted, along with the role of legislation and the need to ensure an appropriate legal framework for ICT development.

30. Participants identified common considerations, challenges and opportunities across the presentations and subsequent discussion, including resourcing and investment, interoperability, integration and use of data, complexity of processes, inclusion and access to registration, the intersection of technical and policy solutions and risk, and ownership and planning of ICT development. Participants recognized the value of developing common ICT assets to support effective civil registration and vital statistics systems across Asia and Pacific, ensuring the highest standards of data protection and confidentiality of personal data, in order to promote interoperability between civil registration, health and identity management systems and ensure the flexibility required to meet the needs of all Asia-Pacific countries.

31. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation H, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

H. Civil registration and vital statistics in emergencies and disasters

32. Presentations by India, Indonesia, Solomon Islands on behalf of the Pacific Civil Registrars Network, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Plan International and World Vision highlighted the importance of effective preparation and implementation of plans to cover civil registration and vital statistics in emergencies and disasters. All types of emergencies disrupted or destroyed civil registration and vital statistics systems, but the extent of the damage depended on the nature and scale of the emergency and the strength of the existing system to cope with the shock, which varied depending on the size of the affected population, the type of system (paper-based, online or offline) and the requirements outlined in the laws and policies to legitimize civil registration processes. The Regional Steering Group outlined how effective preparation could mitigate the risks of the impact of emergencies and disasters on civil registration and vital statistics services and identified key challenges and risks, including revising any laws or policies to enable continuity plans for civil registration and vital statistics to be implemented. Continuity planning for civil registration and vital statistics should include their integration into the existing humanitarian cluster response systems.

33. The Regional Steering Group discussed how civil registration and vital statistics could underscore emergency and disaster preparedness and response, since accurate and timely population data were essential for planning and distributing life-saving assistance, and accurate recording of births and deaths

resulting from the emergency was required to understand the scale and potential impact of the emergency. Accurate continuous population data were required to effectively budget and deliver emergency and disaster relief, including cash assistance. Legal identity documentation improved the safety of affected populations, particularly women, girls and boys.

34. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation I, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

I. Improving cause-of-death data

35. Presentations by Bangladesh, Fiji, the Philippines, Thailand, the Pacific Community and the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized the importance of improving cause-of-death data in almost all countries in Asia and the Pacific owing to current shortcomings in that area. The session focused on strategies to improve the extent to which causes of death were ascertained correctly in accordance with the standards of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (currently on its tenth revision) and the various developments needed in countries to support those efforts, including additional training of physicians on how to complete the medical certificate of cause of death. It was also imperative to build skills for coding causes of death according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases. The potential of automated coding tools such as the Iris software was discussed, but it was noted that experienced coders would continue to be needed because not all causes could be coded automatically. Participants also discussed the use of data-quality analysis tools to identify and remedy deficiencies in cause-of-death data from health facilities. The possibility of using verbal autopsies to determine the causes of deaths outside of health facilities was examined, and the need for them to be used within the context of routine registration of deaths was emphasized. A strong recommendation was to highlight the statistical and public health uses of cause-of-death data in order to increase attention to improvements of civil registration and vital statistics systems.

36. As a result of the discussions on the present topic, the Regional Steering Group made recommendation J, and the deliberations further informed the establishment of a set of task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

J. Workplan of the Regional Steering Group

37. The Regional Steering Group discussed opportunities for strengthening regional support to member States in implementing the Regional Action Framework. The Regional Steering Group took note of the ongoing and upcoming support activities by civil registration and vital statistics partner organizations and the need to continuously improve the knowledge base for civil registration and vital statistics. The importance of documenting best practices and lessons learned was emphasized, as well as the need for country-to-country learning and exchanges of practices. To support that effort, a set of ten task forces were established to replace the existing three working groups under the Regional Steering Group. The task forces would be led by different members of the Regional Steering Group and would develop their own programmes of work and terms of references. Membership of the task forces would be open to non-members of the Regional Steering Group.

38. The deliberations under the present topic informed the establishment of a set of ten task forces as outlined in recommendation K.

III. Organization

A. Attendance

39. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following members of the Regional Steering Group: Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Philippines; Thailand; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative; Pacific Community (on behalf of the Brisbane Accord Group); Plan International; UNHCR; UNICEF; WHO; World Bank; and World Vision.³

40. Representatives of the following attended as observers: Myanmar; Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime; Economic Commission for Africa; Statistics Division of the Secretariat; Statistics Norway; and United Nations Population Fund.

B. Adoption of the agenda

41. The Regional Steering Group adopted the agenda.

C. Side events

42. A civil registration and vital statistics marketplace was held alongside the meeting. The marketplace was designed to provide a backdrop for networking and acquiring knowledge about new initiatives and ideas, facilitate informal dialogue between countries and partners and encourage countries to investigate available tools for strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems. The marketplace also allowed countries to showcase new and innovative approaches and highlight their priorities and support needs.

43. Side events included an event organized by the World Bank on its civil registration and vital statistics e-learning course, a reception hosted by Vital Strategies and the University of Melbourne Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, and an event by Plan International showcasing the OpenCRVS prototype.

³ A full list of participants is available from <http://getinthepicture.org/event/third-meeting-regional-steering-group-crvs-asia-and-pacific>.