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

Bangkok and online, 23–27 May 2022

Item 4 (j) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for  
Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific:  
statistics**

**Report of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil  
Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok and online from 16 to 19 November 2021.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific may wish to take note of the report of the Conference.

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

1. The Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific recommends that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its seventy-eighth session, endorse the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

**B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

2. The Ministerial Conference adopts the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

\* ESCAP/78/L.1/Rev.1.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the Conference**

3. The Ministerial Conference was held in Bangkok and online from 16 to 19 November 2021. It comprised two segments: the senior officials segment (16–18 November 2021) and the ministerial segment (19 November 2021).

4. The Ministerial Conference was organized by the following partners: ESCAP; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); World Bank Group; World Health Organization (WHO); CDC Foundation; Pacific Community; Plan International; Vital Strategies; and World Vision International.

5. The senior officials segment was opened by the Executive Secretary. Statements were made by Ms. Kamni Naidu, Administrator-General, Ministry of Justice, Fiji, and Chair of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific; the Director of the UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific; and the Director of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

6. The ministerial segment was opened by the Deputy Secretary-General. Statements were made by the Executive Secretary; Police Lieutenant General Nadhapit Snidvongs, Vice-Minister for Interior, Thailand; the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and the Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR.

### **B. Attendance**

7. The Ministerial Conference was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

8. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers to ESCAP attended: Finland; Mexico; Nigeria; and Switzerland.

9. Representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean attended.

10. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: International Organization for Migration; UNDP; UNFPA; UNHCR; UNICEF; UN-Women; and WHO.

11. Representatives of the Pacific Community attended.

12. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime; CDC Foundation; Child Rights Coalition Asia; Plan International; Vital Strategies; and World Vision International.

13. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the senior officials segment examined the credentials of all the representatives and found them to be in order.

### C. Election of officers

14. The Ministerial Conference elected the following officers for the senior officials segment:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Chair:       | Mr. Jeff Montgomery (New Zealand)      |
| Vice-Chairs: | Mr. Syed Rashedul Hossen (Bangladesh)  |
|              | Mr. Sukmo Yuwono (Indonesia)           |
|              | Ms. Suzilah Mohd Sidek (Malaysia)      |
|              | Mr. Joyoung Jeon (Republic of Korea)   |
|              | Mr. Oleg Shamanov (Russian Federation) |

15. The Ministerial Conference elected the following officers for the ministerial segment:

|             |                                |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Chair:      | Dr. Faisal Sultan (Pakistan)   |
| Vice-Chair: | Mr. Tumur Amarsanaa (Mongolia) |

### D. Agenda

16. The Ministerial Conference adopted the following agenda:

#### Senior officials segment (16–18 November 2021)

1. Opening of the Conference:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the progress and existing challenges in accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.
3. The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics systems and the role of civil registration and vital statistics in the response to and recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic.
4. Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring no one is left behind.

5. Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making.
6. Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach.
7. The relationship between civil registration, identity management and vital statistics, and their role in ensuring legal identity in Asia and the Pacific.
8. Other matters.

**Ministerial segment (19 November 2021)**

9. Opening of the ministerial segment:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
10. Towards a shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health and development.
11. The importance of civil registration and vital statistics and legal identity for all to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda.
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the ministerial declaration.
14. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

**E. Other events**

17. The following side events and special sessions were held in conjunction with the Ministerial Conference:

(a) 25 October 2021, side event: “Digital innovation: civil registration and the COVID-19 vaccine record”, organized by UNDP and the Government of Japan;

(b) 8 November 2021, side event: “Establishment of civil registration and vital statistics sister districts in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries”, organized by the UNICEF Pakistan Country Office;

(c) 8 November 2021, side event: “Birth registration of refugees in ESCAP member States”, organized by the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific;

(d) 9 November 2021, side event: “Deaths in Asia and the Pacific: how many remain uncouned?”, organized by ESCAP;

(e) 9 November 2021, side event: “#CountingEveryone through leadership and innovation”, organized by Vital Strategies and Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative;

- (f) 10 November 2021, side event: “Business process improvement: an innovative approach to civil registration and vital statistics system strengthening”, organized by Vital Strategies, ESCAP and the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office;
- (g) 11 November 2021, side event: “Review and revision of civil registration, vital statistics and identity management legal frameworks: an essential component of civil registration and vital statistics system strengthening”, organized by Vital Strategies, Global Health Advocacy Incubator, CDC Foundation and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat;
- (h) 11 November 2021, side event: “Unique identifiers: how can we minimize the risk and maximize benefits?”, organized by UNICEF;
- (i) 12 November 2021, side event: “Introducing an e-learning course to guide the analysis and use of vital statistics”, organized by Vital Strategies and Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative;
- (j) 12 November 2021, side event: “Count us in the picture: voices of children and youth on civil registration and vital statistics”, organized by World Vision International, Child Rights Coalition Asia and ESCAP;
- (k) 15 November 2021, side event: “Register-based censuses”, organized by Statistics Norway;
- (l) 16 November 2021, side event: “Deep dive on progress made during the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)”, organized by ESCAP;
- (m) 17 November 2021, warm-up session: “Health sector and civil registration and vital statistics”, organized by Vital Strategies and WHO;
- (n) 17 November 2021, warm-up session: “Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for the Sustainable Development Goals”, organized by ESCAP, UNHCR, World Vision International and Child Rights Coalition Asia;
- (o) 18 November 2021, warm-up session: “Connecting vital events registration and gender equality”, organized by UN-Women, UNFPA and ESCAP;
- (p) 18 November 2021, warm-up session: “Relationship between civil registration and legal identity in Asia and the Pacific”, organized by UNICEF, World Bank, UNHCR and UNDP;
- (q) 19 November 2021, “Pandemics, people and preparedness: ministerial round table on civil registration and vital statistics, COVID-19 and health”, organized by ESCAP;
- (r) 19 November 2021, “Ministerial round table: building resilient civil registration and vital statistics systems – incorporating lessons from COVID-19 in the second half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)”, organized by ESCAP.

### **III. Chair’s summary**

18. The deliberations during the Ministerial Conference will be summarized in the Chair’s summary, which will be available within a week following the conclusion of the Conference and included as annex II to the present report.

# Annex I

## List of documents

| <i>Symbol</i>             | <i>Title</i>   | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| <i>General series</i>     |  |                    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1       | Summary of Getting Every One in the Picture:<br>A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade      | 2 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2       | Support from development partners in the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)                         | 2 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3       | The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics  | 3 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/4       | Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring that no one is left behind | 4 and 11           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5       | Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making   | 5 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/6       | Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach  | 6 and 11           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/7       | Intersection between civil registration and identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific  | 7 and 11           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/8       | Report of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific   |                    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/8/Add.1 | Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics   |                    |
| <i>Limited series</i>     |  |                    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.1     | Provisional agenda   | 1 (c) and 9 (c)    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.2     | Annotated provisional agenda   | 1 (c) and 9 (c)    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.3     | Draft report   | 14                 |

| <i>Symbol</i>   | <i>Title</i>   | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|---|--|--------------------|
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/L.4   | Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics   | 13                 |
| <i>Information series</i>   |  |                    |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1   | Development partners involved in civil registration and vital statistics improvement in Asia and the Pacific: profiles and support activities                          | 2 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2   | Verbal autopsy and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific: operational procedures, practices and innovations | 3 and 10           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/3   | Economic costs and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems   | 2 and 11           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/4   | Legal identity systems in Asia and the Pacific: civil registration, vital statistics and identity management   | 7 and 11           |
| ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/5   | Privacy and confidentiality in the context of civil registration and vital statistics systems  | 7 and 11           |
| <i>Information available online</i>   |  |                    |
| <a href="https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/second-ministerial-conference">https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/second-ministerial-conference</a>                             | Information for participants   |                    |
| <a href="https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/second-ministerial-conference/programme2021">https://getinthepicture.org/crvs-decade/second-ministerial-conference/programme2021</a> | Tentative programme  |                    |

## Annex II

### **Chair's summary of proceedings of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was held as a four-day online meeting, four hours per day, from 16 to 19 November 2021.

2. The Chair's summary covers the proceedings of the senior officials segment (16–18 November 2021) and ministerial segment (19 November 2021) of the Conference.

#### **II. Proceedings of the senior officials segment**

##### **A. Review of the progress and existing challenges in accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific** (Agenda item 2)

3. The Conference had before it the notes by the secretariat entitled “Summary of Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1) and “Support from development partners in the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2) and the information documents entitled “Development partners involved in civil registration and vital statistics improvement in Asia and the Pacific: profiles and support activities” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1) and “Economic costs and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/3).

4. The Conference benefited from a review of specific areas of progress with regard to the goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and its implementation steps. The speakers included the following: Mr. Mohammed Shahidul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division, Bangladesh; Ms. Kamni Naidu, Administrator-General, Ministry of Justice, Fiji; Mr. Gogita Todradze, Executive Director, National Statistics Office, Georgia; Ms. Nazaria Baharudin, Deputy Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia; Mr. Jeff Montgomery, Registrar General – Births, Deaths and Marriages, Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand; Dr. Rajesh Dikshit, Director, Centre for Cancer Epidemiology, Tata Memorial Centre, India; Mr. Muhammad Cholifihani, Director of Population, Planning and Social Security, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia; and Mr. Philip Setel, Director, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Improvement, Vital Strategies.

5. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made statements: China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Nepal.

6. The Conference expressed its commitments to achieving the shared regional vision that, by 2024, all people in Asia and the Pacific should benefit



from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems and noted the significant progress made during the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024).

7. Civil registration and vital statistics systems provided individuals with the official recognition and documentation necessary to establish legal identity and civil status, which contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Conference noted the need to digitize civil registration and vital statistics systems to facilitate their linkage with identity management systems in order to provide identity for everyone. The Conference acknowledged remaining areas of action during the second half of the Decade, notably in the recording of medically certified causes of death and marriage registration.

**B. The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics systems and the role of civil registration and vital statistics in the response to and recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic**  
(Agenda item 3)

8. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat on the potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3) and the information document entitled “Verbal autopsy and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific: operational procedures, practices and innovations” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2).

9. The Conference benefited from a discussion on how to improve collaboration between the health sector and the sectors responsible for civil registration and vital statistics. The speakers included the following: Dr. Dzhangaziev Bakyt, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Social Development, Kyrgyzstan; Mr. Seniloli Inoke, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Tonga; Ms. Jana Shih, Technical Advisor, Vital Strategies; and Mr. Steve MacFeely, Director for Data Analytics, Division for Data Analytics and Delivery for Impact, World Health Organization.

10. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Cambodia; China; Pakistan; Philippines; United States of America; and Viet Nam.

11. When the health sector took an active role in reporting live births and deaths occurring in health facilities, completeness of birth and death registration was likely to improve, as well as the accuracy and timeliness of data on vital events, including on causes of death. A life cycle approach to civil registration which included the universal and ongoing registration of births and deaths, together with causes of death, provided a real-time source of data for Governments to identify population health risks and inform the design of effective public health policies and resource allocation. Complete and timely civil registration data for monitoring the impact of public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and for informing evidence-based responses were critical. The lack of coordination and interoperability between the health sector and civil registration system remained a challenge for some member States.

12. Registering vital events that occurred outside of health facilities and collecting information on the causes of those deaths remained a challenge and therefore conducting verbal autopsies to assess the causes of deaths that occurred outside of health facilities remained important.

13. International standards for enhancing the role of the health sector in civil registration and vital statistics systems and improving the recording of medically certified causes of death continued to play a critical role. The Conference recognized the need to implement those international standards in national systems through changes to registration procedures, the revision of legal and regulatory frameworks, the provision of training for medical practitioners and the use of digitization to facilitate the sharing of information between the health sector and the civil registration system.

**C. Civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensuring no one is left behind**

(Agenda item 4)

14. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat on civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/4).

15. The Conference benefited from a discussion on how to use civil registration and vital statistics systems to help accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The speakers included the following: Ms. Maria Amihan V. Abueva, Regional Executive Director, Child Rights Coalition Asia; Ms. Dingaliyeva Marzhan Esenzhanovna, Head of Unit on Methodological Provision and Control for Registration and Apostille of Civil Acts, Department of Registration Service and Organization of Legal Services, Ministry of Justice, Kazakhstan; Ms. Ha Thi Minh Duc, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labour – Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam; and Ms. Terry Ferrari, Regional Leader for East Asia, World Vision International.

16. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Japan; Pakistan; Philippines; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; United States; Uzbekistan; and Vanuatu.

17. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also made a statement.

18. A representative of the Child Rights Coalition Asia delivered a statement on behalf of the civil society organizations that had participated in the Regional Forum of Civil Society Organizations on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held on 20 October 2021.

19. A video joint statement by children and youth from 11 member States was played. The statement, which was recorded during the Regional Forum of Children and Youth on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held on 29 May 2021, highlighted the importance of involving children and young people in efforts to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems.

20. The Conference noted the value of improving data from civil registration and vital statistics systems for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing that not only were such systems relevant for monitoring a wide range of population-based targets and indicators but also embodied targets in their own right.

21. The COVID-19 pandemic had posed significant challenges to the delivery of civil registration and vital statistics services, impacted multiple areas of the 2030 Agenda and was expanding existing inequality gaps, all of

which were likely to disproportionately affect populations who were already being left behind.

22. The Conference noted the critical role of civil registration and its basis for legal identity, highlighting the importance of universal birth registration and the implementation of a holistic approach to legal identity that was inclusive of vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

23. Many member States were using the Bali Process Civil Registration Assessment Toolkit to qualitatively assess inequalities in civil registration coverage and to register the vital events of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. The Conference recommended expanding the Toolkit so that it could be applied to other populations.

24. The Conference recognized the efforts made to digitize existing civil registration and vital statistics systems, to streamline linkages with other government sectors for efficient public service provision and to increase access to civil registration services in remote or hard-to-reach areas.

25. The Conference noted the relevance of the Regional Action Framework and expressed an interest in more opportunities for the sharing of experiences and cooperation between member States to accelerate progress towards the goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework.

26. The Conference acknowledged the importance of financial and technical assistance from international development agencies to support the strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems.

**D. Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making**

(Agenda item 5)

27. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5).

28. The Conference benefited from a discussion about collecting, analysing and disseminating civil registration and vital statistics data in order to better inform public policy. The speakers included the following: Ms. Nuraim Syrgak, Consultant, Kyrgyzstan; Ms. Thirakha Chanthalanouvong, Director General, Department of Social Statistics, Lao Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao People’s Democratic Republic; and Mr. Romesh Silva, Technical Specialist, Health and Social Inequalities, Population and Development Branch, Technical Division, United Nations Population Fund.

29. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; Maldives; United States; and Viet Nam.

30. The representative of Vital Strategies also made a statement.

31. A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics system was the basis for complete and timely vital statistics to provide policymakers with accurate and reliable information for national evidence-based policymaking, particularly those programmes with specific objectives and targets.

32. The more data from civil registration and vital statistics systems was used to inform policy and to monitor progress towards international development agendas, the more it would be regarded as a valuable tool. The

Conference noted the importance of aligning the forms used to collect civil registration and vital statistics data with international standards for streamlined and effective decision-making.

33. The Conference noted the potential of fully digitized systems to streamline the collation and transfer of civil registration data for the production of accurate, complete and timely vital statistics.

34. Technical capacity-building was needed to facilitate the production of vital statistics based on civil registration data.

35. More regional or subregional initiatives for member States to share best practices on vital statistics production needed to be established.

**E. Implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach**  
(Agenda item 6)

36. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat on implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/6).

37. The Conference benefited from a discussion about existing gender gaps in civil registration and vital statistics data and methods for closing the gaps. The speakers included Ms. Sophie Shugg, Senior Child Rights and Protection Adviser, Plan International, and Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Officer-in-Charge, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

38. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; Maldives; Philippines; and Republic of Korea.

39. The Conference acknowledged the importance of implementing gender-sensitive civil registration systems through a life cycle approach, to better assess and tackle gender inequality at all stages of life, from birth to death.

40. It was important to ensure that civil registration legislation included a no gender discrimination policy as a guiding principle. It was also important to ensure that vital statistics based on civil registration records were disaggregated by gender to better inform and enable policymakers to address gender gaps.

41. The Conference noted the importance of prioritizing the development of marriage and divorce registration as part of national civil registration and vital statistics strategies to prevent child marriage.

**F. The relationship between civil registration, identity management and vital statistics, and their role in ensuring legal identity in Asia and the Pacific**  
(Agenda item 7)

42. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat on the intersection between civil registration and identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/7) and the information documents entitled “Legal identity systems in Asia and the Pacific: civil registration, vital statistics and identity management” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/4) and “Privacy and confidentiality in the

context of civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/5).

43. The Conference benefited from a discussion on best practices for connecting civil registration systems with identity management systems. The speakers included the following: Mr. Muhammad Tariq Malik, Chair, National Database and Registration Authority, Pakistan; Mr. Kap Calo Andy, Director, Department of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics, Vanuatu; and Mr. Jonathan Marshell, Senior Programme Officer, World Bank.

44. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Nauru; and Philippines.

45. The representative of UNHCR made a statement.

46. The representative of Vital Strategies also made a statement.

47. The Conference recognized the importance of identity documents, including birth certificates, for accessing rights and services, and noted the need to ensure vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations were included in legal identity systems. The Conference further recognized the importance of increasing birth registration coverage and the use of identity documents to increase the efficiency of public service delivery.

48. Civil registration played a critical role in the provision of legal identity. The Conference supported the implementation of a holistic approach to legal identity from birth to death through the interoperability of civil registration and identity management systems as highlighted in the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda. Digitization was a catalyst to make both systems interoperable.

49. Strong coordination between civil registration and identity management authorities was important to achieve universal legal identity as was integrating both systems at the technical and organizational levels.

**G. Other matters**  
(Agenda item 8)

50. No other matters were discussed.

**III. Proceedings of the ministerial segment**

**A. Towards a shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems that facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health and development**  
(Agenda item 10)

51. The Conference had before it the notes by the secretariat entitled “Summary of Getting Every One in the Picture: A Snapshot of Progress Midway through the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/1), “Support from development partners in the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024)” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/2), “The potential of the health sector to catalyse accelerated improvement in civil registration and vital statistics” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/3) and “Vital statistics production, dissemination and usage: harnessing civil registration data for decision-making” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/5) as well as the information documents entitled “Development partners involved in civil registration and vital statistics

improvement in Asia and the Pacific: profiles and support activities” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/1) and “Verbal autopsy and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific: operational procedures, practices and innovations” (ESCAP/MCCRVS/2021/INF/2).

52. The Conference benefited from a discussion about methods for bringing members and associate members closer to achieving the shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems. The speakers included the following: Mr. Michael Bloomberg, Bloomberg Philanthropies; Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP; and Ms. Samira Asma, Assistant Director General, World Health Organization.

53. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; Cook Islands; Indonesia; Maldives; Myanmar; Pakistan; Philippines; Samoa; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States; and Viet Nam.

54. The Conference committed to the shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems and acknowledged that despite the significant progress made during the first half of the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, accelerated efforts were required to achieve the shared vision. In that regard, the Conference suggested that regional activities be continued beyond 2024.

55. The Conference recognized the efforts made to establish multisectoral strategic plans to strengthen national civil registration and vital statistics systems, taking into consideration the role played by other sectors such as the health sector. The Conference also recognized the efforts made to implement demand-generation interventions such as birth registration campaigns and public awareness activities to increase civil registration in local communities. Frontline workers (e.g. midwives and community outreach workers) needed to be effectively engaged to conduct birth and death notification, thus removing barriers for people in rural or hard-to-reach areas. In that respect, the Conference further noted the importance of conducting assessments of inequalities related to civil registration and vital statistics systems to identify who was being left behind.

56. Many deaths in Asia and the Pacific did not occur in a health facility or with the attention of a medical practitioner; therefore the integration of verbal autopsies into civil registration and vital statistics systems was critical for providing information on all deaths.

57. The digitization of civil registration and vital statistics systems needed to be accelerated during the second half of the Decade to achieve the shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems for all people.

58. Continued support from international development partners was important to meet the nationally set goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework. Recognizing the large amount of support provided by development partners, the Conference mentioned the possibility of establishing a multi-donor trust fund in which development partners could pool their funds, which could then be made available to members and associate members to implement the civil registration and vital statistics strategy.

**B. The importance of civil registration and vital statistics and legal identity for all to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda**  
(Agenda item 11)

59. The Conference had before it the notes by the secretariat on civil registration and vital statistics as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/4), implementing gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics systems through a life cycle approach (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/6) and the intersection between civil registration and identity management systems in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/7) as well as the information documents entitled “Economic costs and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/INF/3), “Legal identity systems in Asia and the Pacific: civil registration, vital statistics and identity management” (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/INF/4) and “Privacy and confidentiality in the context of civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/MCCRVs/2021/INF/5).

60. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Armenia; Bangladesh; Cambodia; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Nepal; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; and Vanuatu.

61. The representative of UNHCR also made a statement.

62. The Conference recognized that legal identity conferred through civil registration had an intrinsic value under human rights law and was critical to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by facilitating the delivery of services. The Conference further recognized the role of civil registration in providing data for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Conference expressed its commitment to the achievement of the goals of the Regional Action Framework and of the 2030 Agenda.

63. The Conference noted the importance of high-level political commitment for the creation and implementation of national civil registration and identity management strategies and the establishment of coordination mechanisms, including all relevant stakeholders to guide the development of interoperable systems.

64. The Conference also noted the need to revise legal and regulatory frameworks for civil registration and identity management and implement digital platforms to attain interoperable systems covering the entire population, including vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

65. The Conference also noted that, despite significant progress, members and associate members still faced challenges in achieving universal civil registration and the provision of legal identity and that there was a need to reach out to populations living in geographical locations hindering easy access to civil registration offices, up-skill human resources to adopt new technologies, and ensure adequate financial resources to strengthen registration services. In that regard, the Conference noted the success many member States have had in adopting mobile registration campaigns to access hard-to-reach populations with civil registration services as well as to respond to disasters.

66. The Conference expressed its interest in more sharing of experiences among members and associate members to ensure lessons learned were effectively shared and to accelerate progress on implementing the 2030 Agenda.

67. Collaborations with international development partners had enabled members and associate members to take steps towards improving civil registration and vital statistics, including by introducing quality assurance for registration services, and had strengthened data collection for policymaking, planning and programming for health sector priorities such as non-communicable disease and cancer.

**C. Other matters**  
(Agenda item 12)

68. No other matters were discussed.

**D. Adoption of the ministerial declaration**  
(Agenda item 13)

69. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics on 19 November 2021.

70. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bhutan; and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

71. The Conference acknowledged the importance of the Ministerial Declaration for outlining the areas of civil registration and vital statistics that required accelerated efforts and targeted resources during the second half of the Decade, to realize the shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems.

72. The Conference noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had further reinforced the need for resilient and comprehensive civil registration and vital statistics systems.

**E. Adoption of the report of the Conference**  
(Agenda item 14)

73. The Conference adopted the present report on 19 November 2021.

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