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Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and
Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 24-28 November 2014
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Consideration of the draft ministerial declaration to
“Get every one in the picture” in Asia and the Pacific**

Report of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific**

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Proceedings.....	2
A. Consideration of the preliminary draft ministerial declaration	2
B. Consideration of the preliminary draft regional action framework.....	3
C. Other matters	3
D. Adoption of the report of the Meeting.....	4
II. Organization	4
A. Background	4
B. Objectives.....	4
C. Attendance.....	4
D. Opening	5
E. Election of officers	5
F. Agenda	5
G. Closing	5
Annex	
List of documents	6

* E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/L.1/Rev.1.

** The late submission of this document is due to the need for consultation with the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific following the Regional Preparatory Meeting.

I. Proceedings

A. Consideration of the preliminary draft ministerial declaration (Agenda item 4)

1. The Meeting had before it the preliminary draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/WP.1).

Key challenges, opportunities and actions for improving civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific

2. A panel discussion was held on key challenges, opportunities and actions for improving civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific. The panel was moderated by Ms. Carla AbouZahr, Chief Executive Officer of CAZ Consulting, with panellists representing Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Fiji, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Plan International.

3. The Meeting highlighted the need for Governments to develop comprehensive and well-functioning CRVS systems, underlining the importance of cooperation across government agencies, development partners and civil society, including the health sector and religious institutions, at the country, subregional and regional levels. In that regard, it noted the potential for cost reduction through better management and coordination.

4. The Meeting recognized the development benefits of well-functioning CRVS systems, including their importance in safeguarding human rights.

5. The Meeting emphasized that political support was pivotal to achieving universal registration and stressed that the development of positive incentives for individuals to register vital events was key to generating demand for civil registration.

6. The Meeting recognized that many country-specific issues would need to be taken into consideration in designing and implementing policies and action plans in order to strengthen CRVS systems. It also emphasized the importance of appropriate and up-to-date legal frameworks and the implementation of existing legislation.

7. Some delegates identified emerging issues of relevance to CRVS systems, such as gender identity, surrogacy and electronic data privacy.

8. The Meeting recommended that CRVS be included in the development agenda beyond 2015 and brought to the attention of the highest-level decision-makers in international and regional forums to attain strong and continuous political engagement.

Civil Society Forum for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

9. On behalf of the Civil Society Forum for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which was co-organized by ESCAP, Plan International and World Vision in Bangkok on 26 and 27 August 2014, a representative of Plan International congratulated the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and the secretariat for the time and effort they had invested in developing the preliminary draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific, for having led a

comprehensive consultation process with countries and development partners and for having driven the CRVS initiative in Asia and the Pacific. The representative transmitted the conclusions of the Forum to the Meeting.

10. Under those conclusions, it was noted by the Forum that civil society organizations were trusted agents at the community level and were well positioned to play a key role in helping Governments increase the demand for registering vital events, especially among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations, and were open to support Governments in developing and implementing specific interventions for those groups. The Forum had pointed to the importance of:

(a) Introducing innovations to increase access to registration, such as the use of technology for registration and maintaining civil registration records, recognizing the need to support Governments in reviewing and amending legislation to allow those types of intervention;

(b) Documenting, publishing and disseminating good practices on CRVS across the region, recognizing the specific needs and contexts of countries and aligning such practices with international standards;

(c) Using effective CRVS in emergency situations;

(d) Making joint efforts and advocating for CRVS as a priority in the development agenda beyond 2015.

Preliminary draft ministerial declaration

11. After the Meeting considered the text of the preliminary draft ministerial declaration, it recommended submission of the revised draft to the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which would be held in Bangkok from 24 to 28 November 2014, for consideration and possible adoption.

B. Consideration of the preliminary draft regional action framework (Agenda item 5)

12. The Meeting had before it the preliminary draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/WP.2).

13. The Vice-Chair of the Meeting and a representative of the World Health Organization introduced the preliminary draft regional action framework to the Meeting.

14. In considering the preliminary draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific, the Meeting noted that its content was of a technical nature and that consultations with member States had been held prior to the Meeting. It recommended submission of the revised draft to the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific for consideration and possible endorsement, without further negotiation of the text of the document during the Conference.

C. Other matters (Agenda item 6)

15. No other matters were discussed.

D. Adoption of the report of the Meeting

(Agenda item 7)

16. The Meeting adopted the present report on 29 August 2014.

II. Organization**A. Background**

17. The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 28 and 29 August 2014.

18. The Meeting was held to consider preliminary draft versions of the main outcome documents of the Conference, namely the draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture” and the draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

19. The preliminary draft ministerial declaration and regional action framework were developed under the guidance of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which was established pursuant to Commission resolution 69/15 on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

20. A “zero draft” of the regional action framework was prepared by that group and issued to seats of Government on 28 April 2014 for initial national consultations. The preliminary draft presented to the Meeting incorporated the feedback received from those consultations.

21. The preliminary draft ministerial declaration reflected the discussions of the Regional Steering Group at its first meeting in December 2013, and subsequent review and consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the group.

B. Objectives

22. The objectives of the Meeting were to: (a) review the preliminary draft outcome documents of the Ministerial Conference, namely a ministerial declaration and a regional action framework on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific; and (b) identify key emerging issues related to CRVS to be considered by the Ministerial Conference.

C. Attendance

23. The Regional Preparatory Meeting was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkey; Tuvalu; and Viet Nam.

24. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended the Meeting: United Nations Children’s Fund; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Population Fund; and World Health Organization.

25. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank and the International Organization for Migration.

26. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: Plan International and World Vision International.

D. Opening

27. The Meeting was opened by Ms. Lisa G. Bersales, Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, and National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippines.

28. Mr. Isiye Ndombi, Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific, delivered an introductory statement on behalf of the co-organizers of the Ministerial Conference, namely: ESCAP; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Population Fund; World Health Organization; Asian Development Bank; and Plan International.

29. The Deputy Executive Secretary and Officer-in-Charge of ESCAP delivered welcoming remarks.

E. Election of officers

30. The Meeting elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Chandramouli Chandrasekaran (India)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Peter Harper (Australia)
Mr. Enrique Tayag (Philippines)

Rapporteurs: Mr. Jeff Montgomery (New Zealand)
Mr. Abu Kalam Azad (Bangladesh)

F. Agenda

31. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Consideration of the preliminary draft ministerial declaration.
5. Consideration of the preliminary draft regional action framework.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Meeting.
8. Closing.

G. Closing

32. The Meeting was closed by the Chair and a representative of the secretariat.

Annex**List of documents**

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
<i>Working Paper Series</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/WP.1	Preliminary draft ministerial declaration to “Get every one in the picture”	4
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/WP.2	Preliminary draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific	5
<i>Limited documents</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	3
<i>Information documents</i>		
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/INF/2/Rev.1	List of participants	
E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/PREP/INF/3	Tentative programme	
