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## CRVS Insight

December 2023

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### **Happy New Year to our CRVS Community!**

As we embark on a new year, please join us in celebrating the significant achievements made by the the regional CRVS community over the past year. In 2023, many countries in Asia and the Pacific enhanced their civil registration systems through legal changes, process improvements, digitization, increased registration completeness and strengthened vital statistics production; all with the goal of ensuring universal civil registration that really gets every one gets in the picture.

While celebrating these achievements, we should also take a moment to remind ourselves that 2024 will mark the end of the Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade, underscoring the work that remains on the pathway to achieving our collective vision. We hope that the upcoming year will be marked by continued successes within the CRVS community as we strive to ensure that all people in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from universal and responsive CRVS systems.

On behalf of ESCAP, we extend our warm wishes for a successful new year to everyone in our community!

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## **Dissemination Workshop on Law on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identification in Cambodia**

Following the passing of the fundamental Law on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identification (CRVSID) on 1st July 2023, the General Department of Identification (GDI), Ministry of Interior, organized a nation-wide dissemination workshop on Friday, 15th December 2023. The development of the Law benefited from technical assistance by Vital Strategies and Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), with financial support from Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health (D4H) Initiative.

The commemorative workshop provided an opportunity to elaborate on the provisions of the law and offer clarification to senior management and practitioners on actual implementation of the law. A presentation by the Director General on the new civil registration process and interactive group discussions led by GDI, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Justice answered many of the questions raised by participants of the workshop. Insights generated from the workshop will feed into the development of accompanying sub-decrees and proclamations, some of which are supported by Vital Strategies and GHA.

Over 700 people including government officials from civil registration, health, and justice at both national and sub-national level, development partners, and civil society organizations attended the workshop. H.E. Aphisanthipundit Sar Sokha, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, H.E. Chan Sotheavy, Permanent Secretary of State, and H.E. Lt. Gen. Top Neth, Director General of GDI presided over the event. For more information on the Law, please refer to the following [link](#).

Cambodia #CountingEveryone videos can be found on YouTube:

Full 5 min [video](#)

Shorter 1 minute [video](#)

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### **Budget advocacy yields systemic change for the Maldives' civil registration system**

The Government of the Maldives has made a historic investment in the human and technical resources that underpin its national civil registration, vital statistics (CRVS) and identity (ID) management system, dedicating approximately US\$ 1 million (MVR 15.4 million) in new funding for the fiscal year 2024-2025. These investments are the result of a successful budget advocacy program that commenced in late 2022 through a partnership between Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) and the Maldives Department of National Registration (DNR).

The new funding will be used to create a cadre of subnational civil registrars, expand biometric technology for ID management nationwide and make its online birth, death, marriage and divorce registration systems interoperable. Data from CRVS systems helps governments prioritize health challenges, develop policies and deploy resources to improve public health systems.

Full article from Global Health Advocacy Incubator available [here](#).

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## Launch of Tonga's National Vital Statistics Report 2018-2020

Congratulations to Tonga on their launch of their latest Vital Statistics report! This is Tonga's fourth Vital Statistics report, following its predecessors from 2003, 2004, and the previous one covering the years 2013–2018.

Looking ahead, the launch of this report sets the stage for the regular compilation of annual analytical reports. This ongoing effort will ensure a continuous supply of vital statistics, enabling Tonga to adapt and respond to evolving demographic patterns and health indicators. The commitment to regular reporting reflects Tonga's dedication to utilizing data-driven approaches for sustainable development and underscores the importance of CRVS in shaping the nation's future.

Statistics presented in the report can be used by the Government of Tonga and other government entities, to provide evidence to inform decisions on health policy and planning, and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs for the benefit of the people of Tonga.

Summary fact sheet of the report can be found on [this link](#) and the full document can be found [here](#).

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## Capacity Building Workshop on Assessing Inequalities in CRVS in the Philippines

Following the initial workshop on Inequality Assessment in the Philippines, ESCAP, in collaboration with the [Philippines Statistics Authority \(PSA\)](#), and the support of [Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health \(D4H\)](#) Initiative, hosted a three day workshop focused primarily on completeness estimations.

The main objective of the workshop was to provide technical knowledge to PSA for the upcoming Philippines CRVS Inequality Assessment report. The workshop enhanced the participants' understanding of the Philippines' CRVS data ecosystem, offering practical knowledge and exploring innovative demographic estimation methods. This will facilitate PSA's ability to collaborate on, support the production, and facilitate dissemination of the upcoming report.

More information on ESCAP's work on Inequality Assessment available [here](#).

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## First digital birth certificate in Sri Lanka issued

Sri Lanka recently initiated its digital birth certificates program, commencing with a limited rollout and intentions to expand across various districts. The first digital birth certificate was issued on December 5 in Kalutara, overseen by the State Minister of Home Affairs. The digital certificates feature a unique ID number, which will later become the individual's national ID card number. This initiative is a part of the government's broader strategy to establish a nationwide birth registration system facilitating information exchange among state institutions through a national population registry.

View full article [here](#).

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## Southeast Asian roundtables advance civil registration and identity documentation to prevent statelessness

[The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific](#) and the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam](#) organized the Southeast Asian Senior Officials' Roundtable on Civil Registration, Legal Identity Documentation, and the Prevention of Statelessness. The participants discussed the connection between ending statelessness and poverty reduction, and the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The event was attended by government representatives of Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Civil society organizations and academics working on the issue were also at the event.

Nationality for all (NFA)'s coverage of the event is available [here](#).

The 'Third roundtable on legal identity and Statelessness in Cambodia' was held on 14th December 2023 in Phnom Penh. The roundtable was hosted by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Cambodia Program and Women Peace Makers.

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## Launch of the Bali Process Toolkit for Inclusive Civil Registration

This month, UNHCR, in collaboration with the [Regional Support Office of the Bali Process](#) (RSO), organized a launch event of the updated Bali Process Toolkit for Inclusive Civil Registration. The launch event aimed to enhance the uptake of this Toolkit among Bali Process Member and Observer States. This was achieved by raising awareness about the Toolkit and emphasizing its importance in reducing civil registration gaps as a risk factor for trafficking in persons and irregular migration, whilst also contributing to reducing the vulnerability of trafficked persons. The event included a panel discussion on civil registration in the context of addressing the issue of irregular migration and migration management. The panelists discussed the challenges faced by hard-to-reach and marginalized groups in accessing civil registration systems.

The Bali Process Toolkit for Inclusive Civil Registration highlights how it can be used by governments to assess civil registration systems to understand the inclusivity of hard-to-reach and marginalized populations, including people living in rural, remote, isolated or border areas; minorities; indigenous people; migrants; non-citizens; asylum seekers; refugees; stateless people; and people without documentation.

More information about the updated Bali Process Toolkit [here](#).

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## CRVS Business Process Improvement in Fiji

Fiji CRVS stakeholders convened for a National Capacity Building and Consultation Workshop for the Assessment, Analysis and Redesign of CRVS Business Processes from 27 to 30 November in Suva, Fiji. The workshop which was co-organised by Fiji Ministry of Justice, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, ESCAP and SPC, provided an opportunity for CRVS stakeholders to map current CRVS processes, identify performance issues and develop potential redesign ideas for ongoing system strengthening using the [CRVS Systems Improvement Framework](#). Workshop participants also had the opportunity to try their hand at creating business process maps using Bizagi Mapping and Modeling Software.

The findings and recommendations from this project will inform ongoing CRVS system strengthening efforts in Fiji.

More information can be found [here](#).

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## Digitally Transforming the CRVS and Birth Registration System in Samoa

Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) and the UNDP Accelerator Lab (AccLab) have been working together on an exciting and holistic journey of modernizing and digitally transforming the CRVS System in Samoa, with a sharp focus on strengthening the birth registration system.

Through this successful partnership, they are not only pushing the needle on safeguarding every child's inalienable right to a name and identity, but also positively contributing to Samoa's efforts on gender empowerment.

AccLab has engaged with a broad range of stakeholders including mothers, pregnant women, hospital nurses, mid-wives, village mayors (Sui Tamatai o Nu'u (STN) and Sui O Nu'u (SN)) and faith leaders. AccLab also partnered with a telecommunications company and conducted interviews of 400 respondents across Samoa to unpack the community's understanding on the importance of the birth registration system, challenges and perspectives on timely birth registration responsibilities.

The full blog post which shares AccLab's insights on the catalytic effects of strong birth registration for gender empowerment in Samoa can be read [here](#).

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### NEW RESOURCES

- [Assessing the policy utility of routine mortality statistics: a global classification of countries](#)
- [Comparative performance of national civil registration and vital statistics systems: a global assessment](#)
- [Global analysis of birth statistics from civil registration and vital statistics systems](#)

- [Bali Process Toolkit for Inclusive Civil Registration](#)
  - [Tonga National Vital Statistics Report 2018-2020](#)
  - [ESCAP blog post: From bureaucratic labyrinths to accessible civil registration](#)
  - [UN Data blog post: Seven lessons we should learn from the pandemic](#)
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### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **20 – 23 February 2024:** [Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](#)
  - **7- 9 May 2024:** [Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#)
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### PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- [Postdoctoral Researcher within the ERC project 'CitizenGap - Legal Identity for All?'](#)
  - [Statistician, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York](#)
  - [Senior Technical Advisor, Data Impact and Cancer Registry Programs, Vital Strategies](#)
  - [Country Coordinator, Data Impact, Vietnam, Vital Strategies](#)
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