



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 25 April-1 May 2013

Agenda items 3 (g) and 3 (h)

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions:**Social Development and statistics****Resolution 69/15****Implementing the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific***The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,² the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,³ the Declaration on the Right to Development,⁴ the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁵ and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁶

Recalling its resolution 67/12 on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific, and reaffirming the importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems for safeguarding human rights, producing critical information to support decision makers, enabling good governance, improving development outcomes, measuring aid effectiveness and monitoring progress towards achieving nationally and internationally agreed development goals,

Affirming that well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems are crucial for inclusive and sustainable development in the region,

Acknowledging the successful outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok on 10 and 11 December 2012,⁷ which brought together senior officials of ministries of health, civil registration offices and national statistical organizations from 43 members and associate members as well as 22 international development partners to reach a consensus on the

¹ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 999, No. 14668.

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol.993, No. 14631

⁴ General Assembly resolution 41/128, annex.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁶ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

⁷ E/ESCAP/69/26, annex.

Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific,⁸

Appreciating the efforts made by many members and associate members to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems, indicated by the 48 members and associate members that have conducted an assessment of their civil registration and vital statistics systems, as requested in Commission resolution 67/12, including the efforts of Pacific island countries and areas through the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan 2011-2014,⁹

Alarmed that the majority of members and associate members lack civil registration and vital statistics systems that are well functioning and meet relevant international standards and recommendations,

Recognizing the important role of international, regional and subregional organizations and development partners to support the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in countries through advocacy, dissemination of information on standards, application of information and communications technology, research and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the region,

Convinced that the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in countries relies on efforts from ministries of health, civil registration offices, national statistical organizations, local governments and other relevant government stakeholders, and that non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and the public may accelerate these efforts,

Stressing, therefore, that multisectoral engagement and coordination is critical for the effective civil registration and vital statistics systems,

Expressing deep concern that:

(a) Members and associate members continue to face major challenges in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems, such as legislative gaps, social barriers and discrimination, geographical barriers and a lack of sustained high-level political commitment for improvement,

(b) Civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region suffer from insufficient institutional capacities and financial and human resources, such as scarce investment, inadequate logistics and office equipment in remote areas, poorly trained and remunerated staff and staff retention challenges,

(c) Incomplete registration coverage and poor quality vital statistics are constraining administrative, planning, health information and national statistical systems at local and national levels,

Emphasizing the urgency of improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region,

1. *Urges* that all civil registration and vital statistics improvement activities in the region include and engage all relevant government entities, particularly those responsible for health, civil registration and statistics;

⁸ E/ESCAP/CST(3)/6/Add.1.

⁹ www.uq.edu.au/hishub/docs/VITAL-STATS-OUTLINE-FINAL.pdf.

2. *Supports* the decision of the Committee on Statistics made at its third session¹⁰ related to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics, including its endorsement of the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific,⁸ and the establishment of a regional knowledge-sharing platform and a regional training network to exchange expertise and experiences within and beyond the region, as stressed by the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;

3. *Urges* that country actions and regional support activities be aligned with the eight outcomes¹¹ of the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which are:

(a) Enhanced public awareness of the value of civil registration and vital statistics systems and actions taken to remove barriers to registration at all levels;

(b) Sustained political commitment to support the development and improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(c) Sufficient and sustainable investments towards making incremental improvements in civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(d) Improved and strengthened policies, legislation and implementation of regulations for civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(e) Improved availability and quality of legal documentation for all individuals;

(f) Increased capacity of countries in Asia and the Pacific to record, compile, analyse and disseminate complete and reliable statistics on vital events;

(g) Mechanisms established for effective coordination among key stakeholders within civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(h) Increased capacity of countries in Asia and the Pacific to effectively use vital statistics;

4. *Approves* the recommendation of the Committee on Statistics made at its third session that a regional meeting of relevant ministers and development partners be held in order to attain the high-level political commitment required to support the successful implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;¹²

5. *Calls upon* organizations of the United Nations system, in particular United Nations Country Teams, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the International Labour Organization and the

¹⁰ See E/ESCAP/69/13, chap. I, decision 3/4.

¹¹ See E/ESCAP/CST(3)6/Add.1, para. 3.

¹² See E/ESCAP/69/13, chap. I, sect. A, recommendation 3/2.

International Organization for Migration, international and regional development banks, in particular the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and other global, regional and subregional development partners and agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector entities to increase their support to countries for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in the region;

6. *Reiterates* its encouragement to members and associate members to conduct an assessment of their civil registration and vital statistics systems and to develop a national multisectoral improvement plan;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to strengthen the capacities and coordination of relevant institutions to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems in their countries;

8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To convene, in 2014, an intergovernmental regional meeting of ministers of health, ministers responsible for civil registration and heads of national statistical organizations, other relevant government stakeholders and senior officials of relevant development partners to endorse the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and to foster further regional action to support the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in the region;

(b) To collaborate closely with relevant donors and development partners to establish a well-coordinated funding and advocacy campaign in consultation with Governments to support country actions and to fully develop and help fund the regional support activities of the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) To establish a regional steering group on civil registration and vital statistics under the auspices of the Committee on Statistics comprising representatives of the health, civil registration and statistics sectors and of relevant development partners, bearing in mind the urgency of initiating further consultations on the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and initiating its implementation, as well as taking into account the confines of the existing conference structure of the Commission;

(d) To ensure that the established regional steering group is tasked with considering and proposing a more appropriate governance structure that would fully facilitate the required multisectoral engagement, which would be considered for adoption by the regional meeting of ministers;

(e) To report to the Commission at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.