

Respected Chair

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you Mr. Chairperson on your election and convey our deep appreciation to the UNESCAP for organizing the first Ministerial Conference on CRVS in the Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh has a long history of registering its citizens at birth since 1873. And yet, in the last 131 years up to 2004, only 8% of the births were registered simply because there was no socio-economic need-based awareness for registration. The system of registering its citizen started functioning actively after the enactment of the birth and death registration act 2004. However, amendment to the registration law in 2013 by the present government was a milestone in Bangladesh's journey towards universal civil registration.

Today approximately more than 120 million people out of our 160 million have already been registered in an electronic system. For the largest LDC in the world, this is no mean achievement.

We built a database of more than 100 million people aged 18 years, 65% of our population with biometrics, which is also being used for free fair electoral purposes. We are also developing the database of the people of all households for efficient targeting for about 100 social safety net programs that would ultimately lead to the National Population Register (NPR) of the country. A good number of the Government services have been linked with the Birth and Death Registration such as certificates for obtaining passports, national ID cards, marriage registration, admission to educational institutions, government and non-government recruitment, driving license, land registration and for many other activities.

To coordinate activities of all the ministries and agencies in Bangladesh, a whole-of-govt. approach has been undertaken. A Steering Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary has recently been formed for effective coordination and provides policy guidelines to address this issue. A working group has also been formed for developing a strategy document for an effective CRVS system.

Mr. Chair,

In spite of our incredible achievements of the birth registration some challenges still remain in registering birth and death. One of the major challenges is registering the birth within the stipulated timeline, i.e. 45 days set by the law and the causes of death are not recorded as per global practices. Presently vital statistics is compiled on the basis of sample survey that is not thorough and complete.

Excellency's

Following the regional action framework, Bangladesh has set specific targets under the three goals in consultation with all stakeholders including civil society and the youth. I firmly believe we will be able to establish a complete CRVS system by the year 2024 following the Ministerial declaration and the agreed regional action plan. We seek whole-hearted partnerships with ESCAP and South-South triangular cooperation towards that end.

I thank you.