

Country Statement: India

The Regional Action Framework put forward by the UNESCAP envisions the achievement of universal civil registration in Asia and Pacific by 2024. India after careful analysis has set itself an ambitious vision of achieving the goal by 2020. This has been christened as “**Vision 2020**”. The country is now gearing up to achieve this vision by formulating grass root level action plans. All stakeholders in the CRVS in India - Health Departments of Central and State Governments, National and State Statistical Offices, Finance and Planning departments, International organizations and UN agencies will have to commit themselves to work towards the achievement of the national targets by 2020.

We have been realistic in setting targets in the national Action Plan. As far as births are concerned, the National Action Plan (NAP) envisages a modest increase in the level of registration by 1.5% per year in the first two years (2014-2016) and 3% per year over the period 2016-2020. As far as levels of death registration are concerned, the target envisages that all institutional events would be registered by 2020.

On the supply side, we in the Office of Registrar General, India under the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several initiatives to strengthen the CRVS.

- **Uniform Software Application for Registration of Births and Deaths:** A software application for online and offline registration of birth and death has been developed. This application covers the entire gamut of the Civil Registration System – Registration of events, Generation of certificates and Generation of Statistical Tables and Reports. The application that is presently available in English is being customized in 13 Indian languages.
- **Database of Institutions:** A nationwide database of medical Institutions has been prepared. This comprehensive database has the address, telephone numbers and other contact details of the institutions where events occur. The plan is to electronically monitor the registration of events occurring in these institutions through an ICT enabled platform.
- **Software Application to Monitor Institutional Events:** An SMS based application called 'Event Monitoring System for Registration has been developed and is currently under pilot testing. This application attempts to track the events at the level of institutions and ensure their registration.
- **Capacity Building of Registrars:** A standard training manual has been developed for training the registration functionaries in 13 languages. Regular training of registration functionaries has been introduced by providing financial assistance to the State Governments.

- **Data digitization:** Project to keep old records in easy to retrieve digital form has been started. This will help in storage of registers in electronic format and allow easy access to the records.
- **Advocacy and Publicity:** An intensive multi-modal publicity and awareness campaigns on birth and death registration is already underway. Plans are being formulated to expand this campaign in all regional languages in order to increase the coverage of the CRVS system.
- **Demand Generation:** Creating a policy environment for demand generation for birth and death registration is one of the basic needs identified by a National task force set up for the strengthening the CRVS. As per its recommendations, the Registration of events has been linked to various welfare schemes of the Government.
- **National Population Register:** India is in the process of setting up a National Population Register (NPR). This is the first step towards the creation of a National Register of Citizens and the issue of a National Identity Card. The Civil Registration System has been linked to the NPR.

The real challenge however is on the demand side- How we create a demand push for Civil Registration. Unless this is done, the investments made on the supply side would not bear complete results. This would involve widespread and effective advocacy across a wide range of stake holders within and outside the Government at the country as well as the State level.

We commend the efforts of the UNESCAP and the development partners who have through this Conference brought CRVS to the centre stage. We would however like to caution that the commitment has to be sustained and efforts continuous in order for us to achieve our goal. India is committed to working with the international community in this regard.