

Kia ora and warm Pacific greetings

Three weeks ago civil registrars or representatives from 17 countries and 15 partner agencies gathered in Suva for three days. See below for a summary of the meeting - a full report will be available in a few weeks and most presentations can be viewed now at https://sdd.spc.int/events/2023/03/pcrn-2023-meeting

At the meeting Mr Neel Singh, Registrar-General of Fiji was selected as the new Convenor PCRN and SPC was confirmed to provide secretariat and facilitation support. Neel introduces himself below.

Please keep reading below for other news and links to new resources.

Jeff Montgomery

PCRN Secretariat, Pacific Community SPC



(Forward this email to a colleague

Introducing Neel Singh, new PCRN Convenor

"My name is Neel Singh and I am the Registrar-General at Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) Office within the Ministry of Justice, Fiji. I am passionate

about ensuring that every child gets formally registered for a legal identity.

Prior to taking up appointment as the Registrar-General, I served as the Acting Official Receiver at the Ministry of Justice from 2017 to 2019 and Executive Officer in Litigation at the Office of the Attorney-General from 2012 to 2017.



I hold a bachelor's degree in banking, Finance and Economics, and a diploma in Economics. Recently, I have been elected as the Chair of the Pacific Civil Registrars Network (PCRN) at the 4th PCRN meeting that was held in Fiji from 20-22 March 2023."

Check out Neel's profile on LinkedIn.



Pacific Civil Registrars Network Meeting (by Nicola Richards)

With the support of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Pacific Community (SPC), and partners, PCRN hosted their general meeting in Suva, Fiji, from March 20 – 22, 2023. Attended by over 45 civil registrars and partners from countries and territories across the Pacific, the meeting provided an opportunity to:

- 1. share progress and challenges in CRVS improvement efforts and identify common challenges
- 2. facilitate knowledge exchange and potential collaboration on issues of concern for civil registrars in the region
- 3. encourage capacity building for sustainable institutional development, and 4. document existing practices in the region.

Along with presentations from countries and territories on existing CRVS challenges and recent CRVS coordination and improvement efforts, two priority areas were identified in collaboration with PCRN members prior to the meeting for extensive discussion: digitisation of CRVS systems, and climate change and CRVS.

Key themes arising from discussions on digitisation included the challenges associated with digital archiving of historical records and need for common or shared approaches, technologies, and human resources. A critical priority was the need for improved links and interoperability with other government systems, particularly health and national identity, with several participants commenting on the continued challenges of siloed and technologically incompatible digital databases and systems. Several countries also commented on issues arising due to duplicate records, often identified during the transition from paper-based records to digital ones, and the need for technical assistance on cleaning central registers, including shared resources around best practice guidelines and standard operating procedures.

Climate change, and its impact on civil registration, was a prominent theme throughout the meeting, with participants noting both the potential threat to civil registration that climate change brings (the destruction of records, damage to critical supporting infrastructure, etc.) along with the critical role that civil registration plays in disaster preparedness and response efforts. While many countries have implemented safeguards for the storage of civil registration records, including offsite backups of digital records, most agreed this was an area in need of additional support. A stronger emphasis on preparedness was mentioned, with participants discussing the need to ensure civil registration is integrated as part of national disaster preparedness and response committees and processes.

A noted highlight of the meeting was the site visit to the local civil registry offices in Suva, where participants were able to see registration processes working 'on-the-ground'. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the future of PCRN – with all members strongly supporting the continuation of the network, and the nomination of a new chair: Mr Neel Singh from the Ministry of Justice in Fiji. Congratulations Neel and thank you Jeff for your amazing support!

A full meeting report will be available early next month at https://sdd.spc.int/events/2023/03/pcrn-2023-meeting.





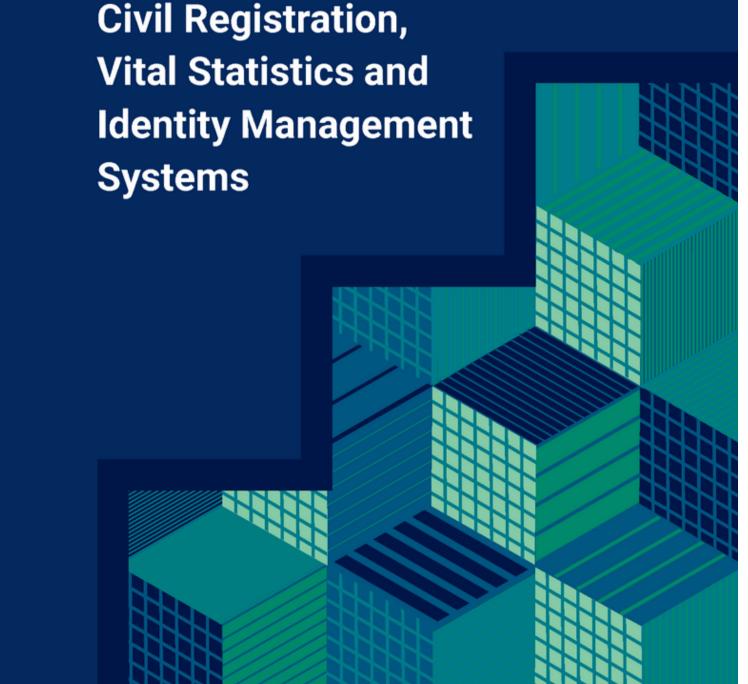
Journey Towards ICD-11 in the Pacific Webinar Series: **ICD-11 Introduction and Implementation Plan**

The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Brisbane Accord Group, invites you to this webinar series. This series will introduce ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision) and related resources available to Pacific Island countries and areas (PICs). The first webinar will be delivered by ICD experts from WHO headquarters and the Western Pacific Regional Office who will provide an overview of ICD-11, its implementation steps and discuss the implications of transitioning to ICD-11 based on PICs' current ICD implementation. Dr Erwyn Ooi Chin Wei from the Ministry of Health, Malaysia will also share the experience and lessons learnt from implementing ICD-11 in Malaysia.

Date: Tuesday April 18th, 2023 Time: 10am-11:30am (Fiji Standard Time) Audience: Health coding workforce, health policy makers, and other health

Registration: Questions? Please contact Tracy Yuen at yuent@who.in





Out now! Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems is now available here. This compliments existing Pacific resources - Best Practice Guidelines for Civil Legislation Legislation and Model Legislation for CRVS, both available on the Pacific Community SPC CRVS website.

The publication, prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division and Vital Strategies, with financial support from the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative, update and replace the 1998 Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Preparation of a Legal Framework. The Guidelines provide overarching principles and elaborate in detail the legislative framework critical for implementing international recommendations, with a focus on ensuring a holistic and integrated approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management.

This publication is part of a series of handbooks on civil registration and vital statistics systems developed by the United Nations Statistics Division. In addition to the present Guidelines, the series includes two other handbooks on this topic, respectively entitled:

(a) Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance, Revision 1 (available in English, French and Spanish), and

(b) Handbook on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management Systems: Communication for Development (available in English, French and Spanish).

Insights and innovations - first Asia Pacific CRVS Research Forum (from **ESCAP CRVS Insights Newsletter)**

The first Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum was held from 3-4 April 2023. The two-day online forum was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It focused on innovative methods and approaches contributing to achievement of the goals of the Asia-Pacific CRVS Decade and showcased country-level success stories. Some of the themes covered included enhancing community engagement in civil registration, addressing systemic issues to strengthen CRVS systems and improving mortality statistics, among others. Overall, the Forum offered a major research, information sharing, and capacity-building opportunity for participants, who shared experiences in more than 15 countries through paper presentations and interactive sessions. Abstracts, papers and recordings of the sessions will be made available on the forum website.

Participants included experienced CRVS practitioners and researchers from ESCAP Member States as well as representatives from international organizations, academia, private institutions and civil society. ESCAP will support selected authors to finalize and publish their papers in

peer-reviewed journals. Funding was provided by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative.

Samoa begins to assess inequalities in CRVS (from ESCAP CRVS Insights Newsletter)

Samoa has been selected to receive support to undertake a CRVS inequality assessment. An inception workshop was organized on 4 April 2023 by The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The objective of the workshop was to introduce the <u>inequality assessment project</u>, further develop relationships among relevant stakeholders (data providers, data users, and policy makers), discuss challenges with doing such an inequality assessment, and collaboratively develop a plan for the way forward.

The inequality assessment project seeks to provide technical support and capacity strengthening to the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and other relevant national stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of CRVS inequality assessments using secondary data sources in Samoa. This will involve building capacity for demographic analysis to undertake inequality assessments in the future as well as dialogue with policy-makers to ensure the results are used for policy formulation.

Standard Operating Procedures in Vanuatu (from ESCAP CRVS Insights **Newsletter**)

Andy Kap Calo, Director of the Civil Registration & Identity Management (CRIM) Department in Vanuatu, recently signed a raft of critically important Standard Operating Procedures to ensure the preservation of the corporate knowledge and practices guiding the work of the Department. The CRIM Department captured the exact procedures to register the birth of a child, undertake a name change or prepare the necessary documents for a marriage certificate. The procedures are recorded in a Standard Operating Procedure, which corresponds to the documentation of a detailed step-by-step process. The initiative is supported by the UNDP/Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project as part of a larger delivery of new foundational identity management system.

In addition, the CRIM Department is in advanced stages of digitization of all records onto a comprehensive database. The new foundational identity management system is known as "RV5" and it replace the existing RV4 database. The database will provide up-to-date, accessible and validated data for use by different government and non-government entities.



Review of CRVS Progress in the Pacific

A meeting of the Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) was organised on 23-24 March 2023 in Suva, Fiji by the Pacific Community (SPC), who are the secretariat of the group. Participants at the meeting included representatives from BAG member organizations. The group aims to coordinate CRVS related support to countries in the Pacific. More details in the next PCRN newsletter!

About PCRN

PCRN is an independent network of Civil Registrars in the Pacific, established in 2014 for sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practice in Civil Registration among practitioners. We foster peerpeer relationships and support in tackling common challenges affecting the implementation of CRVS systems in the region. We are key participant in the implementation of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (PVSAP) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

Before the pandemic we met annually (sometimes more often). Significant conferences were held around the topics of Disaster Planning and Response, IT Systems and Cloud Technology, Legal Identity and Security and Improving the Quality of Mortality Data.

More information, including a copy of our strategic plan (needing updating) is available at https://sdd.spc.int/pacific-civil-registrars-network-pcrn.

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