




April 2024

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### Warm Pacific Greetings to You

With borders open and things "returning to normal" civil registrars and other professional groups are meeting again. This newsletter evidences this with reports about recent workshops in a number of Pacific locations.

In May, the [Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#) will meet in Bangkok. PCRN will be represented by our Chair, Neel Sing, Registrar-General with other Pacific representatives from Kiribati, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, as well as from the Pacific Community SPC. The next newsletter will provide a report back from the meeting - and hopefully plans for an in-person PCRN meeting later this year. Stay tuned!

Jeff Montgomery, CRVS Adviser and PCRN Secretariat



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### Registration campaign for persons with disabilities in Vanuatu

The Civil Registration and Identity Management Department (CRIM), Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MOJCS), and other partners have launched a campaign to increase the registration of persons with disabilities to ensure that People with Disability (PWD) are visible, have access to government services, and are enfranchised as voters. The country's new National ID civil registry database and population register captures information on people with disabilities so that their information can be used for planning and targeted support. Find [more information](#) 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.

This report sets the stage for the regular compilation of annual analytical reports, ensuring 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 data-driven approaches for sustainable development and underscores the importance of CRVS in shaping the nation's future.

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

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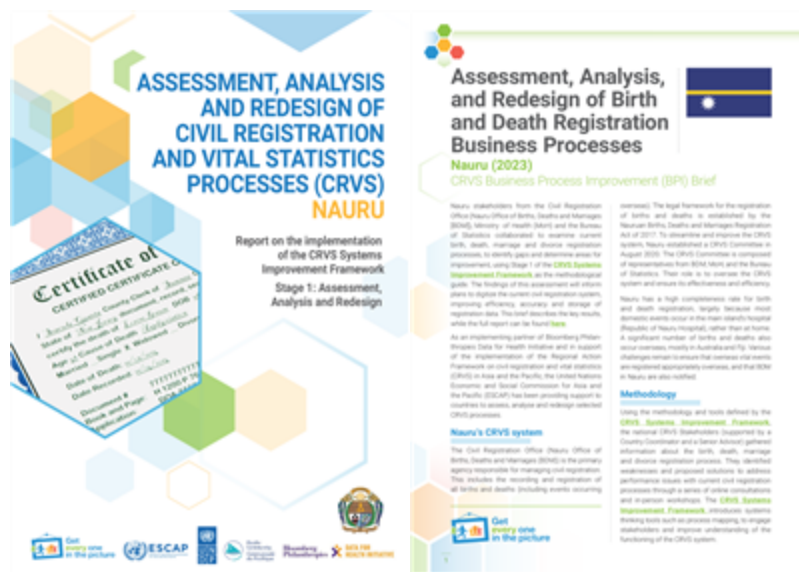
## Children's Policy dedicates resources to improve birth registration

In 2023, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs of the Solomon Islands (MWYCFA), in partnership with UNICEF, launched its [revised Solomon Islands National Children's Policy 2023-2028](#). The policy ensures that the rights of children are at the centre of development. To safeguard children from harm and exploitation, one of the strategies is to provide legal identity for all, including enhancing birth registration.

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## Nauru redesigns CRVS processes

The publication of a report detailing the implementation of the CRVS Systems Improvement in Nauru marks a significant milestone in the enhancement of the country's vital registration systems. As part of its ongoing cooperation with ESCAP, Nauru CRVS authorities are exploring mechanisms that could be leveraged to address existing challenges, while taking advantage of regional and global guidelines. With this goal in mind, Nauru authorities accepted the invitation of ESCAP with support from SPC to apply the CRVS Systems Improvement Framework as a novel approach to analysing, redesigning and improving vital events registration processes. You can find the [summary report here](#) and the [full report here](#).



## Three days of CRVS workshops in Palau

On 5 - 7 March 2024 in Palau, the Pacific Community (SPC) in collaboration with Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), other Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) partners, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) organised a 3-day workshop to strengthen capacity in medical certification of cause of death and strengthen civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and health systems.

The workshop was held in alignment with the regional priority to strengthen cause of death certification and coding for analysis, reporting and evidence-based policy direction. It helped countries to move towards accurate and reliable mortality data to monitor population health and guide public health decision-making.

A key outcome of the workshops was the formation of a new National CRVS Committee and the adoption of an Action Plan of "quick wins".



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### **PNG CRVS ACTION PLAN (2023-2025)**

The Papua New Guinea CRVS Committee, in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), has a new comprehensive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Action Plan (2023-2025), with the goal of an immediate increase in birth and death registration rates, ensuring legal identity for all citizens. The plan will play a pivotal role in generating vital statistics from civil registration records, supporting informed social and economic planning.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) currently faces the lowest birth and death registration rates in the Asia-Pacific region, with less than 1 in 6 babies and less than 1 in 50 deaths registered. This poses significant challenges for establishing legal records and related population databases for national identification, passports, and voter registration. Additionally, the system serves as a crucial national source for vital statistics.

The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Action Plan focuses on both short and long-term key improvement initiatives aimed at supporting the Government of Papua New Guinea in achieving a coordinated approach to the development of the CRVS system in the country. The emphasis is on enhancing access to registration services by leveraging existing health infrastructure and ensuring accessibility for local communities. Notable recommendations include the procurement of additional mobile registration kits for remote areas and the establishment of a civil registration service desk for birth and death registration at Port Moresby General Hospital.

Read the PNG CRVS Action Plan here - <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/bg7fw>

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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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## Niue, Tokelau, Cook Islands, and New Zealand meet

In the first week of March, the Realm Countries Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Forum convened, bringing together representatives from Niue, Tokelau, Cook Islands, and New Zealand. The forum served as a platform for collaborative dialogue aimed at enhancing cooperation and synergy among the realm countries. Discussions centred on strategies to foster stronger partnerships and improve coordination in CRVS initiatives. Additionally, each country provided updates on their current status and progress in the area of civil registration and vital statistics. Through this collective effort, the forum aims to pave the way for enhanced cooperation and shared progress.

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## Marshall Islands Workshop to Strengthen CRVS

To ensure minimal disruption to clinical services RMI's doctors asked to spend their weekend in a workshop to develop a high level improvement plan with clear actions to further improve medical certification of cause of death (MCCD) both short- and long-term basis. Edlen Anzures, MOHHS Acting Deputy Director for Office of Health Planning recognized this is ideal post covid with ninety five percent (95%) of participants attending a MCCD workshop for the first time and it aligns well other MOHHS institutional developments which builds capacity of physicians and nurse practitioners.

Countries need accurate, reliable mortality data to monitor population health and guide public health decision-making. As well as to complete Voluntary National Reviews of the SDG targets and Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework (HIMF) indicators.

The second part of this workshop series addresses gaps in the wider ecosystems of health and statistics through civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) targeting hospital administrators Ministry of Health staff and representatives from Planning and Statistics Office, Civil Registry Office, Education Department and development partners.

We acknowledge the support of MFAT New Zealand and Vital Strategies in funding this initiative and recognising its alignment with regional priority to strengthen Cause of Death certification and coding for analysis, reporting and evidenced based policy direction under the [Action Plan for Pacific CRVS](#).



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## New Zealand's birth rate falls to lowest since World War II

[As discussed on RNZ's podcast The Detail](#), fertility rates are declining around the world, as more women are educated to higher levels and in employment, combined with access to contraception. New Zealand has experienced its lowest natural increase in population in 80 years. Statistics released showed there were only 19,071 more births than deaths in 2023.

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## Digitally Transforming the 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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### Upcoming meetings:

- **April 16 - 17, 2024:** [Tuvalu Business Process Mapping Workshop](#)
  - **6 May 2024:** [Meeting of the Asia Pacific CRVS Partnership](#)
  - **7- 9 May 2024:** [Meeting of the Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#)
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## 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 peer-peer 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 [Action Plan for Pacific CRVS](#) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Framework on CRVS.


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. Our most recent meeting was in March 2023 - [see report](#).

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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