Sixth Meeting of the Global CRVS Group

New York, USA

7 March 2015

Attendance: ESCWA, UN Population Division, ECLAC, AfDB, UNSD, ECA, World Bank, Unicef, IADB, UNFPA, WHO, OSCE (phone), ESCAP (phone).

Agenda:

1. Opening

2. Training Course on CRVS Systems (Mills, WB)

3. CRVS Digitization Handbook (Mitra, UNECA)

4. Recent activities on CRVS (all participating organizations)

5. Others

Summary of the Meeting:

The sixth Meeting of the Global CRVS Group was held in New York, USA, in Conference Room B, on 7 March, in conjunction with the Statistical Commission. Eighteen participants from thirteen international and regional entities attended the meeting, of which two (OSCE, ESCAP) joined through the phone. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Raj Mitra of UNECA.

Mr. Samuel Mills, World Bank (WB), presented an overview of the on-going design and development of the e-learning course on CRVS. It is based on the course developed by the CDC, with a view of making it more interactive and more balanced in terms of topics and methodological content, in line with the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System. It will be organized in modules, which will be led by relevant institutions (namely members of the Global CRVS Group). The time line considers finishing the technical content by July 2016, conducting an expert group meeting during summer to review and fine tune the curriculum, developing the technological elements during fall and having the course live by January 2017. The e-learning elements will be developed by the WB e-learning campus, which is also expected to maintain and keep the software updated. The specific terms of reference for conducting the course are not set yet, it might consider a mix of online and offline sessions, as well as own-pace activities and sessions led by facilitators. These and other aspects, such as language, connectivity challenges in some countries, use of voice and characters, will also be discussed at the expert group meeting in the summer. The burden of cost is being bared mainly by the World Bank, with substantive inputs volunteered by institutions.

It was agreed that contributing organizations need to have a template to frame the course content, and most importantly to define the target audience. In addition, members agreed to make use of available resources, such as the Handbook on Training in CRVS Systems (by UN) and the Birth

Registration Programme Guide called a Passport to Protection
http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/UNICEF_Birth_Registration_Handbook.pdf and also the ICT
handbook Towards Universal Birth Registration
http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/ICS_CoPUB_Toward_Universal_Birth_Registration.pdf (by
Unicef).

Mr. Raj Mitra, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), presented the Guidebook on CRVS
Digitisation, www.**crvs**-dgb.org an online publication available in English and French aimed at assisting
countries during the process of introducing information and communication technology in their CRVS
systems. The next steps for ECA for supporting countries in this endeavor are: to create a pool of
experts, preferably within Africa to be able to match the demand, to develop open-source software for
countries to use, and to select one country as training ground and model case. Funds are being raised in
order to implement this three-prong strategy.

Participating members reported briefly, in tour-de-table, on their activities since the last
meeting in June and their planned activities for the coming months.

The discussion following the tour-de-table was centred on the relevance of CRVS to the SDG
indicators and the need to sustain the momentum in favour of strengthening CRVS systems. Mr. Mitra,
ECA, emphasized that the demand for support from countries has not subsided, but the supply is still in
shortage. Mr. Mitra and Mr. Gerland, UN Population Division, also highlighted the need of a guidebook
on how to improve death registration and noted that there is no literature on this regard. Rather,
guidance will have to come from empirical examples. He mentioned that ECA is planning a short
meeting to gather country practices as input for such a guidebook.

The Group agreed that more time for debate was needed, in particular to discuss the link of
identity systems with CRVS, and the plethora of relevant initiatives that are arising, some of which do
not necessarily converge with the work of the Group members and can cause confusion in the field.

Finally, it was agreed that the WB will take over the Chair role of the Group starting in April
2016; UNSD will remain in its secretariat role.

The meeting was adjourned.