

Tenth Meeting of the Global CRVS Group

Conference call

7 July 2017

Attendance

Remotely: African Development Bank, OSCE, Organization of American States, UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, UNHCR, UNICEF, ESCAP, ECLAC, UN Population Division, WBG, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Centre of Excellence for CRVS systems, UNSD, CDC.

Apologies: Inter-American Development Bank, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, ECA, UNDP, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Agenda

1. Updating country progress
2. Update on mapping activities and planned conference
3. Update on e-learning
4. Update on WHO verbal autopsy instrument and implementation tools
5. Group planning for 2018
6. Briefing on the current, recent and future activities of members

Summary of the Meeting

The tenth meeting of the Global CRVS Group was held virtually over a conference call/webex session on 7 July 2017. Twenty-two participants from fifteen institutions attended the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anneke Schmider, WHO.

1. Update on country progress

The chair emphasized the importance of having a mechanism to monitor country progress on a regular basis, preferably once a year, as the essential building block and measurement towards CRVS improvement. She shared the successful experience of the WHO Global Country Overview on CRVS Systems (CoIA), as part of the global strategies for promoting health of women and children.

UNICEF added that it is crucial to learn which countries are in progress and which are not so they can be further assisted.

UNSD commented that country progress updating is already done at the regional level, at least by two regional commissions. Then he shared that there is indeed a country progress monitoring system in Africa, which is an online reporting system allowing countries to submit their report. However, in Africa, among 40 countries which are submitting reports to ECA, only 15 countries can provide data of completeness because others do not measure this. The representative of UNSD also emphasized that information at the global has to incorporate regional level contexts.

African Development Bank (AfDB) acknowledged the achievement of the monitoring system in Africa despite the difficulties of having all information collected. AfDB shared that the report on country progress for the upcoming Ministerial Conference will be ready in two weeks' time.

ESCAP shared that similar to Africa, so far 38 countries in the region have reported on a variety of issues, including completeness of registration, but the information is not complete either. ¹ESCAP further shared that the regional Partnership is planning on doing country profiles. SPC has begun developing country profiles for several countries in the Pacific and the UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia have begun the work on country profiles for that sub region. ESCAP has begun collating information for a selection of other countries in the region. Once ESCAP collects all the inputs, it has to get partners and countries review and approval before releasing the profiles online through www.getinthepicture.org.

WBG added that apart from the update of CRVS progress at country level, it is equally important to know what particular initiatives are bearing fruits in which particular countries, as well as details of activities carried out and agencies involved. Among others, this would serve to avoid duplication of work.

Action for WHO:

to send template of the CoIA

2. Update on mapping activities and planned conference

Canada CoE announced their two current initiatives, the mapping exercise and the innovation conference. The purpose of the mapping exercise is to identify CRVS activities at country level conducted by different organizations, in particular, regarding two important aspects – policy framework and technical assistance. They are targeting the Global Financing Facility (GFF) countries; in the first phase there is a pilot project focusing on five countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Ethiopia) The second phase will build on the results of first phase and include more countries.

UNICEF put forward a concept of making this mapping a living product, which should be evolving constantly.

CoE is planning to host a conference on innovations in CRVS, partnering with WHO in November this year and welcomes all traditional partners and working groups, especially members of this Global CRVS Group to join and provide suggestions. The preliminary agenda of the conference is composed of two main building blocks: inclusive economies and data analytics, incorporating the practice of innovation labs. Going forward, CoE will form a steering committee with some of the global partners to discuss details of the agenda of the conference, panelists and other preparations.

The Group showed interest in this conference. WHO is looking forward to find out how innovation, like big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain technology can help link health of women and children to CRVS. WHO also shared that they have completed a small project using AI for public health, which has received exciting results. The report on the project has not been published yet but will be shared to this Group when ready.

¹ This information is available in a synthesis report available from <http://getinthepicture.org/resource/report-regional-steering-group-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-asia-and-pacific>

WBG welcomed the idea and expressed their interest in discussing in more detail, for example, how countries are invited, the venue of the conference, funding issues, substantive content, etc.

CoE further clarified that the purpose of this planned conference is to come up with a three to five years framework on cross-cutting areas which should be paid attention, like the identity management systems and their link to CRVS. More details will be discussed in the steering group meeting the following week, including participants, agenda, etc. CoE welcomed this group to invite countries to participate in this event and clarified that they can provide funding, particularly to GFF countries.

Actions for CoE:

to form the steering committee of the conference

to circulate concept note of the conference and a draft agenda for comments

3. Update on e-learning

World Bank announced that the e-learning platform was launched on 23 May in Korea, with the attendance of around 30 countries and 90 participants. Emails have been sent to inform everyone in the Group. The e-learning platform is designed in two formats, self-paced and with facilitator. Only the self-paced format is released now, so are the three core modules. Currently feedback is being incorporated into updated core modules.

The format with facilitator is expected to be launched in September, so are all elective modules. World Bank is collaborating with partners in order to identify potential facilitators and experts. Facilitators' training is planned to take place in August.

Only the English version is available now. Initially, WBG planned to launch the French version next year but that may change due to the heavy workload and difficulties of such a technical translation. WBG is discussing with the CoE the possibility of them taking over the translation.

Regarding the rollout, World Bank encouraged capacity building activities in countries to make use of these e-learning materials, and adapt them to local contexts. For example, UNHCR is planning to use the e-learning course in a workshop to be conducted in Ethiopia. Coupled with this, WBG is considering giving an award to the African country with the largest number of course takers during the Ministerial Conference.

In order to boost the rollout, UNSD suggested World Bank to also involve the regional training centers in using the e-learning course as the entry point to their training materials.

UN Population Statistics asked about the enrollment and duration statistics as well as feedback from the course takers. World Bank responded that there are two main kinds of feedbacks, one is technical issue related to access, passwords, video capabilities, etc; and the other is content related with suggestions for improvement. All feedback will be sent to responsible parties and taken care of. Unfortunately, enrollment statistics were not yet available but would be sent out soon.

UNICEF emphasized the importance of publicizing the e-learning course as much as possible, and committed to integrate the course in any and all relevant activities.

Bloomberg committed to use the e-learning course in their training on health data and promised to promote this training tool.

The Chair suggested to design a training plan for all members of the Group making use of the e-learning tool to be discussed during or after the conference in November in Ottawa.

Action for World Bank :

to send the enrollment statistics and feedback of the E-learning course to the group

4. Update on WHO verbal autopsy instrument and implementation tools

CDC announced that a first release candidate of the 2016 edition of the verbal autopsy instrument mapping to ICD-10 is available on the WHO website at: <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/verbalautopsystandards/en/>. This version has now been field tested and is in the process of being updated to integrate experiences from the field teams and to fix identified “bugs.” The updated version with enhanced algorithms will soon be posted to the website and is meant to be valid and in place for the next few years. CDC also mentioned that partners of the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative are developing a pipeline to integrate VA data collection with DHIS2 and a platform to support automated VA analysis. In this context, there will be a meeting in September to review the experiences of early implementers.

Bloomberg Philanthropies mentioned that they are developing implementation support materials and manuals, while assisting a few countries.

5. Group planning for 2018

The Chair suggested to have a full day meeting in person after the CoE conference in November in order to discuss the possibility of having joint projects, resource issues, and other issues.

6. Briefing on the current, recent and future activities of members

UNICEF recognized the importance of having regular meeting for keeping the Global Group on the same page, with the aim to prioritize work more effectively.

CDC briefed members on the progress of their global health program. In partnership with the Health Data Collaborative, CDC is planning a technical workshop on surveillance at the end of July for West Africa (in Senegal) and another meeting for South and East Africa later this year.

UNSD briefed members on their current activities

- The second draft of the Management, operation and maintenance handbook, Revision 1 is ready to be sent back to expert group for final comments and should be ready for editing and printing by the end of summer. The new version introduces new chapters addressing contemporary issues. It is expected to be presented at several workshops starting in fall.
- As for the Development Account, the technical report focusing on quality evaluation, without national examples, will be put together by September. UNSD will then collect country examples in a series of regional technical meetings.
- UNSD is preparing new Guidelines on the legal framework for CRVS. A technical seminar is being held in Philippines 17-19 July.
- UNSD is considering to also update the handbook on Information, education and communication for CRVS.
- UNSD provides information to the SDG report team on the CRVS relevant goals. This report is produced annually. The upcoming report of SDG monitoring will be launched on 17 July. Furthermore, UNSD reports to the UN Statistical Commission on global CRVS progress every two years. Will explore the possibility of using the information collected by regional commissions, in particular ESCAP and ECA.

WHO informed that they also recently released a health report which includes data on completeness of registration. Bloomberg Philanthropies asked whether UNSD has done any comparison between the SDG report and the figures produced by WHO. UNSD answered that for SDG monitoring, UNSD compiles information directly from countries and does not take into account WHO's estimates. The only comparison is shown at the UNSD website where both the country reported figure and WHO's estimate can be seen (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/CR_coverage.htm).

OAS reported that the CLARCIEV meeting this year will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November.

SPC was not in attendance, however they send apologies and asked for their current activities to be included in the minutes, as follows:

- The major upcoming activity for the Brisbane Accord Group- planned for the end of this year is to hold a Data analysis and report writing workshop. This is tentatively scheduled for 28 November-8 December 2017. The Brisbane Accord Group welcomes the participation and support from other partners towards this event.

The meeting was adjourned.