COVERING EVERY BIRTH AND DEATH: IMPROVING CIVIL
REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolution (WHA67.14) on Health in the post-2015 development agenda,

Recognizing the importance of evidence-based decision-making and accountability through regular assessment of progress by strengthening civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and health information systems with disaggregated data to monitor health equity,

Noting that reliable data is essential for effective planning and management of health and other sectors, particularly in efforts towards achieving the time-bound health targets,

Emphasizing that CRVS systems are crucial to obtain continuous and compulsory data on births, deaths and causes of death, through cost-effective means,

Concerned with the heavy reliance on expensive and time-consuming surveys to produce health statistics in the absence of more complete civil registration data and the generation of reliable mortality statistics from routine CRVS systems,

Noting the findings of the comprehensive assessment of CRVS, already completed (using the WHO tool) in eight of the 11 Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region, that have identified the key challenges for CRVS in the countries of the Region to be: inadequate coverage and completeness of birth and death registration; poor quality of cause of death (CoD) data
resulting in ill-defined recording of ICD (International Classification of Diseases) codes; lack of quality audits to improve civil registration data quality and its use for generation of vital statistics; and inadequate interagency coordination between the key stakeholder ministries responsible for CRVS,

Considering the commitment of Member States to prioritize CRVS strengthening as a coordinated effort between ministries of health, ministries responsible for civil registration and the national statistics offices,

1. ENDORSES the Regional Strategy for Strengthening the Role of the Health Sector in Improving CRVS (2015–2024), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy; and

2. URGES Member States:

   (a) to undertake key actions for implementing the Regional Strategy;
   (b) to establish or strengthen a national CRVS coordination mechanism with representation of all key stakeholders;
   (c) to undertake assessment of national CRVS systems and development of costed national plans for improvement of CRVS, including requirements of all stakeholders;
   (d) to build national capacity for strengthening of CRVS and mobilize adequate human and financial resources,
   (e) to enhance the contributions of health and other sectors to boost the completeness and quality of birth and death registration by creating demand through linking CRVS systems with services;
   (f) to support the use of verbal autopsy, as appropriate for deaths occurring particularly in the absence of a trained health-care worker;
   (g) to strengthen death certification by trained health-care workers;
   (h) to strengthen implementation of ICD coding and generate quality mortality statistics from routine CRVS data; and
   (i) to monitor progress and evaluate achievements in strengthening completeness and quality of CRVS systems and institutional capacities on a regular basis aligned with the agreed-upon framework in the Regional Strategy, conducting mid-course corrections where necessary.
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(a) to provide technical support to Member States to implement the Regional Strategy;
(b) to support knowledge-sharing platforms encompassing a repository of tools and conduct technical consultations for sharing of best practices and lessons learned;
(c) to coordinate and harmonize technical and financial support from different international agencies and development partners at the regional and country levels;
(d) to assist Member States on request in adapting and implementing the standard verbal autopsy tools to strengthen CRVS, in particular in the absence of a trained health-care worker; and
(e) to report progress to the Seventy-first, Seventy-fourth and Seventy-eighth Sessions of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia in 2018, 2021 and 2025.

Sixth session, 12 September 2014