Vital Statistics from Civil Registration: Perspectives from the Philippines

Lisa Grace S. Bersales, Ph.D.

1 Session 7 in the International Identity Management Conference, 23-25 September 2014, Seoul
2 National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippines
Outline of presentation

• Background: Civil Registration in the Philippines
• Current CRVS in the Philippines
• Organization, Coordination and administrative arrangements
• Advantages of this organizational set-up
• Challenges
• Opportunities
• Way forward
Background: Civil Registration in the Philippines

- Philippine Statistics Authority: the repository of the civil registration database.
- The National Statistician, is ex officio also the Civil Registrar General.
- The legal framework:
  - Civil Registry Law (Act No. 3753) which took effect in 1931 - civil registration was made compulsory with the Director of the National Library serving as the Civil Registrar General.
  - Commonwealth Act 591 signed in 1940 - the Bureau of Census and Statistics was created and its Director designated as ex officio Civil Registrar General.
  - Republic Act No. 10625 in 2013 - The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) head, the National Statistician, is ex officio the Civil Registrar General.
Current CRVS in the Philippines

- Legal frameworks including those for special groups
- IT infrastructure for computerized civil registration through public private partnership
- Coordination mechanisms with stakeholders including CSOs and international organizations
Organization, Coordination and administrative arrangements

- PSA has a Civil Registration Division, in charge of CRVS
- Local civil registrar administratively under the office of the mayor is under technical supervision of PSA
- Civil registration is done with the local government unit (municipality and city) and documents submitted to the PSA which maintains the civil registration database
- Special activities: February is declared Civil Registration Month; Mobile registration; late registration
- Coordination with stakeholders done through interagency committees, workshops, special projects
- Other stakeholders: Department of Health (provides guidance to health practitioners that sign civil registration documents; solemnizing officials (e.g., priests); civil society (e.g., PLAN); international organizations (e.g., WHO, UNHCR, UNFPA, ADB, WB); commissions for special groups (Indigenous Peoples, Muslim Filipinos)
Advantages of this organizational set-up

- streamlined processes in the construction and maintenance of civil registration database
- standardized and better-quality CRVS data
- faster introduction of innovations (including use of IT)
- timely generation of vital statistics
- closer coordination among stakeholders
- cost efficiency
Challenges

• Civil registration for special groups (indigenous peoples, Muslim Filipinos, the stateless)
• Civil registration for the marginalized (poor and uneducated, those in inaccessible rural areas)
• Death certificates (problems in filling up cause of death)
• IT infrastructure and staff in the subnational level (insufficient)
• Communication and feedback mechanisms with local civil registrars (need enhancement)
• Generation and dissemination of vital statistics (needs more timely releases)
Opportunities

• More budgetary support from government
• Renewal of PPP engagement for CRVS>>better IT infrastructure/better business processes
• More demand from users for use of CRVS
• Ministerial level declaration to “get everyone in the picture” as organized by the UN ESCAP
• Post 2015 and Sustainable Development Goals
• Big Data / Data Revolution
Way Forward

• Adoption of seven action areas of the draft regional action framework on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific

• Adoption of Investment Plan for CRVS in the Philippines

• Review of the Philippine Statistical Development Program which includes programs for CRVS
Way forward:
Some specific innovations

• Online Modules on CRVS for capacity building
• Include CVRS in curriculum of medical schools and law schools
• Professional Regulatory Commission to require updating sessions on CRVS when health professionals and lawyers renew license
• Continue public private partnership in developing and maintaining the CRVS database
• Develop mechanisms for CRVS in disaster situations
Thank You!