

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Cabinet Division  
Implementation and Monitoring Section  
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**Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for Coordinating the Activities of Different Ministries in this regard**

Chairperson : M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Cabinet Secretary  
Date & Time : 28 September 2014, 04:00 P.M.  
Place : Cabinet Room, Building-1, Cabinet Division  
Attendance : **Annexure-A**

The Chairperson inaugurated the meeting by welcoming the members of the Steering Committee (SC) set up for coordinating and guiding the initiatives of different agencies of the Government to implement a robust system of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. While making his introductory remarks, the Chair mentioned that the CRVS is critical for the country specially in carrying out different activities of government where uniquely identifying citizens is of paramount importance such as birth and death registration, education and health services, social safety nets, passports, licenses, among many others.

2. The Chairperson mentioned that some of the members of the SC have been dealing with the CRVS issue for a long time while there are some who are comparatively new in this regard. The members of the committee appreciated the cooperation and the coordinating role of the Cabinet Division in making a strategic plan for implementing a CRVS in Bangladesh. Then the Chairperson requested Mr. Anir Chowdhury, one of the pioneers in CRVS planning, to make a presentation on progress of CRVS in Bangladesh.

3. In the presentation it was highlighted that Bangladesh has so far made a tremendous progress in planning of CRVS. The birth and death registration by the Local Government Division, the voter registration and issuance of National ID by the Election Commission, Geographical Reconnaissance database and EPI accomplished by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the upcoming poverty database to be created by the Statistics and Informatics Division have placed Bangladesh in an advantageously unique position of becoming a role model in the world in implementation of CRVS. It was indicated that all the fragmented activities of different agencies need to be synchronized in a single platform from which the data about citizens can be created, updated and accessed by various organizations. A five year strategic plan as devised recently with the assistance of WHO will facilitate establishment of CRVS in the country.

4. It was pointed out in the presentation that there should be incorporated at least two biometric features in the civil registry database. There are different types of biometric features like finger prints, iris impression, facial features, palm veins etc. Selection of biometric features should be made in consideration of installation as well as maintenance costs and easy operability by grassroots operators such as the ones in Union Digital Centres.

5. It was observed in the meeting that one of the most prominent features of CRVS is data about causes of death. In order to make a full-fledged CRVS, measures should be taken to incorporate data about causes of death according to international standards. Such data will facilitate analysis of the pattern of different fatal diseases in different areas. Thus the relevant



agencies of the government will be able to make appropriate plans for preventive measures against diseases.

6. In the meeting some of the technical issues like matching components of data across different organizations, data security and secrecy were discussed. It was mentioned that appropriate software and database structure should be used for enabling exchange of data across various departments. However, it was mentioned that the issue of data security should also be ensured as the process of multipoint exchange may make the database vulnerable. The meeting also discussed about the ethical issue of using data so that the personal information of the individual may not be misused by unscrupulous people or by agencies that should not have access to parts of citizens' data.

7. The meeting also discussed about setting up a small secretariat at the Cabinet Division for coordinating the activities of CRVS and facilitating policy and legal reform, as necessary. A senior or mid-level officer should be given the exclusive responsibility of dealing with the issues of CRVS. The A2i may provide necessary technical support to the secretariat like software and human resources. It was unanimously agreed that for proper coordination of the CRVS, the secretariat will be created very soon. The Chairperson mentioned that the secretariat will perform the main job of coordinating the CRVS activities while the Steering Committee will sit only for resolving important issues.

8. The meeting also discussed about involvement of some organizations in CRVS. The Law and Justice Division controls the matter of marriage and divorce registration which will comprise an important part of CRVS. Also the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education was identified to be very important as it enrolls millions of children each year. The data of primary education may contribute to the development of the CRVS. The role of the PMO/A2i was also discussed to be critically important in creating a CRVS system. Therefore, the meeting urged to include the secretaries or representatives of these ministries/divisions in the Steering Committee.

9. It was mentioned in the meeting that the leading global organizations like WHO, World Bank and even the United Nations have taken the issue of CRVS very seriously. The issues of CRVS will be discussed in these world forums where Bangladesh may get advantage for its early implementation of CRVS.

10. The meeting was apprised that the Canadian Government has raised a huge fund of about USD 3.5 billion for assisting developing countries to implement CRVS. Bangladesh has so far drawn the attention of world communities for its timely approach in planning and implementing CRVS while making presentations in different conferences including those held in Ethiopia, India and Thailand. In particular, the whole-of-government approach, where a number of ministries and agencies work together to create and update the CRVS system, was hailed as exemplary by the major international development partners and many developing countries. It is expected that Bangladesh can set a global model for CRVS. In the meeting, it was emphasized that the government should take required preparation for the conference of ministers in next November in Bangkok when a number of vital decisions will be made.

11. The members of the meeting discussed that the CRVS is a continuous process and a mature database cannot be created overnight. Therefore, it was stressed in the meeting that the CRVS should be started as early as possible despite all its limitations. In course of time, the system will proceed to a state of considerable perfection. However, for making a detailed plan of CRVS it was stressed that a six month piloting may be conducted, when the usefulness and operability or limitations of the system would be identified. Based on the findings of the piloting a well-balanced and perfect model of CRVS can be possible to develop.

12. After elaborate discussions the following decisions were made unanimously:

- a) Cabinet Division will take the coordinating role in creating a CRVS system and a dedicated secretariat will be set up in this Division for dealing with this issues. The A2i will provide technical assistance to the secretariat in efficiently carrying out its responsibilities.
- b) The Steering Committee on CRVS will convene its meeting only when there will be specific matters on which the guidance and intervention of the committee will be felt necessary.
- c) In order to make the Steering Committee more operational, the secretaries/representatives of Prime Minister's Office/A2i; the Law and Justice Division; and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education will be included.
- d) A six month piloting project of CRVS will be taken from October 2014 to March 2015 for testing and analyzing different aspects of implementing CRVS. Based on the results of the piloting a full-fledged model of CRVS will be developed.
- e) Measures should be taken to select the appropriate biometric feature for incorporation in the CRVS to make it more useful.
- f) The data field for causes of death should be incorporated in the CRVS for getting systematic information about the pattern of fatal diseases in various regions.
- g) A full-fledged project plan for the comprehensive implementation of CRVS will be prepared by the CRVS Secretariat by January 2015 and that will be shared with the development partners including Canada which is spearheading the Trust Fund for CRVS.
- h) The following table summarizes at, roles for each of the contributing ministries a high-level:

SL	Organization	Role
1	Local Government Division	1. Developing one unique ID number for every citizen 2. All should follow CCDS 3. A single Civil Registry connected to BRIS, NID, GR, Poverty DB 4. Process Alignment
2	Election Commission	
3	SID/BBS	
4	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	
5	Ministry of Education	Integration with student DB
6	Cabinet Division	Coordination and policy reform
7	ICT Division	Infrastructure and security
8	MoPME	Integration with student DB
9	Law and Justice Division	Marriage/Divorce
10	Access to Information, PMO	Technical and process design

13. The Chairperson concluded the meeting with thanks to all.

  
29/12/2014

M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan  
Cabinet Secretary  
&

Chairperson, Steering Committee on CRVS