

International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

Agenda 9.5- Covering every birth and death: Improving CRVS

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) highlights the urgent importance of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems for health, rights, and sustainable development in the South-East Asia Region. Currently, birth registration is around 78%, leaving more than one in five children without a legal record, while death registration is even lower at 61%. This constrains health systems' ability to track mortality, understand causes of death, and respond effectively to challenges. Over 9.5 million children under five remain unregistered, maternal deaths often go unrecorded, and efforts against early and forced marriage are undermined. Millions are denied the legal identity essential for healthcare, education, and social protection. Robust CRVS systems are also critical for pandemic preparedness, early detection of health threats, and monitoring progress towards the SDGs. Digital tools and community-based approaches offer promising pathways to close gaps and ensure inclusivity. Therefore, IFMSA calls upon Member States and WHO to:

Strengthen and integrate CRVS with health information systems for completeness, interoperability, and accuracy. Remove barriers to registration, including financial, geographic, and socio-cultural obstacles. Ensure data is disaggregated, transparent, and guides equitable policies. Engage youth and civil society to extend outreach to underserved groups. Prioritize cause-of-death certification and verbal autopsies to generate meaningful mortality data. Reaffirm CRVS as a matter of human rights under the UDHR, CRC, and ICCPR. A reliable and inclusive CRVS system is the foundation of resilient health systems and accountable governance. By counting every birth and death, Member States uphold rights, advance equity, and strengthen evidence-based decision-making across the Region. Thank you.