



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems

LE CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE
sur les systèmes ESEC



Photo: Tom Cheatham / World Bank

ConVERGE: Connecting Vital Events Registration and Gender Equality

Date: 25-26 February 2020

9:00 AM-5:30 PM (Day 1)

9:00 AM-5:00 PM (Day 2)

Location: International Development Research Centre
150 Kent St, Ottawa, ON K1P 0B2, Canada

Contact: CRVS-Gender@opendatawatch.com

Registration: Please visit the Eventbrite page [here](#).

BACKGROUND

A cornerstone of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and children. An even closer milestone is the 25th anniversary of the Fourth Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action in 2020. As any commitment to gender equality, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Beijing Declaration will be contingent on strong, inclusive, and timely gender data.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) is an indispensable part of the gender data ecosystem. CRVS is at the core of a government's administrative system and provides permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of life events, such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces. Overall, CRVS systems are essential to monitoring the progress of 67 SDG indicators and are directly related to achieving 12 of the 17 SDGs. CRVS is not only needed to monitor the status of women and children but it is also a form of protection since it ensures individuals have a legal form of identification. The exclusion of women and children from CRVS systems risks the denial of access to education, health services, and economic opportunities and leave them uncounted in key indicators such as population, mortality rates, and causes of mortality. On the other hand, well-functioning systems can afford women and children benefits such as access to financial services, rightful claim to inheritance or property, protection against child marriage, among others.

The Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has set out to inspire global commitment to integrating gender analysis across activities that strengthen CRVS systems. As part of this effort, the Centre of Excellence organized **the first international conference on gender and CRVS in February 2018**. It was a landmark event and the first meeting of its kind to gather experts and leaders of organizations to discuss the connections between CRVS systems and gender equality.

In the year following, the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems led, in partnership with Open Data Watch, **the launch of two knowledge briefs on the intersection of CRVS and gender**, and partnered with UNFPA to put in place a programme with global reach and technical depth on strengthening CRVS production and use with a gender lens. Two years after the February 2018 event, this gathering of experts, country representatives, youth, and donor agencies in Ottawa in February 2020 will dig deeper and move discussions beyond the case for the importance of CRVS systems for women and children and towards the operationalization of action-oriented solutions and further investments into research and the implementation of agreed actions.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this conference is to assess progress made to the CRVS and gender field since the first global meeting "**Making the Invisible Visible: CRVS as a basis to meeting the 2030 agenda**" (Ottawa, February 2018); to evaluate present-day and future opportunities and challenges; to ensure all civil and vital life events are universally registered and certified; to generate and use granular vital statistics for improved development planning; and to contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

More specifically, the event will:

- 1. Identify and debate how gender-sensitive CRVS systems complement other data systems** such as national identity systems, health information systems and population census' and discuss how they could be better aligned. Country perspectives will be highlighted to better understand real challenges and good practices with an emphasis on identifying action-oriented solutions.
- 2. Strategize how to increase political support for the CRVS gender agenda** and ensure domestic resources are allocated to these areas of work while taking stock of funding opportunities and challenges.
- 3. Explore how social norms and political economies affect the functioning of CRVS systems** and in particular, how CRVS systems operate in the context of conflict, emergencies, or migrants/refugees.
- 4. Inspire and encourage action from event participants** and ensure that outcomes are socialized and communicated in strategic forums at all levels after the event conclusion.
- 5. Identify areas of research needed to increase the knowledge base on CRVS systems and gender**, especially in the context of fragile states and emergencies.
- 6. Foster links between the global CRVS gender agenda and ongoing gender equality commitments** such as Beijing 25+ and demographic initiatives such as ICDP25.

The event and discussions will produce a set of commitments by the end of the event and agree and sign off on a set of priority actions that could be communicated more broadly as Ottawa 2020 conference outcome. To sharpen the outcome of the conference some pre-conference communications with key audience may be needed to gauge interests in different action areas and future plans.

FORMAT AND THEMES

The two-day conference will be structured around panels, breakout sessions and workshops. Day 1 will consist of a high-level political panel followed by two afternoon technical sessions covering emerging issues in the field of CRVS Gender such as conflict and emergencies as well as social norms and legal frameworks. Day 2 will include participatory breakout workshops and dynamic flash presentations by country representatives and other stakeholders. Participants of the conference will be able to choose from four different themed workshops spanning topics such as promoting advocacy and communication for development strategies for stronger CRVS systems; navigating the interoperability of CRVS systems within the data ecosystem; ensuring CRVS data is open, disaggregated and used; and exploring new methods and innovations in CRVS, including integration of CRVS and ID management systems. Closing sessions on Day 1 and 2 will focus on action-oriented discussions detailing outcomes of the conferences and ways forward. A final agenda will be shared with all participants and be made available online in the coming weeks.

A side meeting of donors is planned for one and half hours on the morning of Day 2 to discuss plans for funding national and international plans on CRVS-gender. Representatives from development partners/banks, private sector, foundations, and other relevant organizations will be invited to discuss the current financing architecture of funding CRVS systems, the limitations and challenges, and how CRVS fits with ongoing financing for development data initiatives.

AUDIENCE

The event will be international in scope, designed for CRVS, gender and development practitioners from low- and middle-income countries, experts from academia, UN Agencies, donors, private sector and civil society working towards the improvement of CRVS systems for women and children. It will be a unique forum to take stock of the recent innovations in the field, tackle ongoing and emerging issues, and debate high-impact interventions and policy level responses to the challenges with developing CRVS systems with a gender lens. The conference is being organized to strategically take place in the days before both the UN Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in Spring 2020. A key objective of the conference will be to catalyze commitments and action-oriented ideas, and to report on these at the two UN commissions. The conference will also be webcasted to achieve increased engagement with those who cannot be in physically present Ottawa.

LANGUAGE

The official languages of the conference are English and French. Interpretation services will be available for all sessions on Day 1 and select sessions on Day 2.