MESSAGE

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Good morning everyone!

Thank you very much for this invitation. Actually, it is Secretary Karl Chua who is supposed to be here, but he is on his way to another important appointment.   But I am more than happy to take his place and to be speaking before my fellow statistician.

The title of my talk or short presentation is "Digital information plus e-CRVS Systems: The Way to Manage the New Normal." In fact, this is also my key message that the way to manage the new normal is really to have a digital information and an electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System.

This is not my first time, I think, to speak before this group or nor speak before the PSA. And, as I have always said, statistics is exactly one of the most noble professions. I'm not just saying that because it is also my field of expertise, but it is really in the bible that actually the statisticians have

been tasked with the noble purpose. In fact, it has always been used to informed policy making and development planning.

So many of you probably guessed already that I am referring to the Book of Numbers. Just a brief background, the Book of Numbers has 36 chapters in three (3) settings: from the foot of Mount Sinai to the wilderness of Sinai and then there is a Mojave which is actually going to the Promise Land. As you can see there is a difference in the landscape and is actually the setting of so many things happening in the nation of Israel.

Chapters 1-9 is about mobilizing the people. This is where the conduct of the first census. So, there was a determination of how many are there by tribes and they came up with the number 603,550. This was just after they made that exodus out of Egypt. And it's also about creating institutions, it's about putting in place the laws. Actually, it is also about defining different festival so the social capital, social institutions were also created in Chapters 1-9.

Chapters 10-25 is all about Israel now complaining, grumbling: there's the jealousy, there's the rebellion, and finally the punishment and judgment. You probably recalled that there was a play that they were bitten by snakes and so many things happening there. So, the judgment was: Nobody from that generation will be entering the Promise Land. They actually spent 40 years in the wilderness.

Then the Mount Hermon of Jordan River is about preparing the new generation as they enter the Promise Land. The first order really was to conduct another census and there came up the number 601,730. And then again, it is about building institutions, about naming the leaders of each and every tribes and then most interestingly it is really about the land use allocation.

Let me just go to that part in Chapter 26, verse 2 where you can read "Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families, all those twenty years old and more who are able to serve in the army of Israel." So, it was not just for census, it is not just for labor census as actually I could say it is a registry - the skills registry. And, then in verse 52 you can read the Lord said to Moises "The lands to be allotted to them as an inheritance shall be based on the number of the names. To a larger group give a larger inheritance and to a smaller group a smaller one" So you would note here that that the census was actually used in order to ensure that no one left is behind expected land use allocation and that the land is distributed by lot. So, it was randomly distributed, and each group inheritance will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe. Each inheritance is to be distributed by lot among the larger and smaller group. So, statistics then was being used in order to achieve equality in order that there will be equity of resources so that there will be the same inheritance.

So much has changed between then and now. Now, we have more sophisticated civil registration and vital statistics. I got this from W-H-O Civil Registration and Vital Statistic's Strategic Implementation Plan and it is really about trying to make use and harness the power of the CRVS so there will be now better delivery of health services, in particular.

Well, first of all, there are other use apart from the health. So, we're thinking that from population statistics this is where we can derive a measure of labor force survey and where you can also derive the measure to plan for school enrolment. There is also the voters registers and then the demand for housing. You can also calculate the maternal mortality ratio of course in conjunction with the mortality statistics. And then, of course your fertility statistics, and this is how you will come up on the need for family planning. Again, from school enrolment, the need for immunization coverages. For epidemiological studies, it is from mortality statistics where you can understand the health care needs and measure specific cause of death. And from death rates and you can also come up with this health

care needs and prioritize the health care needs and, of course, do epidemiological studies.

Now, imagine with me a next level CRVS. Let's say you now have a digital information and electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System. Let's have this picture: imagine the case when there is a pregnant woman in the village and so be the B-HERT (Barangay Health Emergency Response Team) in the barangay informs the District Health Care Office that there is a pregnant woman and therefore this one is already included in the database for the prenatal visit, etcetera. Once the pregnant woman gives birth and the birth is registered in the system, this already alerts the government offices, alerts the different health offices that we have a new baby. That with this new baby, there is need to design an immunization program. That there is need to schedule an immunization program for this new baby and to have this new baby to be included in the first one thousand (1,000) days program. And then that information is also sent to schools, the different schools, that they can already make plans. Going forward there will be ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) need and there will be additional enrollee in the elementary etc., etc.

At the same time, take the other side of your CRVS. There is a death in the village and therefore that death is also registered in your CRVS including the cause of death. And then let just again imagine the situation where there is another death, you know, that occurred not too far from each other and it's the same cause of death. Therefore, once again, in a very timely basis, that death is communicated and registered in your CRVS. There, right away, this information is brought to the attention of your government offices and your different government system as well. This raises the red flag to the Health Department, and the Epidemiological Team is dispatched in order to find out why is it that you have two deaths occurring at the same area with having the same cause of death.

You can just imagine how much different it would be in terms of delivery of services. What we are saying here is that it is the same uses in your CRVS but if you have an e-CRVS coupled with other digital information systems of course in the government, you can just imagine how much more timely, we can deliver services to the Filipino people. Of course, in the end it is, what will get us through this new normal.

And going forward, we still have this digital ID, and for that I would like to congratulate the Philippine Statistics Authority for being able to implement this national ID despite the challenges of the pandemic. You can just imagine what would happen if we have a digital information system and e-CRVS. Like I said, we can deliver these services in a very effective, very timely manner and in the end that is really the way to manage the new normal.

I wish you all the best in this convention. I cannot believe that this is the first convention of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics but this an important event. I hope that you learn a lot from this one and yes, were taking small steps toward having this digital information systems, and an e-CRVS system but I know under the leadership of National Statistician Dennis Mapa and, of course, all the civil registrar that we have here, then we will get there. And yes, that is the way to manage the new normal.

Thank you very much and good morning to all of you!

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