



APAI-CRVS
Everyone visible in Africa



**Meeting of the Task Force on the establishment
of a committee of African Registrars General
17–20 October 2017
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

Background paper 2

Establishing a committee of African Registrars General: Background and draft terms of reference

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Establishing a committee of African Registrars General

A. Background

The rationale for the establishment of a committee of African Registrars General has been set out in the report, “Establishing a committee of African Registrars General: the rationale”, prepared for the consideration of the Task Force at its meeting on the establishment of a committee of African Registrars General, to be held from 17 to 20 October 2017. This report presents the present background paper comprising the draft terms of reference as a supplement.

The draft terms of reference will be discussed and enriched by the Task Force. The final draft will be submitted to the Expert Meeting preceding the fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, hereafter referred to as the Conference of African Ministers, to be held in Nouakchott, from 4 to 8 December 2017 and chaired by the Task Force. The conclusions and recommendations of the Expert Meeting on establishing a committee of African Registrars General will be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers for endorsement.

B. Draft terms of reference

1. Title

1. The committee, once established, will be known as the Committee of African Registrars General.¹

2. Membership

2. The Registrars General or heads of the civil registration offices or agencies of African countries will be the members of the committee.

3. Purpose

3. The purpose of a committee of African Registrars General is to establish a consultative forum that provides several elements: effective support to the Conference of African Ministers; a close working relationship with the secretariat of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, better known as APAI-CRVS, on issues of concern in the development and improvement of national and continental civil registration systems, coordination and integration of the African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems; supportive of technical cooperation activities; implements and monitors the implementation of the initiative, “Decade for the repositioning of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa: 2017-2026”,² among others.

¹ In most African countries, the head of the civil registration offices or agencies is designated Registrar General, and in others, Director or Director General.

² In July 2016, Heads of State and Government declared 2017-2026 to be the “Decade for the repositioning of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa’s continental, subregional and national development agendas”.

4. Objectives

4. The overall objective of a committee of African Registrars General is to deliberate on how to make strategic shifts to take the APAI-CRVS initiative to the next level by taking stock of achievements, identifying and prioritizing available opportunities, and devising ways of addressing current challenges. Working closely with the APAI-CRVS secretariat, the committee will contribute to the progress of policies on civil registration across the continent in support of the Conference of African Ministers, and will consider a range of issues of concern, including the development of national and continental civil registration methodology, and the coordination and integration of the African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. In addition, it will support technical cooperation activities in civil registration organizational matters, among others. Moreover, it will provide strategic support to the Conference of African Ministers and to the work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank on the development of civil registration in Africa.

5. Functions

5. The committee, once established, will provide a forum for work on all matters related to civil registration that are of interest to its members and for the advancement of civil registration and vital statistics systems across the continent. In particular, the committee will have the following functions:

- (a) Identify key challenges in implementation of APAI-CRVS at the continental level and at the national level, and propose solutions so that objectives of the “Decade for repositioning” is achieved and the vision of the APAI-CRVS initiative, “Everyone visible in Africa”, becomes a reality;
- (b) Work with the APAI-CRVS secretariat in ensuring all past and future recommendations of the Conference of African Ministers are implemented;
- (c) Promote the development and improvement of national civil registration systems for better governance in the spirit of “leave no one behind”, by taking into account all pertinent national, continental and international legal instruments;
- (d) Promote effective coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders at national and continental levels;
- (e) Provide a forum for member States to deliberate on activities related to civil registration of the pan-African institutions and other members of the Africa CRVS Core Group (referred to as the Core Group), and provide advice in order to ensure their relevance to the needs of countries; and to establish working mechanisms in implementing continental strategies and initiatives aimed at supporting major international development initiatives and the African integration agenda;
- (f) Ensure that countries have in place comprehensive civil registration laws or regulations aligned to international standards;
- (g) Explore ways to ensure that civil registration records are, where appropriate, the conventional instruments in the proper implementation of various human rights provisions embedded in national laws and international instruments;

- (h) Encourage countries to institute an adequate organizational structure for such systems, using appropriate business management models, with an adequate monitoring and evaluation framework;
- (i) Facilitate the sharing of experience in the use of new technology and encourage countries to put in place comprehensive, appropriate, integrated and secure IT solutions in their civil registration systems;
- (j) Support research work that the APAI-CRVS secretariat conducts, and share experience, where necessary, on issues being investigated; and recommend studies that may be required to further the objectives of the APAI-CRVS initiative;
- (k) Deliberate on the external environment in order to create opportunities or to reduce factors that put at risk the development of civil registration systems at national and continental levels;
- (l) Promote the development and improvement of relevant national systems by ensuring the quality and comparability of vital statistics at the national and international levels by working closely with the national statistical offices;
- (m) Review the annual report of the APAI-CRVS secretariat, which corresponds to the five-year costed strategic plan;
- (n) Set up, in collaboration with the APAI-CRVS secretariat, a peer-review mechanism process in which a group of countries reviews the performance of selected countries, but as an ongoing process until all countries are reviewed at least once;
- (o) Amend, where necessary, its priorities and methods to meet new requirements and maintain a balance between matters of current concern and the longer-term development aspects of the civil registration systems.

6. Steering committee

6. Once established, the committee of African Registrars General, from among its own members, will elect members to form a steering committee³, in accordance with its rules of procedure⁴ and in consultation with the APAI-CRVS secretariat. The steering committee, which will serve as an implementing body of the committee of African Registrars General, will work with the APAI-CRVS secretariat in implementing policies defined by the main committee and the Conference of African Ministers. The members of the steering committee will undertake to devote the time necessary to ensure the adequate discharge of their duties during their term in office. The chairperson of the steering committee will preside over the meetings of the committee of African Registrars General for the period of time specified in the rules of procedures that the latter will establish.

7. A committee secretariat and a steering committee

7. The APAI-CRVS secretariat in the African Centre for Statistics, ECA will serve as the secretariat of the committee of African Registrars General and its steering committee. The secretariat will, among other things, work with the steering committee on the

³ The term "Bureau" is reserved for the Conference of African Ministers, if they agree to establish one. Other designations may be suggested by the Task Force.

⁴ Draft rules of procedure of the committee that would govern its work, that of its steering committee, and the working relationship with the APAI-CRVS secretariat is intended to be used in conjunction with the present background paper.

implementation of the recommendations of the Conference of African Ministers; handle official contacts; correspond with countries, the Core Group and other governmental and non-governmental experts, including experts from international agencies involved in civil registration and vital statistics; assist in the scheduling of meetings and other activities for adoption by the committee; and support the preparation and translation of progress reports of the work of the steering committee, which will be reported to each general meeting of the committee.

8. Other participants and observers

8. Standing invitations will be extended to the pan-African institutions to participate in all meetings of the committee; and they will be invited to the meetings of the steering committee, when it deems it necessary. The committee will decide on the list of participants, and whether it be selected or all members of the Core Group.

9. The committee will make arrangements for regular joint meetings with the Statistical Commission for Africa and the health sector. The members of the Statistical Commission are the Directors General of the national statistical offices of the 54 countries in Africa. In addition, it will make efforts to involve other key continental-level stakeholders, such as from the health sector, national identification management agencies, electoral board commissions, and immigration offices. It will reach out to African training institutions, civil societies and others as observers if the agenda of its meeting requires it.

9. Meetings

10. It is proposed that the committee of African Registrars General meets once a year. A one-day meeting is proposed to be held preceding the Conference of African Ministers and once per year between the Conference of African Ministers. The meeting will be held under the auspices of ECA, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, at a time and venue to be fixed by the APAI-CRVS secretariat. The steering committee, in consultation with the APAI-CRVS secretariat, may accept requests from African Governments to host the regular annual meeting.

10. Report

11. The committee will submit an annual report to the Conference of African Ministers.⁵ The report will be drafted by the steering committee in collaboration with the APAI-CRVS secretariat.

11. Task teams

12. The committee, in consultation with the APAI-CRVS Secretariat and the Statistical Commission for Africa, may establish, maintain or retire technical groups or subcommittees to advance the civil registration improvement objectives. The form and scope of a technical group will be determined by the terms of reference created for the particular group and according to the rules of procedures of the committee.

⁵ The annual report will be submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of African Ministers, if it is formed.

12. Working modalities

13. The work of the Committee will be organized according to the modalities it establishes. A draft of the rules of procedure that will govern the committee is provided in background paper 3: Draft rules of procedure for the committee of African Registrars General, which will serve as the basis for the discussion on formulation of its working modalities. The working modalities are proposed to serve as a tool for the smooth functioning of the committee.

13. Amendments to the terms of reference

14. The committee of African Registrars General may propose changes to its terms of reference to the Conference of African Ministers, as necessary.
