



**Fourth Conference of African Ministers  
responsible for Civil Registration**  
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**Progress made against the commitments of previous sessions  
of the Conference of African Ministers responsible  
for Civil Registration**



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**Decade for Repositioning  
of Civil Registration and  
Vital Statistics in Africa  
2017-2026**



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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (Africa Programme) is being implemented on the basis of the policy and programmatic guidance provided by the African ministers responsible for civil registration through the resolutions adopted at the previous three sessions of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration (Conference of African Ministers). At the first session of the Conference of African Ministers, held in Addis Ababa in 2010, the ministers recognized civil registration and vital statistics as a development imperative for Africa and made clear commitments to improving it in their countries. At the second session, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2012, the ministers recommended specific and practical steps for achieving complete and efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems. They tasked the three pan-African institutions, namely, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank (AfDB), with supporting the Africa Programme and called upon other development partners to take part in the regional initiative. The third session of the Conference of African Ministers was held in Yamoussoukro on 12 and 13 February 2015.

2. At the three previous sessions of the Conference of African Ministers, African experts deliberated and made recommendations to the ministers on various issues pertinent to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems on the continent. Some of those issues included the need for capacity-building; coordination among national stakeholders; partnership with the health sector; improved accessibility; review of the legislative framework for civil registration and vital statistics; adequate human and financial resources for civil registration and vital statistics programmes; monitoring and evaluation of the regional initiative and country programmes; the need for research on specific subjects, in particular on how to improve death registration and the collection of cause-of-death information in Africa; and the use of information and communications technology solutions.

3. The present report reviews the progress made in the implementation of the Africa Programme over the past two years against the commitments made by the African ministers responsible for civil registration. Annex I summarizes the actions taken or initiated in response to the declarations made during the previous sessions and is intended to draw the attention of ministers to emerging issues.

## **II. Key achievements and progress made**

### **A. Institutionalization of the Conference of African Ministers**

4. The Conference of African Ministers was institutionalized as a standing forum of the African Union Commission and was approved during the nineteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in July 2012, on the recommendation of the Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance. In line with the recommendations of these high-level bodies, the third session of the Conference of African Ministers was held in Yamoussoukro on 12 and 13 February 2015, on the theme of “Promoting the use of civil registration and vital statistics in support of good governance in Africa”. It was the first to be held under the auspices of the African Union Commission.

## **1. Civil registration and vital statistics regional core group**

5. The regional civil registration and vital statistics programme is supported by the regional civil registration and vital statistics core group (regional core group), formed by key civil registration and vital statistics actors on the continent (i.e., pan-African institutions, agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations) working together under a common framework, the Africa Programme. Established in 2011, the regional core group is intended to harmonize approaches, harness synergies and thus help to avoid duplication of efforts, as well as provide technical and financial support to the Africa Programme. The regional core group arrangement is being formalized through a memorandum of understanding that will ensure more sustainable engagement by partners in the implementation of the continental programme.

6. The following organizations are members of the regional core group: African Union Commission, ECA, AfDB, the secretariat of the African Symposium on Statistical Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, INDEPTH Network, Plan International and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century.

## **B. Promoting collaboration between key actors of national civil registration and vital statistics systems**

7. Following the recommendations of the Conferences of African Ministers, one of the guiding principles of the Africa Programme is to promote systematic and coordinated approaches and partnerships at the national and regional levels.

8. One of the key activities in promoting the collaboration of civil registration and vital statistics actors at the country level (mainly statistics offices and civil registration offices) is the African Symposium on Statistical Development. The past five consecutive Symposiums, in particular, had civil registration and vital statistics as their main focus: South Africa in January 2012 (seventh Symposium), Côte d'Ivoire in November 2012 (eighth Symposium), Botswana in February 2014 (ninth Symposium), Uganda in January 2015 (tenth Symposium) and Gabon in November 2015 (eleventh Symposium). The seventh Symposium was the first-ever continent-wide meeting between civil registration offices and heads of national statistics offices. Some of the key recommendations included strengthening coordination between national statistics offices and civil registration offices and enhancing the roles and responsibilities of the two players in the operational aspects of civil registration and vital statistics at the country level.

9. The eighth and ninth Symposiums went a step further by involving officials from ministries of health, in recognition of the important role of the health sector as a producer and user of vital statistics from civil registration, as a key player and potential resource in the registration of births and deaths and as a core actor in the accurate recording and certification of death and the collection of cause-of-death information. At the tenth Symposium, it was resolved that countries should use civil registration and vital statistics systems to generate mortality and cause-of-death statistics in a seamless cooperation between national statistics offices, civil registration offices and ministries of health. At the eleventh Symposium, the last one dedicated to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics, the directors-General of national statistics offices and civil registration offices of African States committed

themselves to establishing a committee of registrar generals at the continental level. It was also resolved that each country would set up a mechanism on the basis of civil registration and vital statistics systems to regularly measure the completeness of vital events registration at all levels of hierarchy.

10. The third session of the Conference of African Ministers, which was held in Côte d'Ivoire in 2015, was also attended by the ministers of health of several member States contributing to strengthening the partnership between the civil registration offices and ministries of health.

11. In order to encourage the formalization and sustainability of these collaborations, in September 2013, ECA wrote to all countries recommending them to establish a high-level coordination committee to provide oversight to the entire civil registration and vital statistics systems assessment and improvement planning exercise, and thereafter when the plan is being implemented. Since then, most countries (at least those that have conducted or are conducting assessments) have established these committees and technical working groups to oversee the national civil registration and vital statistics systems improvement programme.

### **C. Capacity-building**

#### **1. Digitization of civil registration and vital statistics systems**

12. The African regional core group has continued to carry out its mandate of providing technical guidance and building the capacities of African countries in the management and operation of civil registration and vital statistics systems. Following the declaration of the third session of the Conference of African Ministers, held in Yamoussoukro, the Africa Programme prioritized the need for comprehensive guidelines to support countries intending to digitize their civil registration and vital statistics processes. The "Civil registration and vital statistics digitization guidebook" has been developed by the regional core group under the technical leadership of Plan International, supported by ECA and the AfDB in collaboration with country experts in Africa. Jembi Health Systems from South Africa provided the technical support as consultant organization. The guidebook is intended to remain a living resource, including reusable assets and case studies that will continue to evolve and expand over time, and is available online ([www.crvs-dgb.org](http://www.crvs-dgb.org)). The guidebook will be used to train country experts on digitization.

#### **2. Improvement in death registration and mortality statistics**

13. African countries face considerable challenges in developing health interventions and building health systems, measuring and monitoring mortality and in reporting against national and global development mortality goals and targets. The death registration levels in most African countries are abysmally low, and the recording and compilation of causes of death is almost non-existent. During its third session of the Conference, held in Côte d'Ivoire in February 2015, the African ministers took note of the situation and called upon WHO and pan-African organizations to take urgent steps to support African States in establishing real-time death registration and cause-of-death information systems. ECA and WHO have jointly developed an Africa mortality statistics strategy (2016–2020) to directly deal with this ministerial call for action. The overarching objective is to make readily available continuous, harmonized, quality mortality and cause-of-death data and statistics for African countries, guiding the development of better planned, designed and integrated mortality systems.

Following the meeting on development of the strategy, which was held in Addis Ababa in August 2015, a meeting of experts on mortality statistics was held in Cairo from 28 September to 1 October 2015, to discuss the five-year mortality statistics strategy for systematic improvement of regional and country mortality registration and statistics in Africa, especially in the context of improving civil registration and vital statistics systems and developing a pool of experts on the improvement in mortality statistics as part of the civil registration and vital statistics initiative.

14. One of the key challenges facing countries in Africa is the lack of guidance on how to improve death registration, in particular when the majority of deaths occur outside medical institutions. In order to deal with this issue, ECA, with the support of the regional core group, has undertaken the development of a practical guide to design and implement the most appropriate business processes for death registration. This would cover the entire civil registration and vital statistics value chain, beginning from notification of death to ending in compilation and dissemination of death statistics. A workshop was held in Lusaka in May 2016 to seek input from African countries and validate the proposed structure of the guide.

15. In addition to the practical guide on the improvement of death registration and cause-of-death processes, it was realized that there is need for further in-depth research in the form of country case studies on current practices in death registration and cause-of-death processes. The result of this research should complement the guide in presenting good practices and giving examples of bottlenecks in the death registration and cause-of-death processes in various settings, and contribute to guiding countries in developing a business process best suited for their specific setting. Both the practical guide and research template are under development.

### **3. Producing vital statistics from civil registration records**

16. Another key area for support, as identified by the regional core group, is strengthening the capacity of African countries to produce vital statistics from their civil registration records. This was reiterated at the third session of the Conference of African Ministers in 2015, in which the ministers called upon the countries to “analyse and disseminate statistics from civil registration regardless of the level of completeness as a means to establish the state of the system and its development”. The production and availability of vital statistics from civil registration systems is a key step towards building the capacity of the countries and accelerating and informing the improvement of the whole system. Accordingly, there is a need to initiate the process, notwithstanding the registration level of many countries still not allowing for producing high-quality statistics for a few more years to come. In order to support the countries in beginning to compile vital statistics, ECA, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), has undertaken the development of a training manual on producing vital statistics from civil registration records, and guidelines and a template for vital statistics reports, developed jointly with Statistics Norway. Both publications were reviewed and validated in a three-day Expert Group Meeting, held in Addis Ababa in May 2016, and are now being finalized.

### **4. Other information**

17. Plans are under way to develop two more guidelines: operational guidelines on advocacy and information, education and communication and guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration and vital statistics in conflict and emergency situations under the Africa Programme.



18. ECA and other members of the regional core group have participated in the development of a global e-learning course on civil registration and vital statistics coordinated by the World Bank, developing a module on assessments and plans and providing comments and input to other modules on the basis of expertise and regional experience. Once finalized, the global e-learning course will help to build the capacity of its users in the various areas of the civil registration and vital statistics systems.

**D. Supporting countries in conducting comprehensive assessments of civil registration and vital statistics systems and development of strategic improvement plans**

19. As mentioned earlier, at the second session of the Conference of African Ministers, specific recommendations were made requesting all African countries to urgently undertake comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems and to develop national action plans to improve or strengthen the systems on the basis of the findings of the assessments. The ministers also called upon the regional core group to provide the technical and financial support necessary to countries. In response to this call, the regional core group developed a set of resource documents to guide countries in conducting the assessments and developing the plans of action. The documents include “A comprehensive assessment tool for the civil registration and vital statistics system”, “Guidelines on how to undertake civil registration and vital statistics comprehensive assessments: a guideline for strategic planning” and “A facilitator’s handbook for strategic planning”. These documents are already available ([www.apai-crvs.org/resources](http://www.apai-crvs.org/resources)) for use by the countries and will continue to be updated regularly on the basis of inputs received from users.

20. Owing to the differences between the civil registration and vital statistics systems in English-speaking and French-speaking countries, the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa in Niamey was requested to lead the French-speaking countries in the implementation of the Africa Programme. Technical civil registration and vital statistics materials were translated and aligned to suit the French pattern of civil registration and vital statistics for an effective implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics process in French-speaking countries. A subregional core group, made up of the same institutions and based in the Subregional Office, was created in 2013 to serve the specific needs of French-speaking African countries. A regional support group for francophone countries was officially established in February 2015.

21. As of May 2017, as many as 30 countries had conducted assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems (23 countries completed comprehensive assessments and 7 countries completed rapid assessments). Twenty-five of them had developed strategic improvement plans and a few had initiated their implementation. A further 13 countries had, at least, initiated the process of conducting a comprehensive assessment. The regional core group has contributed immensely to this process by supporting the development of the resource materials required and helping Governments to find funding for the various components of the assessment and planning processes. Detailed information on the status of comprehensive assessments and plans in each country is presented in annex II of the present report.

22. Two experience-sharing workshops on civil registration and vital statistics assessments and plans were held in 2016, which provided the countries with an opportunity to share their vision of building an efficient and effective civil registration and vital statistics system; the results of assessment of the civil registration and vital statistics system and plans developed for

its improvement; experiences of undertaking (or planning) civil registration and vital statistics assessments and development of plans; and their strategy for implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics plans. The first workshop was held in Addis Ababa in February 2016, and attended by the representatives of 8 countries, and the second workshop was held in Lusaka from 2 to 4 May 2016, and attended by the representatives of 22 countries. Both workshops were also attended by regional core group members, other development partners and senior advisors that supported the countries in conducting comprehensive assessments. The two workshops resulted in a set of recommendations for the revision of the current guidelines and brought to light new issues and challenges faced by countries in the civil registration and vital statistics improvement process.

23. A workshop entitled “Bloomberg D4H regional orientation and training workshop on enterprise architecture: process mapping for strengthening civil registration and vital statistics design” was held in Kigali from 21 to 23 June 2016. The workshop was co-hosted by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, the Ministry of Health of Rwanda and ECA. It trained participants from the Data for Health Initiative countries throughout the Africa region and was facilitated by experts from the Initiative’s implementing partners (Vital Strategies, the University of Melbourne and the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute). During the workshop, the participants were introduced to the basic principles of enterprise architecture and business process mapping and acquired the skills needed to apply this system analysis approach to civil registration and vital statistics systems. Business process mapping is proving to be a very effective and efficient tool in facilitating the discussion on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, not only as an essential step in the assessment process, but also during the planning and implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics reform. Given the usefulness of this approach, it has been decided that business process mapping and enterprise architecture processes should be integrated into the Africa Programme process in a more systemic and systematic way. A strategy is being developed in this regard.

### **1. Promotion of knowledge sharing**

24. In order to facilitate cross-learning between the countries and benefit from each other’s experience in the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, ECA and ESCAP organized a two-day interregional seminar to exchange and discuss best practices on civil registration and vital statistics from Africa and Asia and the Pacific in Addis Ababa in June 2016. During the seminar, representatives of countries from both regions identified common challenges in the implementation of civil registration and vital statistics programmes and various mitigating strategies adopted by countries. The following areas were covered: improving accessibility of civil registration services, including accessibility to remote, hard-to-reach and nomadic populations; creating demand for registration of all vital events; enhancing coordination among national stakeholders and development partners; digitizing civil registration and vital statistics systems; ensuring sustainability and political commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems; building the capacity of national civil registration and vital statistics officials; monitoring the performance of the systems and registration completeness; and building demand for vital statistics from civil registration.

25. In June 2016, the regional core group launched a regional civil registration and vital statistics website ([www.apai-crvs.org](http://www.apai-crvs.org)) that will provide the basis for knowledge-sharing and information-sharing and, just as importantly, monitoring and evaluation of the regional civil registration and vital statistics programme. The platform will also allow for sharing and

exchange of civil registration and vital statistics knowledge products and information between countries, development partners and training and research institutions. The platform is intended to foster partnerships, networking and collaboration; facilitate resource management; monitor improvement efforts; coordinate the regional core group and other development partners; and support member States in reporting on their progress and improvement efforts.

### **E. Establishment of a monitoring framework**

26. Responding to the call of African ministers made in the declaration of their second session of the Conference in Durban to “develop results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and tools to monitor and report on progress on civil registration and vital statistics”, the Africa Programme secretariat developed a framework to document and monitor the progress made by member States in the improvement in civil registration and vital statistics systems. The monitoring form, to be filled by a designated focal point from the civil registration office and submitted through the above-mentioned website, is intended as a tool for an annual review of progress on civil registration and vital statistics, each assisting in systematic stock-taking of the implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics action plan, identifying bottlenecks and taking the corrective measures necessary to accelerate the pace of reform. The review process is envisaged to be consultative in nature, involving the main stakeholders in each country. This monitoring exercise was launched on the Africa Programme website in October 2016, and a consolidated annual report will be shared with all civil registration offices at the ministerial conference. The information will also be used to develop a regional dashboard that will present a more detailed status of progress on various aspects of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.

### **III. Challenges**

27. The funding for the programme, sourced largely from development partners, has been inadequate and ad hoc in nature. The unpredictability of resources has affected the smooth implementation of the programme, including sustaining the human resources required to run the Africa Programme secretariat. The availability of such funding has critical implications for the success of the regional initiative. It is therefore pertinent for the ministers to deliberate on this issue and provide strategic guidance.

28. At the country level, the funding for the plans will come from Governments, and some countries will require catalytic funds to kick-start implementation.

29. Many African Governments and regional economic communities embark on the establishment of national identification systems, including commitment of substantial resources. Even though the national identification systems are indispensable to good governance, their sustainability and robustness can be easily compromised if they are not organically linked to civil registration systems. The civil registration system should essentially be the primary source of breeder documents on birth, death and marriages for national identification systems, which the current approaches on the continent fail in large part to recognize and apply. The risk is that Governments and their development partners may divert resources and attention towards building national identification systems without building efficient and complete civil registration systems, which can provide quick solutions but are impossible to sustain in the long term. Under these circumstances, the coordination of donor and development partner interventions is even more important in order to avoid a duplication of efforts and waste of resources.

30. The mechanisms and capacity to routinely monitor the performance of their civil registration systems are lacking in many of the countries, and they cannot therefore adequately report on the improvements emerging from their interventions. The Africa Programme has now put in place a monitoring mechanism at the country level that will ensure the ability to monitor the progress on and achievements of the regional civil registration and vital statistics initiative. The mechanism will also provide the opportunity to conduct an annual review of progress in each country to support and inform the ongoing implementation of improvement plans.

31. Although the country-led process of assessments (which are now under way) is helping to develop capacity throughout the continent, there is a need to build a more systematic approach in this regard. The regional core group is therefore planning to develop a strategy and action plan in collaboration with other relevant institutions for a more sustainable approach to civil registration and vital statistics capacity-building on the continent.

32. Now that more than half of the countries have conducted the assessments and many have developed their plans, it becomes crucial to support and guide countries in the implementation of the plans and ensure that the plans that they have adopted can bring about real sustainable change. Civil registration and vital statistics, by its nature, is multidisciplinary and different types of support are required to accelerate the implementation of the reform of various parts of the system. The regional core group has already begun to develop guidance on the key areas (e.g., digitization, mortality statistics and vital statistics). Nevertheless, more support and capacity-building is needed, including building a pool of specialized experts.

33. Although most countries adopted a uniform approach to conducting the assessments, some countries followed other methods and a few more used tools for civil registration and vital statistics assessment and planning that were different from the ones developed by the regional core group under the Africa Programme. Such deviations were found mostly in the northern African countries and in those that had completed their assessment even before the tools and guidance were developed by the regional core group. Similarly, countries have adopted other approaches to planning. There were also methods in which the process of assessment and planning was consultant-driven. The question that needs to be answered is whether the strategies and plans developed by countries will lead to the desired goal of achieving an efficient and effective civil registration and vital statistics system that meets the international benchmark, as envisaged in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations on Vital Statistics, along with other global guidelines and standards and whether these are best suited to the country context.

34. Analysis of the business processes of the civil registration and vital statistics system was not always properly conducted during the assessment, owing mostly to limited guidance and tools. The strategy on how to incorporate the methods of enterprise architecture in the Africa Programme assessment guidelines and tools is being developed to deal with this issue.

## Annex I

## Matrix of progress against the declaration of the previous sessions of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration

<i>No.</i>	<i>Ministers' declaration</i>	<i>Key action points</i>	<i>Progress made to date</i>
1	<p><b>Repositioning civil registration and vital statistics as a development imperative</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.3</b></p> <p>The African Symposium, which has hitherto focused on mobilizing Africa to fully participate in the 2010 round of population and housing census, to give priority to mobilizing Africa to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 4</b></p> <p>Recall the commitments made at our first conference held in Addis Ababa in August 2010, to consider and prioritize civil registration and vital statistics as a regional policy agenda and to take steps to reform and improve the systems in our countries.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement I (r, s)</b></p> <p>Recommend that the Heads of State and Government declare 2015–2024 as the decade for repositioning civil registration and vital statistics in Africa's continental, regional and national development agenda and urge Governments to respond with appropriate action.</p> <p>Recommend the establishment of one day of a year to be a Civil Registration Day.</p>	<p>Continue to advocate for the primacy of civil registration and vital statistics as a continental development agenda within the various regional statistical forums, such as the Statistical Commission for Africa and the African Symposium on Statistical Development (African Symposium).</p> <p>Establish the civil registration and vital statistics decade and Civil Registration Day.</p>	<p>The sixth African Symposium, held in Cairo from 31 October to 2 November 2010, adopted a resolution that shifted its focus area from population and housing census to civil registration and vital statistics systems for five symposiums beginning in 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) January 2012 in South Africa (seventh African Symposium);</li> <li>(b) November 2012 in Côte d'Ivoire (eighth African Symposium);</li> <li>(c) February 2014 in Botswana (ninth African Symposium);</li> <li>(d) January 2015 in Uganda (tenth African Symposium);</li> <li>(e) November 2015 in Gabon (eleventh African Symposium).</li> </ul> <p>These regional civil registration and vital statistics initiatives have continuously and successfully promoted the collaboration of civil registration and vital statistics actors at the country level (mainly statistics offices and civil registration offices). The twelfth African Symposium, held in Tunis in November 2016, had a session dedicated to civil registration and vital statistics in which a report on the progress in the implementation of the programme was presented by the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (Africa Programme) secretariat.</p> <p>A report on the progress of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa was submitted to the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the Statistical Commission for Africa.</p>

No.	Ministers' declaration	Key action points	Progress made to date
			<p>As part of the celebrations to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity, in May 2013, the African Union Commission hosted a high-level panel on civil registration and vital statistics aimed at advocating for the primacy of civil registration and vital statistics systems in realizing development on the continent. The panel's discussions were held on the theme of "Eliminating the scandal of invisibility". The discussions were aired on international media and received audiences from all over the continent.</p> <p>In July 2016, the Heads of State and Government declared 2017–2026 to be the decade for repositioning civil registration and vital statistics in Africa's continental, subregional and national development agendas.</p>
	<p><b>Institutionalization of the Conference</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 10</b></p> <p>We request the African Union Commission to consider institutionalizing the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration as a standing regional platform to meet biannually, for discussion and evaluation of political and policy issues related to civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 5</b></p> <p>Note with satisfaction the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (assembly/AU/DEC.424) endorsing the recommendation of our first session on the institutionalization of the Conference as a standing regional forum of the African Union to deal with matters concerning civil registration.</p>	<p>The African Union Commission to undertake the relevant institutional arrangements to facilitate its roles with respect to the institutionalization of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration (Conference of African Ministers), including taking leadership in organizing the Conference.</p> <p>The African Union Commission to develop standard operating procedures and other relevant documents that will guide the running of the Conference, specifically outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (the secretariat) and those of the Commission.</p> <p>Member States to continue to participate at the biennial ministerial conferences and support the African Union Commission in the implementation of this resolution.</p>	<p>The decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (assembly/AU/DEC.424) endorsed the recommendation of the first session of the Conference of African Ministers on the institutionalization of the Conference as a standing regional forum of the African Union to deal with matters concerning civil registration.</p> <p>The African Union has taken lead in the organization of the third session of the Conference of African Ministers. The fourth session of the Conference is being organized under the auspices of the African Union Commission in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and ECA, with the support of the regional core group. All future sessions will be conducted under the same framework.</p> <p>Members States have continued to participate in the biennial conference.</p>

No.	<i>Ministers' declaration</i>	<i>Key action points</i>	<i>Progress made to date</i>
	<p><b>Conference II: Statement 22 and 23</b></p> <p>We reaffirm our commitment to making the Conference a dynamic forum that is used to discuss policy and strategic issues related to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa; in this regard, we undertake to support the African Union Commission in its implementation processes.</p>		
	<p><b>Resource mobilization and management of the programme</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.1</b></p> <p>ECA, African Development Bank, African Union Commission, as well as other development partners to continue to support our efforts in capacity-building and mobilizing resources.</p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.7</b></p> <p>Call upon the United Nations Statistics Division, the Health Metrics Network and other development partners to strengthen their support for regional and national civil registration and vital statistics initiatives and programmes, including aligning their assistance accordingly.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 14</b></p> <p>Note that the challenge before us now is to reaffirm our commitment and scale up efforts to reform and improve civil registration and vital statistics systems in our countries. In this regard, we fully endorse the recommendations of our experts on strategies for improving civil</p>	<p>Strengthen partnership among the various civil registration and vital statistics actors by developing a memorandum of understanding and other relevant documentation to strengthen and formalize the partnership of the regional core group.</p> <p>Strengthen partnership with the Statistics Division.</p> <p>The regional core group to support countries in capacity-building initiatives, including their effort towards conducting comprehensive assessments and the development of national action plans.</p> <p>The African Union Commission to provide the required human and financial resources to support the regional civil registration and vital statistics agenda.</p> <p>Pan-African institutions to establish a financing mechanism for the Africa Programme.</p> <p>The regional core group to develop a five-year plan succeeding the medium-term plan.</p>	<p>Established in 2011, the regional civil registration and vital statistics core group (regional core group) has continued to support countries' capacity-building initiatives by providing them with the human and financial resources required to undertake comprehensive assessments and develop national action plans. Specifically, it has supported the development of various regional guidelines and tools to support the assessment and planning processes and facilitated the finances required to cover the training, assessment and planning of undertakings at regional and the country levels.</p> <p>The regional core group has also steered significant efforts toward mobilizing resources to support the African regional civil registration and vital statistics programme at the global level. The regional core group, represented by the secretariat, is among the founders of the global civil registration and vital statistics group, which establishes critical partnerships for civil registration and vital statistics in the region.</p> <p>A draft of the memorandum of understanding was developed and shared with the agencies belonging to the regional core group. The memorandum provides a framework of cooperation and facilitates collaboration between member agencies to further their shared goals and objectives relating to civil registration and vital statistics and the mobilization of resources for civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.</p>

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	<p>registration and vital statistics as well as the proposed Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics at national and regional levels.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 20</b></p> <p>The African Union to allocate the necessary financial and technical resources in support of the civil registration and vital statistics development agenda.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement C (h, i, j)</b></p> <p>Call upon pan-African organizations (African Union Commission, ECA, African Development Bank) to set up a financing mechanism for the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems.</p> <p>Call for partners, to support the implementation of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems strategy, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;</p> <p>Endorse the renewal of the five-year medium-term plan to 2016–2020.</p>		<p>As of the date of the present report, the following organizations form the regional core group: the African Union Commission, ECA, AfDB, the secretariat of the African Symposium, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, INDEPTH Network, Plan International and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century.</p> <p>The secretariat has been working closely with the Statistics Division in delivering training on international civil registration and vital statistics standards and guidelines in African countries. This partnership will continue in the future.</p> <p>Financing regional activities has been a challenge, in particular for the secretariat. There has been some support received by ECA in the past few years but that were not adequate for the smooth implementation of the programme.</p> <p>The Africa Programme costed strategic plan for 2017–2021 has been developed as a foundation to put in place a financing mechanism. The plan will be presented to the ministers in the fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers for their endorsement.</p>
	<p><b>Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems secretariat</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.4</b></p> <p>ECA to consider establishing a substantive post on civil registration and vital statistics with appropriate support staff at the African Centre for Statistics to ensure the sustainability of ongoing</p>	<p>Member States and development partners to provide the relevant support in institutionalizing the civil registration and vital statistics secretariat at the African Centre for Statistics with the necessary complement of staff.</p>	<p>The secretariat for the Africa Programme was established at the Demographic and Social Statistics Section of the African Centre for Statistics at ECA.</p> <p>In 2017, two short-term professional posts have been created at the Africa Programme secretariat (supported by ECA and Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative). Nevertheless, further strengthening of and support for the secretariat is required to ensure smooth implementation of the</p>



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	<p>efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 18</b></p> <p>Member States and development partners to reinforce the civil registration and vital statistics secretariat at ECA with adequate resources and appropriate staff to enable it carry out its mandate as recommended by the first session of the Conference.</p>		<p>programme. (Three more professional posts and two general support posts are still required.)</p>
	<p><b>Assessments and plans</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 8.1</b></p> <p>Take appropriate policy measures to facilitate the implementation of plans, programmes and initiatives for the reform and improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems to achieve universal coverage and completeness, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of our countries.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 16</b></p> <p>Member States to undertake in-depth assessment of the state of their national civil registration systems and develop strategic and action plans for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (a)</b></p> <p>Continue our efforts to develop appropriate policies and strategies to reform and improve our civil registration and vital statistics systems and to mainstream them into national development plans and programmes, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of our countries. In this</p>	<p>Member States to undertake in-depth assessment of the state of their national civil registration systems and develop strategic and action plans for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p> <p>The regional core group to develop tools and guidelines and provide the support necessary for the assessment and plans.</p>	<p>The regional core group, under the leadership of ECA, prepared strategies, tools and guidelines to support countries in conducting comprehensive assessments and developing country action plans that cover all aspects of a civil registration and vital statistics system. The tools and guidelines are based on the standards developed by the United Nations in the Principles and Recommendations on Vital Statistics (Rev.3).</p> <p>English, French and Portuguese-speaking experts were identified and trained on civil registration and vital statistics and assessment and planning tools and guidelines in May 2013, in Gaborone.</p> <p>In September 2013, ECA sent communication to all the chiefs of civil registration offices informing them about the developed tools and guidelines, the readiness of the regional core group to support the process and the availability of trained experts.</p> <p>As part of the assessment process, civil registration functionaries in the countries have been trained to understand, appreciate and apply their tools to benchmark their own systems. Countries are developing strategies and plans on the basis of these standard methods of assessment to ensure effective functioning of their systems.</p>

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	<p>regard, we commit to urgently develop costed national plans of action on civil registration and vital statistics that reflect individual country priorities based on comprehensive assessments to be undertaken with the support of the secretariat and partner organizations.</p>		<p>Two experience-sharing workshops on civil registration and vital statistics assessments and plans were held in 2016 in order to provide the countries with an opportunity to share their vision of building an efficient and effective civil registration and vital statistics system; the results of the assessment of civil registration and vital statistics system and plans developed for its improvement; experiences of undertaking (or planning) civil registration and vital statistics assessments and development of plans; and their strategy for implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics plans. The two workshops resulted in a set of recommendations for the revision of the current guidelines and brought to light new issues and challenges faced by countries in the civil registration and vital statistics improvement process.</p> <p>As of May 2017, as many as 30 countries had conducted assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems (23 countries had completed comprehensive assessments and 7 countries had completed rapid assessments); 25 of them had developed strategic improvement plans; and a few had initiated their implementation. A further 13 countries had, at least, begun the process of conducting a comprehensive assessment on the basis of the support and guidance provided by the regional core group.</p>
	<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.2</b></p> <p>ECA, African Development Bank and African Union Commission to undertake an evaluation of national civil registration and vital statistics systems and finalize the draft medium-term regional plan and guidelines and report to the next session of the Conference of African Ministers.</p>	<p>Secretariat to undertake an evaluation of national civil registration and vital statistics systems and finalize the draft medium-term regional plan and guidelines.</p> <p>Member States to regularly monitor and evaluate the performance of their civil registration and vital statistics programmes.</p> <p>Secretariat to develop relevant platforms to document and monitor the progress made by</p>	<p>An evaluation of national civil registration and vital statistics systems was undertaken and the results reported to the second session of the Conference of African Ministers (<a href="http://www.apai-crvs.org/regional-assessment-study">www.apai-crvs.org/regional-assessment-study</a>).</p> <p>The medium-term plan that was endorsed by the ministers in their first session of the Conference was revisited in the light of the regional assessment that had been undertaken during the biennium 2011–2012, and finalized and approved at the second session of the Conference.</p>

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	<p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (j)</b></p> <p>Develop results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and tools to monitor and report on progress on civil registration and vital statistics.</p>	<p>member States in the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p>	<p>Only a few countries have developed their monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Most countries do not have any mechanism to count the number of vital events registered in a year and therefore cannot calculate the levels of registration of these events. A presentation was made at the third session of the Conference of African Ministers highlighting the need for collecting this basic information to track the progress of levels of registration of vital events over time and space.</p> <p>ECA, in consultation with the regional core group, has developed a web-based questionnaire for regional monitoring of the Africa Programme to be filled in by the focal points in the countries on an annual basis. The countries are also being advised that the questionnaire should be used for annual review of the civil registration and vital statistics system in their country, if possible by convening meetings of all stakeholders and discussing various questions on the monitoring form.</p> <p>This monitoring exercise was launched on the Africa Programme website in October 2016, and its results are used to prepare a consolidated annual report to be shared with all civil registration offices and with the ministers during the ministerial conference. The data collected in this exercise will also serve as a baseline for the monitoring framework for the Africa Programme's five-year strategic plan.</p>
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (d)</b></p> <p>Accord high priority to civil registration and vital statistics and ensure the allocation of adequate human and financial resources for the day-to-day operation of civil registration and vital statistics systems in our countries, including implementation of national action plans, in order to ensure sustainability and country ownership</p>	<p>Member States to allocate adequate financial resources for civil registration and vital statistics programmes.</p> <p>Member States to allocate adequate human resources for the efficient operation of civil registration and vital statistics programmes.</p>	<p>The progress achieved by individual countries in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems in this regard is being assessed through comprehensive assessments and addressed through the national action plans.</p> <p>The fact that a significantly large number of countries have opted to undertake comprehensive assessment and develop their action plan is sufficient indication that the countries are according high priority to civil registration and vital statistics. Many countries are also allocating resources for day-to-day operations of civil registration and vital statistics in their countries.</p>

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	<p>Commit that we will take up the responsibility for financing and sustaining our national civil registration and vital statistics plans and, when necessary, mobilize resources to cover the financing gap.</p>		<p>The Africa Programme has generated a lot of interest among donors in supporting countries in various areas of civil registration and vital statistics. Nevertheless, some countries continue to struggle to finance their plan. Many countries are coming forward to finance a good proportion of their plan.</p>
	<p><b>Legal framework</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 8.2</b></p> <p>We commit to revise and update our civil registration and vital statistics laws and statistical legislation, in line with international and regional guidelines and recommendations, by allocating adequate human and financial resources for this purpose.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (a)</b></p> <p>We commit to continue our efforts in revising and updating civil registration and statistical legislation in our respective countries, in line with regional and international guidelines and taking into account the evolving needs and innovations.</p>	<p>Member States to revise and update civil registration and vital statistics laws.</p> <p>The regional core group to provide support to and guidance on the legal framework reform.</p>	<p>Most of the countries that have conducted assessments have identified the civil registration laws as one of the major impediments in the process of registration. A majority of the countries were using their colonial laws, which were not in tune with the local culture and social norms, and some were not conducive to digitization or automation of the civil registration and vital statistics process. The assessment tools provided a number of standard legal provisions from the United Nations handbook on legal frameworks, which helped countries to establish a benchmark for the provisions in their own laws. It is expected that most of the countries will amend their laws, taking into account the evolving needs.</p>
	<p><b>Advocacy and awareness-raising</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 8.3</b></p> <p>Intensify awareness-raising campaigns on the procedures and importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems to ensure effective functioning of the systems.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (i)</b></p> <p>Intensify awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public on the importance and procedures of</p>	<p>Member States to intensify public-awareness campaigns on the importance of civil registration and vital statistics.</p> <p>The regional core group to provide guidance on communications and advocacy for civil registration and vital statistics.</p>	<p>The regional core group has planned to develop a handbook on advocacy and communication on civil registration and vital statistics.</p>

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	civil registration and vital statistics to ensure their effective functioning.		
	<p><b>Coordination</b></p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 8.1</b></p> <p>Mainstream civil registration and vital statistics processes into national statistical development strategies and other national plans and programmes, including strengthening the coordination of activities among various departments and ministries at national, subregional and regional levels.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (g)</b></p> <p>Establish high-level coordination mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders for efficient functioning of civil registration and vital statistics systems, taking into account the multisectorial and integrated nature of civil registration services.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (i)</b></p> <p>Further strengthen and facilitate coordination between national statistics offices and civil registration authorities in managing and monitoring the challenges of civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.6</b></p> <p>The health sector to align the health system with civil registration and vital statistics systems to improve coordination and sharing of data on births and deaths with assigned causes for all deaths, with national statistics offices and civil registration and vital statistics authorities.</p>	<p>Member States to:</p> <p>(a) Mainstream civil registration and vital statistics into national statistical development strategies or programmes;</p> <p>(b) Establish high-level coordination committees composed of the relevant key sector ministries;</p> <p>(c) Build strong collaboration mechanisms with the health sector and ensure the alignment of health information systems with civil registration and vital statistics systems;</p> <p>(d) Strengthen coordination between national statistics offices and civil registration offices;</p> <p>(e) Establish linkages between civil registration and national identity management systems.</p> <p>The African Union Commission to invite ministers of health to the Conference of African Ministers.</p> <p>Develop a policy and advocacy paper on the linkages between civil registration and vital statistics and the health sector.</p>	<p>One of the most significant steps after the first session of the Conference of African Ministers was the expansion of partnership beyond the three pan-African institutions and formalizing it through a mechanism of the regional core group. The group has been jointly implementing the Africa Programme since that time.</p> <p>In September 2013, ECA wrote to all countries requesting them to establish a high-level coordination committee to provide oversight to the entire assessment and planning exercise and thereafter, when the plan is being implemented. Since then, most countries (at least those that have conducted or are conducting assessment) have established these committees and technical working groups to oversee the national civil registration and vital statistics programme.</p> <p>In all the countries that embarked on the initiative of improvement of their civil registration and vital statistics system under the Africa Programme, national statistics offices have played and continue to play an important role in promoting the need to produce and use civil registration and vital statistics.</p> <p>The new round of national strategies for the development of statistics are including civil registration and vital statistics as an important source of demographic and vital statistics. Plan International and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century are working to formally include civil registration and vital statistics into the third generation of strategies.</p> <p>Ministers of health from all African countries were invited to the third session of the Conference of African Ministers.</p> <p>An increasing number of countries are attempting to include health as an active outreach facility for the registration of vital</p>

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	<p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (h)</b></p> <p>Ensure the alignment of health information management systems and civil registration and vital statistics systems and that both be mainstreamed into national strategies for the development of statistics.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (k)</b></p> <p>Continue to take steps to improve the availability and accessibility of civil registration services by devolving services to local levels through existing structures and service networks, in particular the health sector.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 19</b></p> <p>Invite African ministers of health to join us in view of the important role of the health sector in the delivery of civil registration services to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the challenges of improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement E (i, j)</b></p> <p>Establish strong working arrangements with health and other relevant sectors to improve registration service delivery at the most appropriate administrative level.</p> <p>Establish solid linkages between civil registration and national identity systems in efforts to manage one legal identity and to improve governance and service delivery.</p>		<p>events, in particular for births and deaths occurring outside medical institutions. Increasing efforts are being made to ensure the prompt registration of events occurring in hospitals by providing registration facilities with the hospitals. Countries are linking immunization services for mopping up missed-out events.</p> <p>ECA has been advocating for the establishment of solid linkages between civil registration and national identity systems in various forums.</p> <p>The progress made by individual countries in coordination between the key stakeholders in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems in this regard is being systematically identified and examined through a comprehensive assessment.</p>

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	<p><b>Conference III: Statement F (o)</b></p> <p>Establish appropriate national residential address infrastructure in order to optimize the utility of civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p>		
	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (c)</b></p> <p>Adopt appropriate technologies to speed up and scale up civil registration, manage civil registration records, and ensure their integrity and security against natural disasters, civil wars, etc.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement D (k)</b></p> <p>Adopt a sustainable development stance for civil registration and interrelated systems by using appropriate information and communications technology that meet the legal, administrative and statistical functions of civil registration.</p>	<p>Member States to adopt appropriate technologies in the improvement of their civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p> <p>The regional core group to provide the required technical support to countries by developing regional guidelines on the digitization of civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p>	<p>These issues are being systematically identified and examined through comprehensive assessments.</p> <p>The civil registration and vital statistics digitization guidebook was developed and released in November 2015 at the eleventh African Symposium, which was held on the theme of "Promoting use of information and communications technology solutions in improving civil registration and vital statistics in Africa". The guidebook is an online resource (<a href="http://www.crvs-dgb.org">www.crvs-dgb.org</a>) that provides step-by-step guidance for countries to plan, analyse and implement digital systems and automated processes for civil registration and vital statistics. It takes into consideration various legal, administrative and statistical aspects, as recommended in Principles and Recommendations on Vital Statistics.</p>
	<p><b>Capacity-building and knowledge sharing</b></p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 17</b></p> <p>The secretariat and other partner organizations to continue to provide technical support to reinforce the capacity of member States in civil registration and vital statistics operations and management through technical advisory services, workshops, training and provision of guidelines. In this regard, we request the secretariat to establish a regional knowledge hub on civil registration and vital statistics that promotes research to build technical capacity at the national, regional and continental levels.</p>	<p>The regional core group to develop the relevant resource documents and other materials to support countries in building complete civil registration and vital statistics systems and continue to build the knowledge and capacity of countries regarding civil registration and vital statistics by providing the training and technical advisory services required.</p> <p>The secretariat to develop a knowledge-sharing platform.</p> <p>The regional core group to develop a strategy paper on building sustainable civil registration and vital statistics capacity in the region, including strategies to collaborate with research and training institutions in generating</p>	<p>The regional Core Group has developed the following resource materials to support countries in the assessments and in the development of national civil registration and vital statistics plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment tools</li> <li>• Assessment guidelines</li> <li>• Guidelines on strategic planning</li> <li>• A pool of resource persons to support countries in the assessment and planning processes</li> <li>• Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Digitization Guidebook</li> </ul> <p>The secretariat has been working closely with the Statistics Division in delivering training on international civil registration and vital statistics standards and guidelines in African countries.</p>

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	<p><b>Conference III: Statement A (a)</b></p> <p>Implement a clear strategy on sustainable capacity development on civil registration and vital statistics on the continent, including through intra-African cooperation arrangements.</p> <p><b>Conference I: Statement 9.5</b></p> <p>Universities and national and regional statistical and demographic training institutions to enhance or develop appropriate curricula for building capacity and improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa.</p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 20</b></p> <p>Relevant national universities and regional research and training institutions to respond to the demand for improved death registration and cause-of-death certification in countries, with the support of development partners.</p>	<p>knowledge on improving death registration and cause-of-death certification.</p>	<p>In each country, the support for the assessment and planning included a component of training civil registration and vital statistics officials. Moreover, the capacity-building was an integral part of the assessment and planning process, given that the country team themselves administered the tools.</p> <p>A training workshop on civil registration and vital statistics for officials from francophone countries was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 15 to 19 February in 2015.</p> <p>A workshop for experts in civil registration and vital statistics for francophone countries was held in Cameroon from 2 to 6 November 2016, in which the road map for civil registration and vital statistics comprehensive assessments in French-speaking countries was developed.</p> <p>An interregional seminar to exchange and discuss best practices on civil registration and vital statistics in Africa and Asia and the Pacific was held in Addis Ababa in June 2016 to facilitate knowledge-sharing and learning. During the meeting, representatives of the countries from both regions held discussions in order to identify common challenges in the implementation of civil registration and vital statistics programmes in both regions and various strategies adopted by countries in their successful mitigation.</p> <p>The Africa Programme website was launched in June 2016 to serve as a knowledge-sharing and experience-sharing platform (<a href="http://www.apai-crvs.org">www.apai-crvs.org</a>).</p> <p>In 2016, ECA and other members of the regional core group participated in the development of a global e-learning course on civil registration and vital statistics coordinated by the World Bank, developing a module on assessments and plans and providing the comments and input to other modules on the basis of expertise and regional experience. The global e-</p>



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			learning course will help to build capacity in various areas of civil registration and vital statistics.
	<p><b>Death registration and cause-of-death recording</b></p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 19</b></p> <p>We request the secretariat to undertake operational research in the area of death registration and cause-of death certification in Africa.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement A (c)</b></p> <p>Call upon the World Health Organization, in collaboration with pan-African Organizations and other partners, to intensify their efforts in developing real-time death registration and causes of death information systems at country level.</p>	<p>The regional core group to conduct operational research in the area of death registration and cause-of-death certification in Africa.</p>	<p>ECA and the World Health Organization have jointly developed an Africa mortality statistics strategy (2016–2020) to deal directly with the ministerial call for action. Following the meeting on development of the strategy, which took place in Addis Ababa in August 2015, a meeting of experts on mortality statistics was held in Cairo from 28 September to 1 October 2015, to discuss the five-year mortality statistics strategy for the systematic improvement in regional and country mortality registration and statistics in Africa, especially in the context of improving civil registration and vital statistics systems and developing a pool of experts on improvement in mortality statistics as part of the civil registration and vital statistics initiative.</p> <p>In order to provide guidance on how to improve death registration, in particular settings in which a majority of deaths occur outside medical institutions, the development of a practical guide to help countries to design and implement the most appropriate business processes for death registration and produce statistics from the data collected has been undertaken. The workshop on the practical guide was held in Lusaka in May 2016 to seek input from the countries and discuss their business processes for death registration and cause-of-death recording.</p> <p>The research template for further in-depth research in the form of country case studies on current practices in death registration and cause-of-death processes is also under development.</p>
	<p><b>Vital statistics and cause-of-death statistics</b></p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement F (n)</b></p> <p>Analyse and disseminate statistics from civil registration, regardless of the level of</p>	<p>Member States to begin to produce vital statistics from civil registration data, irrespective of the level of registration completeness.</p>	<p>ECA, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Statistics Norway have jointly developed a publication entitled “Guidelines and template for developing a vital statistics report based on civil registration records”.</p>

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	completeness, as a means to establish the state of the system and its development.	Core group to provide guidance and technical support in the area of producing vital statistics from civil registration records.	<p>ECA and ESCAP have produced a manual entitled "Trainer's manual on production of vital statistics from civil registration records". This manual will be used to develop a pool of experts in Africa to support countries in the production of vital statistics but will also be used for training of trainers in academic and in-service training institutions.</p> <p>Both publications were reviewed and validated during a three-day Expert Group Meeting held in Addis Ababa May 2016, and are being finalized.</p>
	<p><b>Leaving no one behind</b></p> <p><b>Conference II: Statement 15 (f)</b></p> <p>Invite the Independent Expert Review Group on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health to participate in the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement B (d, e, f)</b></p> <p>Pursue actively the idea of "leaving no country behind" and "leaving no one out" especially the vulnerable, including refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless people, as well as implement the General Comment on Article 6 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.</p> <p>Support the development of guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration and vital statistics in conflict and emergency situations, as well as special circumstances, by making use of experiences from countries having gone through these situations.</p>	<p>Secretariat to invite the Independent Expert Review Group on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health to participate in the Africa Programme.</p> <p>UNHCR to produce a status paper on registration of refugees in countries.</p> <p>The West and Central Africa Regional Office of UNICEF to take the lead in developing guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration and vital statistics in conflict and emergency situations.</p> <p>Secretariat to develop guidelines to support countries in mainstreaming gender issues into civil registration and vital statistics systems.</p>	<p>The Africa Programme, by its very nature, does not leave any country behind or anyone behind.</p> <p>The secretariat provided reports of the progress made by the Africa Programme to the Independent Expert Review Group in 2013, 2014 and 2015.</p> <p>Work is under way to develop guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration and vital statistics in conflict and emergency situations under the Africa Programme.</p> <p>Analysis of the gender-based barriers to registration services has been conducted in collaboration with Data2X, leading to the preparation of papers on the gender dimensions of marriage and divorce registration laws in Africa and the gender dimensions of birth registration in sub-Saharan Africa.</p>

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	Request the secretariat to develop guidelines to support countries in mainstreaming gender issues into civil registration and vital statistics systems.		
	<p><b>Africa's contribution to the global agenda</b></p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement G (p)</b></p> <p>Share the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems experience globally, in international forum, to influence innovation.</p> <p><b>Conference III: Statement J (t)</b></p> <p>Invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to address the forty-sixth session of the United Nations Statistics Commission to share in the developments of civil registration and vital statistics in the African region, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda generally and data revolution specifically.</p>		The work of the Africa Programme is being continuously shared with the global civil registration and vital statistics group. The new website on the Africa Programme is being used to share Africa's experience globally.
	<p><b>Next conference</b></p> <p><b>Conference II</b></p> <p>We look forward to our next Conference, which is to be hosted by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in September 2014.</p> <p><b>Conference III</b></p> <p>The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for accepting to host the fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in 2016.</p>	<p>The Government of Côte d'Ivoire to host the third session of the Conference.</p> <p>The Government of Zambia to host the fourth session of the Conference.</p>	<p>The third session of the Conference of African Ministers was postponed owing to unavoidable administrative challenges faced by the organizers and eventually was held in Yamoussoukro in February 2015.</p> <p>The fourth session of the Conference will be held in October 2017, in Nouakchott.</p>

## Annex II

**Status of country assessments and plans<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Plan</i>
Algeria	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Angola	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Benin	Initiated	
Botswana	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Burkina Faso	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Burundi	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Cabo Verde	Not initiated	
Cameroon	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Central African Republic	Initiated	
Chad	Comprehensive assessment completed	
Comoros	Not initiated	
Côte d'Ivoire	Initiated	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Initiated	
Djibouti	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Egypt	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Equatorial Guinea	Not initiated	
Eritrea	Not initiated	
Ethiopia	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Gabon	Initiated	
Gambia	Initiated	
Ghana	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Guinea	Not initiated	
Guinea-Bissau	Initiated	
Kenya	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Lesotho	Comprehensive assessment completed	
Liberia	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Libya	Not initiated	
Madagascar	Comprehensive assessment completed	
Malawi	Initiated	
Mali	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Mauritania	Initiated	
Mauritius	Not initiated	
Morocco	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Mozambique	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Namibia	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Niger	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Nigeria	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Republic of the Congo	Initiated	
Rwanda	Comprehensive assessment completed	

<sup>a</sup> The status is in accordance with the records of the Africa Programme secretariat on 1 June 2017.

Sao Tomé and Principe	Not initiated	
Senegal	In progress	
Seychelles	Not initiated	
Sierra Leone	Initiated	
Somalia	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
South Africa	Comprehensive assessment completed	
South Sudan	Initiated	
Sudan	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Swaziland	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Togo	Not initiated	
Tunisia	Rapid assessment completed	Developed
Uganda	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
United Republic of Tanzania	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Zambia	Comprehensive assessment completed	Developed
Zimbabwe	Initiated	

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