



Commission of African Registrars General

AUC/CRCM4/2017/11

First session

Nouakchott

9 December 2017

**Draft**  
**Rules of procedure for the**  
**Commission of African Registrars General**

**Prepared by the**  
**Task Force and the APAI-CRV secretariat on the establishment of the**  
**Commission of African Registrars General**



**APAI-CRVS**  
Everyone visible in Africa

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



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## **1. Representation**

1. At the session of the Commission of African Registrars General, an accredited head of the national civil registration agency will represent each country that is participating. Each delegation may include such representatives, advisers and experts as may be required.

## **2. Steering Committee**

2. The Commission of African Registrars General shall form a body, hereafter referred to as the Steering Committee. It will work with the Bureau of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration (hereafter referred to as the Conference of African Ministers), and the secretariat of the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on the implementation of decisions and recommendations of the Conference of African Ministers.

### **2.1 Officers and terms of office**

3. At the commencement of its first regular session, the Commission of African Registrars General will elect from its members a Steering Committee of seven, comprising a Chairperson, First and Second Vice-Chairpersons, First and Second Rapporteurs, and two members for a term of two years. The election of the officers will take into consideration geographical distributions, languages and gender balance, to the extent possible. Elections will be by acclamation.

4. The Commission of African Registrars General will conduct the election of the members of the Steering Committee at the time of its sessions preceding the Conference of African Ministers.

5. The newly elected Steering Committee will take up its duties once the regular session of the Commission of African Registrars General has begun, and will remain in office until the election of the next Steering Committee.

6. The members of the Steering Committee may be re-elected for two successive terms. A member of the Steering Committee who has been in office for two successive terms will not be eligible for re-election until two years have elapsed from the end of that member's last term of office.

7. If a member leaves the Steering Committee, his or her successor in the national civil registration office will continue to serve until the end of the term. If a successor is not announced within three months after he or she has left the Steering Committee, a new member will be co-opted by the Steering Committee from members of the Commission of African Registrars General until the time of the next session, when a new Steering Committee member is elected.

### **2.2 Role and duties of the Steering Committee**

8. The Steering Committee will perform duties on behalf of the Commission of African Registrars General. 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.

9. The Steering Committee will have the following duties:

(a) Carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Commission of African Registrars General;

(b) Ensure that the objectives and activities listed in the Terms of Reference of the Commission of African Registrars General are realized;

(c) Work with the APAI-CRVS secretariat in the preparation of the provisional agenda and classifying the documents into items for discussion and for information;

(d) Follow up the implementation of the agreements reached by the Commission of African Registrars General and the tasks entrusted to it;

(e) Decide on the documentation required for its meetings. As a general rule, no substantive discussion will be initiated by the Steering Committee unless an appropriate document is available;

(f) Consult with the secretariat, convene a special meeting in the interval between regular meetings, when required;

(g) Work with present and future task teams referred to in paragraph 17 of the Terms of Reference of the Commission of African Registrars General.

### **2.3 Meetings of the Steering Committee**

10. Meetings of the Steering Committee will convene in conjunction with the plenary sessions of the Commission of African Registrars General preceding the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and the interval between the biennial regular sessions.

11. The Steering Committee will hold a virtual meeting no less than once every two months. Additional Steering Committee meetings will convene in conjunction with any continental-wide civil registration-related events or as the need arises.

12. The secretariat will announce the Steering Committee meetings no later than six weeks before the meetings. Its members and the secretariat will determine the documentation necessary for the Steering Committee meetings. As a rule, the secretariat will make all documentation available to the Steering Committee and other participants via email no later than two weeks before the meeting.

13. The Steering Committee may invite to its meetings any country, organization or expert who can contribute to the fulfilment of its duties.

## **3. Sessions of the Commission of African Registrars General**

### **3.1 Number of sessions**

14. The Commission of African Registrars General will meet once a year unless its members decide otherwise. The session will be for one day preceding each Conference of

African Ministers, and three days for the meeting between the Conference of African Ministers. The secretariat may arrange for some of the Commission sessions to be held back to back or in parallel with the Statistical Commission for Africa, to create an opportunity for the two bodies to meet and discuss common issues.

15. The Steering Committee, in consultation with the APAI-CRVS secretariat, may call an extraordinary meeting. The Commission of African Registrars General should operate as an independent body that provides expert advice to ministers.

### **3.2 Dates of sessions**

16. The secretariat will determine the dates of each session as specified in paragraph 13, taking into account any recommendation of the Steering Committee and subject to the availability of conference servicing facilities.

### **3.3 Venue of sessions**

17. The secretariat will decide on the venue for the sessions. The secretariat, in consultation with the Steering Committee, may accept a request from the Government of an African country to host a session in its country.

### **3.4 Notification of opening date of sessions**

18. The secretariat will notify the Registrar General or the appropriate authority in a country of the date and place of the session no later than eight weeks in advance and invite them to provide the secretariat with a list of any other delegation members.

### **3.5 Organization of sessions**

19. The secretariat will organize the working hours at the plenary sessions. Committees may be set up in parallel sessions in order to discuss specific issues (if need be) or draft resolutions of the Commission of African Registrars General (or both). The secretariat will announce the working hours at the first day of the session.

## **4. Agendas for sessions of the Commission of African Registrars General**

### **4.1 Drawing up the provisional agenda**

20. The secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, will draw up the provisional agenda prior to each session of the Commission of African Registrars General.

21. The provisional agenda may include items that are:

- (a) Requested by the Conference of African Ministers;
- (b) Proposed by the Commission at its previous sessions;
- (c) Recommended by the Steering Committee;

- (d) Required by ECA, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank;
- (e) Requested by the Statistical Commission for Africa;
- (f) Proposed by the African civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) Core Group;
- (g) Requested by the African Statistical Coordination Committee;
- (h) Proposed by an African country, a regional economic community, the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development, learning institutions and others.

22. Participants will submit their proposed items with basic documents for inclusion in the provisional agenda in sufficient time to reach the secretariat no later than eight weeks before the first session to allow for translation and printing.

23. An organization not listed under paragraph 19 may propose items for inclusion in the provisional agenda of the Commission of African Registrars General provided that the organization carries out the following procedures:

- (a) Informs the secretariat of its intentions no later than eight weeks before the commencement of the session; and before formally proposing an item, will give due consideration to any comments the secretariat may make;

- (b) Submits a formal proposal with an outline of basic documents no later than eight weeks before the commencement of the session.

24. An item proposed in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 21 will be included in the provisional agenda of the Commission if approved by the Steering Committee.

#### **4.2 Communication of the provisional agenda**

25. The secretariat will post the provisional agenda for the session of the Commission and the titles of the basic documents relating to each item appearing in the provisional agenda, on the websites of ECA and the African Union Commission no later than six weeks before the opening of the session. In addition, the secretariat will inform national statistics offices and other key stakeholders of the availability of the documents on the Internet.

#### **4.3 Adoption of the agenda**

26. The Commission will, at the beginning of each session and after the election of its officers, adopt the agenda for that session based on the provisional agenda.

#### **4.4 Revision of the agenda**

27. During a session, the Commission may decide to add additional items to the agenda, based on documentation and discussions at the session and priorities or problems that may arise. The Commission will add only important and urgent items to the agenda during a session, from which the secretariat will prepare a revised agenda at the request of the Chairperson.

## **5. Documentation**

### **5.1 Documents of the session**

28. The secretariat will post the basic documents relating to each item appearing in the provisional agenda on the APAI-CRVS website no later than four weeks before the opening of the session; and will inform the Registrars General and stakeholder organizations of the availability of documents on its website.

29. In exceptional circumstances, the secretariat may post on the website the basic documentation relating to some items on the provisional agenda no later than two weeks before the opening of the session.

30. Documents should be limited to seven pages in length, and if possible, well below this limit. The document should be concise and action oriented and available in English and French.

31. As a rule, no substantive discussion will be initiated unless an appropriate document is available.

### **5.2 Background documents**

32. Each member country will submit a progress report of its activities to the secretariat no later than four weeks before the session of the Commission of African Registrars General.

33. The secretariat will ensure other background documents are available to the Commission if it deems they would be of potential interest to the Commission. The secretariat will clear the documents prior to posting them on the APAI-CRVS website and distributing them in the session, if necessary. They can be in any working language(s) and will be circulated only in the language(s) provided by the author(s). The secretariat will not be responsible for the translation of such documents.

## **6. Secretariat and its duties**

### **6.1 Secretariat**

34. The APAI-CRVS secretariat in ECA will serve as the secretariat of the Commission of African Registrars General and the Steering Committee.

### **6.2 Duties**

35. The secretariat will substantively service the sessions of the Commission of African Registrars General, and undertake the following duties:

- (a) Provide appropriate conference facilities and interpretation services;
- (b) Handle official contacts and correspondence with governmental and nongovernmental experts and experts from international agencies involved;
- (c) Provide registration services and ground passes for admission to the conference rooms;

- (d) Examine the credentials of representatives of countries and organizations, and report to the Steering Committee;
- (e) Make oral or written statements concerning any questions under consideration;
- (f) Draw attention to the Commission on recommendations that have financial implications for ECA, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and to the other Core Group members;
- (g) Organize side events and exhibitions with the support of the African CRVS Core Group;
- (h) Assist the rapporteurs in preparing draft recommendations for adoption by the Commission and preparing the report of the Commission;
- (i) Follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission;
- (j) Monitor issues that may affect the implementation of the work programme of the Commission, or issues that are of interest to the Commission and the Steering Committee;
- (k) Print, publish, circulate and archive as appropriate the report and the resolutions of the Commission and the required documentation;
- (l) Perform all other work that may be required for the smooth functioning of the Commission.

## **7. Pan-African institutes**

36. The Commission of African Registrars General will work with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the regional economic communities, in their common efforts towards sustainable development and the improvement of CRVS systems on the continent.

37. The Steering Committee and the secretariat will cooperate and coordinate with the pan-African institutes and the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development with regard to the work of the Commission.

## **8. Other participants and observers**

38. African regional and subregional organizations, African training institutions, African inter-governmental organizations, agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations engaged in civil registration-related work, will be invited to the sessions of the Commission of African Registrars General as observers.

## **9. Languages**

39. The working languages of the Commission of African Registrars General will be English and French. Countries should inform the secretariat which of the two languages they will use for the business of the Commission.

40. Speeches and interventions in one working language will be made available in the other working language.

41. A speaker may use a language other than the two working languages if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages mentioned in paragraph 39, with the consent of the secretariat prior to the opening of the session.

42. All resolutions, recommendations and other formal decisions of the Commission will be made available in the working languages.

## **10. Reporting**

43. The Commission of African Registrars General, through the secretariat, will submit a report on each session to the Conference of African Ministers.<sup>1</sup> The secretariat will ensure that the report is available in the working languages of the Commission.

44. The Rapporteurs, with technical and administrative support from the secretariat, will prepare the final report of the Commission. They will distribute the report as soon as possible to all members of the Commission and to any other participants in the session who, within one week of its receipt, may submit corrections to the secretariat. In special circumstances, the Chairperson, in consultation with the secretariat, may extend the time for submitting corrections. The Chairperson may also have the final say on such corrections.

45. The report will contain an account of the Commission's proceedings and the actions taken on each agenda item. The report, which normally should not exceed 30 pages, will be in the form of draft resolutions, recommendations to member States, the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, agencies of the United Nations system, or any other relevant institute. The report, as far as practicable, should frame the Commission's recommendations and resolutions in the form of drafts for approval by the Conference of African Ministers.

46. The secretariat may bring to the attention of the pan-African institutions any recommendation with financial implications before the submission of the Commission's report to the Conference of African Ministers for adoption.

47. The secretariat will post the draft and the final reports on the APAI-CRVS website, as soon as they are ready.

## **11. Conduct of business**

### **11.1 Public or private sessions**

48. Unless the Commission of African Registrars General decides otherwise, the sessions will be held in public.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission of African Registrars General will submit to its Bureau, if it is formed, a report of its sessions in between the Conference of African Ministers.

## **11.2 Quorum**

49. A simple majority of the representatives of African countries in the Commission will constitute a quorum.

## **11.3 General powers of the Chairperson**

50. The Chairperson will preside over the plenary sessions of the Commission. If the Chairperson finds it necessary to be absent during a session or any part thereof, he or she will designate the First or the Second Vice-Chairperson to take his or her place.

51. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by these rules of procedure, the Chairperson will declare the opening and closing of each session of the Commission, direct the discussions, accord the right to speak and ensure the observance of these rules of procedure. The Chairperson, subject to these rules, will have complete control of the proceedings of the Commission and over the maintenance of order at its sessions.

52. The Chairperson, in the course of the discussions, may propose to the Commission a limitation on the time allowed to speakers, on the number of times the representative of each member may speak on an item, or the closure of the debate. He or she may also propose the adjournment or closure of the debate on the item under consideration, or the suspension or adjournment of a session. He or she may also call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the matter under consideration.

53. During the course of the debate, the Chairperson may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Commission, declare the list closed. The Chairperson, however, may accord the right of reply to any representative if, in his or her opinion, a speech delivered after he or she has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

54. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the Chairperson will declare the debate closed. Such closure will have the same effect as closure by the consent of the Commission.

55. The Chairperson, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the authority of the Commission.

## **11.4 Responsibilities of the rapporteurs**

56. The Rapporteurs, with the support of the secretariat, will be responsible for preparing and finalizing the report of the Commission, in accordance with the rules laid out in this document.

57. On the last day of each session of the Commission, the Rapporteurs, with the assistance of the secretariat, will provide the printed text of the draft of the decisions, recommendations and requests made during the sessions for adoption by the Commission. The decisions and recommendations will be part of the report of the Commission to be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers (or its Bureau) for consideration and adoption.

### **11.5 Speeches and interventions**

58. No one may address the Commission without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairperson. He or she may call upon speakers in the order in which they indicate their desire to speak. The Chairperson will call for focused, issue-oriented and succinct interventions by those participating in the discussions. He or she will also emphasize that participants should not present orally detailed expositions of methodology or the reporting of routine activities, but rather make it available to participants in writing as background documents.

### **11.6 Voting**

59. The Commission will conduct its business by consensus to the extent possible, but when it becomes necessary, it will instigate voting by simple majority of those African countries present and voting. Each official delegation of a country present will have one vote.

### **11.7 Points of order**

60. During the discussion of any matter, a representative, at any time, may raise a point of order, which the Chairperson will decide on immediately in accordance with these rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson, at which point, the appeal will be put to the vote immediately and the ruling of the Chairperson will stand unless overruled by a simple majority of the members present and voting. A representative, in raising a point of order, will not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

### **11.8 Adjournment of debate**

61. During the discussion of any matter, a representative at any time may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Any such motion will have priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative will be allowed to speak in favour of the motion and one representative against it, after which the motion will be put to the vote.

### **11.9 Closure of debate**

62. A representative at any time may move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has expressed his or her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of debate will be accorded only to two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion will be immediately put to the vote.

### **11.10 Withdrawal of proposals and motions**

63. A sponsor may withdraw their proposal or a motion at any time before voting on it has commenced, and if the motion has not been amended. Any representative may reintroduce a proposal or a motion thus withdrawn.

### **11.11 Reconsideration of proposals**

64. When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it will not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Commission, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. The Commission will accord only two representatives opposing the motion

permission to speak on a motion to reconsider, after which, it will be put to the vote immediately.

### **11.12 Congratulations and condolences**

65. Only the outgoing Chairperson or a member of the delegation, or a representative designated by the outgoing Chairperson, will express congratulations to the newly elected officers.

66. Only the Chairperson, on behalf of all members, will express condolences. The Chairperson, with the agreement of the Commission, will dispatch a message on behalf of all members of the Commission.

## **12. Other matters**

67. Member countries will bear the cost of their attendance at the sessions of the Commission until formal arrangements are made to regard it as an Expert Group serving an intergovernmental process.

## **13. Amendments and other procedural matters**

68. The Commission, by a decision, may amend these rules of procedure.

69. The Commission will act under the framework of the policies and procedures of ECA and the African Union Commission as advised by the APAI-CRVS secretariat.

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