



United Nations



African Development Bank
Group



African Union
Commission



Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia

Keeping the Promise



**Reforming and Improving Civil Registration and
Vital Statistics Systems in Africa**

“Keeping the Promise”



Partial view of the participants of the Tanzania Regional Workshop

Seated: starting from Left: Ms. Maletela Tuoane-Nkhasi, representing Mr. Pali Lehohla, Statistician General, Statistics South Africa; Mr. Charles Lufumpa, Director, Statistics Department, AfDB; H.E. Mr. Berhan Hailu, Minister of Justice, Ethiopia; H.E. Mr. Lawrence K. Masha (MP), Minister for Home Affairs, Tanzania; Ms. Albina Chuwa, Director, National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania; Prof. Ben Kiregyera, Director ACS-ECA; and Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Representing, UNSD.

The First Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration¹ is an outcome of the recommendation of the Tanzania regional workshop that was convened in June 2009. The Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 13 to 14 August 2010.

¹ Registration of births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces and complementary notations and collection of vital statistics

“Keeping the Promise”

Country representatives, high-level delegates and representatives of regional and international organizations present at the Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems that was convened in June 2009 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania recommended the organization of a Ministerial Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as a starting point for a regional programme aimed at improving stagnant African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems.

Delegates of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and Health Metrics Network (HMN) firmly stressed the need to ensure country ownership and leadership of civil registration and vital statistics systems and committed themselves to work towards that goal.

The Ethiopian delegation, led by H.E. Berhan Hailu, Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia took the responsibility of hosting this First Ministerial Conference to be organized by main African regional institutions, namely the ECA, AfDB and the AUC.

Now the 53 African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration are expected to convene from 13 to 14 August 2010 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to address this great development challenge that has been facing Africa for over half a century.

Presently:

“Most people in Africa are born and die without leaving a trace in any legal record or official statistics”

Delegates at the Tanzania regional workshop committed to changing this and work towards having:

“Each and every child born and person dying in Africa legally be recognised by the state and be maintained in official statistics”

Africa has been seeking for plausible approaches for developing conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems in the past half century, nevertheless the results were disappointing.

“We, as African leaders and scholars should be ashamed of seeing our citizens coming and going without leaving traceable records in the 21 century. We should be alerted by the urgency that Africa needs to have a legal system that registers every birth as soon as it occurs, ...”



“Establishment and development of civil registration and vital statistics systems is one of the fundamental measures that African governments must take in addressing our challenges”

“Africa should look for more innovative, culturally sensitive and indigenous techniques and approaches in addressing the challenges facing the region in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems...”

H.E Lawrence K. Masha (MP), Minister for Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania

Ethiopia values the importance and benefits of civil registration at the highest level. The composition of the Ethiopian delegation at the Tanzania workshop was a testimony of the importance accorded to such systems.

“We do believe that civil registration should be developed with the objective of serving the people, especially the most disadvantaged and the majority of the rural population. We also believe that civil registration is about ensuring and safeguarding the basic human rights enshrined in the Constitution of the country.”



“Civil registration is also about improving the efficiency and fairness of the justice system. It is also about facilitating the health, education and other social services to the public. Furthermore, civil registration is about provision of vital statistics data and information, primarily to the local administration and service providers at the community level.”

H.E Mr. Berhan Hailu, Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

“An African knowledge base on civil registration and vital statistics to be built at the ECA and for ECA to act as a regional platform for civil registration and vital statistics systems is welcome ”

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania

“The main actors in the development of civil registration systems – the Registrar Generals’ Offices, the Ministries of Health and the National Statistical Offices - have focused more on the products of the system than the long-term development of the system...”

“It is also important to mention that Statistical Training Institutions and National Statistical Associations have not done enough to promote civil registration systems in Africa. In some training institutions, this subject is not on the curriculum.



“Many National Statistical Offices in Africa are developing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics to guide and accelerate statistical development. Many of these strategies do not adequately address the need to put civil registration systems on the front burner.”

Prof. Ben Kiregyera, Former Director of the African Centre for Statistics of the ECA

African Development Bank is at the forefront in addressing the challenges facing Africa in reforming and improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in all member States.

“Emphasis is being placed on achieving measurable results on the ground, on evidence based planning and on putting mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating development results. This clearly has placed statistics at the centre of these development initiatives and in particular with regard to monitoring progress towards MDGs. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics play a critical role especially in-between census rounds...”



“For its part, the African Development Bank stands ready to play a key role in providing the necessary financial and technical support for improving statistics in African countries, including civil registration and vital statistics...”

Mr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, Director of the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank Group

The International Programme on Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems adopted in 1991 was aimed at encouraging countries to undertake long-term self-sustaining programmes of reforms to strengthen their systems. The United Nations Statistics Division is the focal point of the International Programme in collaboration with other agencies.

“Civil registration is the best source of detailed, accurate, relevant and timely vital statistics – is a guiding principle that the United Nations Statistics Division adopted since its inception in late 1940’s.”



“There are several methods of obtaining critical vital statistics. Yet, none is able to generate small area, detailed, annual, reliable, and continuous vital statistics as the civil registration. And that is the principal reason for the national statistical system to care very closely about the state of the art of the civil registration system in the country.”

Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

The role of National Statistical Offices is critical in the development of civil registration systems in Africa.

“It is important that countries recognize that civil registration is a developmental and human rights issue and our ability to monitor progress in this regard will depend on functional vital registration systems and availability of reliable and timely vital statistics.”



“It is important for national statistical agencies to be outward looking and embrace a system approach, especially in providing leadership to line ministries undertaking civil registration in the application of collection standards, data management protocols and associated concepts and definitions.”

Mr. Pali Lehohla, Chairperson of the Statistical Commission for Africa and Statistician General, South Africa

Ownership and leadership of countries is key in the development of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa. The United Republic of Tanzania took the lead by hosting the regional workshop in June 2009.



“Today National Statistical Offices are facing a lot of challenges on the production of official statistics for better and evidence based planning. One way of alleviating this problem is by collecting official statistics through civil registration and vital statistics systems.”

Ms. Albina Chuwa, Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania

The First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration is expected to prepare recommendations that would lead Member States in the coming years in reforming and improving civil registration and vital statistics systems.

“Currently, most African countries are being challenged with the inadequate nature of birth, death, marriage and divorce registrations and incomplete vital statistics that are negatively affecting development endeavours in building modern public administration, promoting decentralization and democratization programmes and measurement and monitoring of development initiatives including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”



“Recent assessments indicate that most African governments are making efforts to improve their civil registration systems in support of reforming their justice administration, implementing decentralization programmes, improving efficiency of health and education services, national identification systems, passport issuance and other public service administrations”

*“Considering ... the need for integrity, interface and collaborative engagements in civil registration and vital statistics systems, the theme for the Conference is: **“Towards Improved Civil Status Information for Efficient Public Administration and Generation of Vital Statistics for National Development and MDGs Monitoring in Africa.”***

H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Jannet, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of ECA,

 <div> REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS </div>	
NOTICE OF BIRTH	
BEFORE COMPLETING THE NOTIFICATION PLEASE SIGN THE INFORMATION SHEET AND SUBMIT AN ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER	
Name: _____	
Relationship to you: _____	
Date of birth: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Place of birth: (City/Town) _____
Registered sex: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Country: _____
Was the child born in a hospital? Born in hospital? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
OTHER OF CHILD: _____	
Country: _____	Date of birth: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Signature: S.D. _____	
Place of birth: _____	
Date: _____	
Assistant Registrar General's Use: _____	

Indicator	Area	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Mid-year population, Female	Algeria	7024.6	7246.2	7462.3	7674.1	7893.0
	Angola	3098.1	3163.7	3232.4	3303.0	3380.9
	Benin	1485.1	1488.1	1524.4	1556.9	1602.3
	Botswana	365.1	376.2	387.7	399.9	413.9
	Burkina Faso	2702.0	2749.6	2830.9	2908.3	2997.9
	Burundi	1822.0	1843.4	1899.9	1975.4	2048.4
	Cameroon	2463.6	2552.0	2645.2	2742.8	2845.0
	Cape Verde	139.9	142.2	144.0	145.8	146.7
	Central African Republic	975.6	994.0	1012.1	1030.5	1050.2
	Chad	1872.2	1917.3	1968.3	2014.7	2064.8
	Comoros	137.9	141.6	145.4	149.5	154.0
	Congo	672.6	694.2	713.6	737.7	764.8

