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

Workshop on developing implementation guidelines to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems

Nairobi, 22–26 January 2024

Concept note

Introduction

In 2022, the expert group meeting of the sixth session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration marked a decade since the launch of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. At the meeting, participants reflected on the progress that had been made towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the acceleration of efforts to implement it through transformed systems. Participants made significant recommendations to improve civil registration and vital statistics in Africa. They acknowledged the fast-approaching deadline of the 2030 Agenda and highlighted the need for African countries to accelerate their progress to ensure that they met the targets and goals outlined in the Agenda. They identified common and cross-cutting challenges hindering the development of civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries and called upon the secretariat of the Africa Programme and partners of the regional core group on civil registration and vital statistics to support African countries in adapting existing global guidelines on civil registration and vital statistics to the African context, including through the development of technical implementation guides on specific topics, which could be used to provide operational guidance to countries.

The upcoming workshop will provide a platform for participants to follow up the recommendations made at the 2022 expert group meeting. Specifically, participants will review the availability of existing global civil registration and vital statistics guidelines and their suitability for implementation in Africa. They will then create a framework for the development of new guidelines, where needed, and a road map for the dissemination of the new and existing guidelines. The primary objective is to ensure that African countries receive good guidance on the main areas in which they underperform (as identified during the previous expert group meetings), thus positioning them better to accelerate progress in line with their preferences.

The workshop will be organized into two main segments. In the opening, three-day segment, experts will map out the existing global guidance on civil registration and vital statistics (on the basis of identified priority themes); determine their suitability for use in national and continental contexts, including their ease in implementation; identify priority themes for which new guidance should be developed; and create a road map for the dissemination of the guidelines at the national level. Where new guidance is needed, experts will initiate the development of annotated outlines, focusing on the main questions that the new



guidelines should address, on the basis of national needs. It is expected that the mapping of existing resources and the review of their suitability will also serve as a capacity-building activity for participating country teams.

In the second part of the workshop, experts will review draft technical implementation guidelines for practitioners on the digitalization of civil registration and vital statistics systems. Developed with the support of the working group on digitalization for the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, the guidelines addresses the principles and functional requirements of such systems, the licensing, service and hosting options, and factors that must be considered when digital civil registration and vital statistics systems are procured. Experts will be expected to delve into the five chapters of the resource and help to improve it as they deem it necessary. The secretariat of the Africa Programme will share the draft guidelines with all participants four weeks before the expert group meeting.

Questions to guide discussions:

Prior to and during the workshop, participants will be encouraged to reflect on the following key questions:

- (a) In your experience, and based on the findings of the civil registration and vital statistics system assessments that you have undertaken, what are the major challenges and bottlenecks that your country faces in the development of its civil registration and vital statistics system? Which of those challenges do you believe can be addressed through the availability of technical implementation guidelines?
- (b) What technical resources that are relevant to the challenges identified are available? How suitable are these resources? What gaps exist? Is new guidance required, or would training based on the existing guidelines be adequate?

Guided by those questions, participants in the workshop will draw fresh insight from other countries. The following areas will be prioritized in particular, given that their importance has been established in various meetings:

- (a) Legal review in response to emerging practices, such as the strengthening of the role of the health sector; legal considerations for an all-inclusive civil registration and vital statistics system; and digitalization;
- (b) Establishing and strengthening collaboration with the health sector, including building links among civil registration and vital statistics systems, on the one hand, and health systems, on the other;
- (c) Harnessing technology as an enabler of efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems, including their improved service delivery and interoperability with other systems, such as the national identification system;
- (d) Strengthening the dissemination and use of civil registration and vital statistics systems data to influence development and decision-making for planning and service delivery;

- (e) Building resilient and sustainable civil registration and vital statistics systems in which there is good governance, political commitment and resource mobilization.

Resources

The resources included in the table, and others, will be referred to during the workshop.

Workshop resources

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Legal reform of civil registration and vital statistics	Aaron Schwid and others, <i>Civil Registration Vital Statistics and Identity Management (CRVISD): Legal and Regulatory Review Toolkit</i> (Global Health Advocacy Incubator).
Harnessing technology to enable efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems	Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, <i>Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Digitisation Guidebook</i> , version 0.10. United Nations Children’s Fund, <i>CRVS Platforms: Key Findings for Practitioners</i> (2023).
Producing vital statistics	Economic Commission for Africa and others, <i>Technical Guidance for Strengthening the Vital Statistics Production Process: Implementing the Vital Statistics Business Process Model for the Production and Dissemination of Vital Statistics from Civil Registration</i> (2023). Vital Strategies and others, <i>Production of a Vital Statistics Report: Guide with Accompanying Template and Workbook</i> (New York, Vital Strategies, 2020).
Estimating the completeness of civil registration and vital statistics systems	Chalapati Rao and others, <i>Estimating Completeness of Birth and Death Registration: Methods and Options for Estimating Completeness of Civil Registration</i> (New York, Vital Strategies, 2020).
Health sector support for civil registration	Lynn Sferrazza and others, “The health sector in civil registration: options and methods to increase registration of live births, stillbirths and deaths – an addendum to the WHO/UNICEF guidance Health Sector Contributions towards Improving the Civil Registration of Births and Deaths in Low-income Countries”, Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, 2022.
Implementing integrated civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems	Zoran Djoković, <i>Implementation of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda: United Nations Country Team Operational Guidelines</i> (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations and United Nations Children’s Fund, 2020).

Population registers	<p>Raj Gautam Mitra, Martin Bratschi and Gloria Mathenge, “Population registers: definitions and conceptual framework”, Knowledge Series 1 (Nouméa, New Caledonia, Pacific Community and Vital Strategies, 2021).</p>
Improving civil registration and vital statistics business processes	<p>Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, <i>CRVS Systems Improvement Framework</i>, version 1.0 (2021).</p> <p>E-learning course for the civil registration and vital statistics systems improvement framework, developed by Vital Strategies and others.</p> <p>Vital Strategies, “Quick reference guide and checklist for CRVS & ID systems improvement framework”, version 1.0, 2023.</p> <p>Martin Bratschi and others, “Implementing civil registration of births and deaths in the CRVS system”, Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems, Guide 1, version 1.0, Vital Strategies, 2023.</p>
Strengthening death registration and the production of high-quality cause-of-death information	<p>Vital Strategies, Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems, series of guides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Martin Bratschi and others, “Implementing medical certification of cause of death in the CRVS system”, Guide 2, version 1.0, 2021. - Martin Bratschi and others, “Implementing ICD mortality coding in the CRVS system”, Guide 3, version 1.0, 2021. - Martin Bratschi and others, “Implementing verbal autopsy in the CRVS system”, Guide 4, version 1.0, 2021.
Civil registration and vital statistics governance	<p>United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, African Union Commission and African Development Bank, “Guidelines on the drafting of memorandums of understanding for better coordination among national stakeholders of civil registration and vital statistics systems at the country level” (CRMC5/2019/12).</p> <p>United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, “National multi-sectoral CRVS coordination mechanisms”, information note.</p> <p>Martin Bratschi and Joan Sara Thomas, “Guidance for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Governance Mechanisms”, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Programme, Vital Strategies.</p>

Format

The workshop will be interactive, with short plenary presentations made by representatives of the secretariat of the Africa Programme or core group partners serving to initiate discussion.

Participants will be placed into thematic teams on the basis of their area of interest and expertise. Each team is expected to appoint a chair to oversee its activities, including its presentations during the plenary sessions. The teams may choose to appoint members to a smaller group to support the compilation of new technical guidelines after the workshop. The secretariat of the Africa Programme and partners of the core group will assign a resource person to provide guidance to the working groups as needed.

Participation and organization

Participation in the workshop will be by invitation only. Civil registration and vital statistics experts from members of the Economic Commission for Africa, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations will be invited by the Commission, with financial support provided on a case-by-case basis. Experts from the United Nations system and other international organizations will be expected to cover their participation costs.
