



---

**African Union Commission**  
**Fifth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for**  
**Civil Registration**  
**Meeting of Ministers**  
Lusaka, Zambia 17-18 October 2019

AUC/CRMC5/  
Distr.: General  
18 October 2019

Original: English

## Draft Report of the Meeting of Ministers



**APAI-CRVS**  
Everyone visible in Africa

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

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Fifth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration was held at the Mulungushi International Conference Center in Lusaka, Zambia from 17 to 18 October 2019. The meeting was organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Zambia with the support of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

## **II. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following members : Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. The following institutions supported and attended the meeting: United Nations (United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Legal Identity Expert Group – UN LIEG), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank; Africa Center for Disease Control (Africa CDC), Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative, Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, Statistics Sweden Plan International, ID4Africa, Global Financing Facility, Development Initiative, Paris21 and iCivil Africa, Statistics Sweden and Statistics Norway.

## **III. Session I: Opening session**

### **A. Opening of the meeting**

4. In his opening remarks, Hon. Stephen Kampyongo (MP), Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia welcomed all delegations and underscored the importance of the Conference for the achievement of the continental socio-economic transformation as encapsulated in Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. Noting the relevance of the theme of the Conference, he commended all stakeholders for the achievements recorded for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in Africa since 2009. He noted the central role of political commitment for fast-tracking progress under the framework of the 2017-2026 Decade for repositioning CRVS at the center of the African development Agenda.

5. In his statement, Mr. Mohamed Ould Soueidatt, Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior of Mauritania and outgoing Chairperson of the bureau gave an overview of the achievement made so far for the effective improvement of CRVS systems in Africa since the fourth Conference of Minister responsible for Civil Registration held in Nouakchott in 2017. Alluding to some prevailing challenges, he underscored the relevance of the theme of the conference and voiced the need for Member States to ensure interoperability with a view of capturing all events occurring in the lives of African people. He concluded by thanking the government and people of the Republic of Zambia for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to all delegations.

6. In his remarks on behalf of the African Development Bank (AfDB) President, Mr. Charles Lufumpa, expressed appreciation to the people and government of the Republic of Zambia for the excellent organization of the Conference. He recalled the fundamental mission of the Bank towards

reducing poverty and inequality in Africa through funding and generating knowledge for the successful achievement of Agenda 2063, the SDGs and the High 5s. Noting the weakness of CRVS systems in Africa he voiced out the need to mobilize more efforts using the digital revolution to implement the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS). After noting the significant progress recorded, he reaffirmed the Banks commitment to continue supporting Member States efforts to strengthen their CRVS systems.

7. In her video transmitted remarks, Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the UNECA stressed that Africa had an identity problem indicating that half of its population lives without identity especially women and children. As lack of identity was a developmental challenge for Africa's socio-economic transformation, she underscored the importance of the Conference towards creating a cohesive society where no one was left behind. Given the achievements made so far for the strengthening of CRVS systems in Africa, she encouraged all relevant stakeholders to step-up their efforts for building efficient CRVS systems in order to provide legal identity to all African citizens. Alluding to the importance of digitalization, she called for more interoperability to link civil registration and national identity systems to bridge Africa's identity gap for the achievement of Agenda 2063 and the SDG's. She concluded by thanking the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia for their commitment towards improved CRVS systems in Africa.

8. In his opening remarks, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Mr. Thomas Kwesi Quartey recalled the background and the relevance of the theme of the Conference for the successful achievement of Agenda 2063 and the SDG's and its flagship programmes. He noted that efficient civil registration systems in Africa contributes to improved governance, capacitates individuals to claim their human and civil rights and facilitates evidence-based socio-economic decision-making. He underscored the importance of strengthening the CRVS systems for providing legal identity to citizens offering opportunities for children to enjoy their rights including the right to education. He reaffirmed the commitment of the AUC and called partners to continue supporting Member States to improve their CRVS. He commended the fruitful collaboration between the AUC, the UNECA and the AfDB for developing the African statistical Architecture for evidence-based policy-making. He informed the conference about the upcoming launch of the AU Institute of Statistics (STATAFRIC) in Tunis on 18 November 2019. In conclusion, he thanked the Government and People of Republic of Zambia for their continued hospitality and for the facilities provided towards the successful organization of the Conference.

9. In her keynote speech, H.E. Mrs. Inonge Wina, Vice-President of the Republic of Zambia and Guest of Honor, welcomed participants on behalf of the President of the Republic of Zambia and expressed appreciation for offering Zambia the honor to host the fifth Conference of African Ministers responsible of Civil Registration. She noted the relevance of the conference towards achieving the Vision and Aspirations of Agenda 2063 for an integrated and prosperous continent driven by his people. She underlined that achieving efficient CRVS systems was fundamental in providing legal identity to all citizens with a view to strengthen good governance, increase political participation and foster structural transformation. Bridging the identity gap offers the opportunity to achieve SDG's target 16.9 and address long-lasting problems leading to poverty and inequality to build a society where no one was left behind. In conclusion she thanked the AUC, the UNECA and AfDB and other partners for their commitment and wished participants' fruitful deliberations and a memorable stay in Lusaka. She declared the Conference open.

### **Election of the Bureau**

10. The Bureau was elected as follows:

<b>Chair:</b>	Zambia — Southern Africa
<b>First Vice-Chair:</b>	Kenya — East Africa
<b>Second Vice-Chair:</b>	Chad — Central Africa
<b>Third Vice-Chair:</b>	Sierra Leone — West Africa
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Mauritania — North Africa

## **B. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

11. The Agenda was adopted.

### **Objectives of the meeting**

12. A representative of the secretariat gave a brief overview of the objective of the fifth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. She underlined that the main objective of the conference was to provide strategic and policy guidance on pathways towards holistic, innovative and integrated CRVS and digital identity management systems in order to close the identity gap in Africa and thus contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 16.9. She noted that the priority was a strengthened commitment to CRVS systems and to a legal identity for all in Africa.

## **Session II: Foundations for digital transformation**

### **A. Presentation**

13. The session on the foundation for digital transformation was organized under the overall topic “Modernized civil registration systems for the implementation of good digital identity. Chaired by Hon. Stephen Kampyongo (MP), Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia, the panel was composed by: Hon. Patrick Ole Ntutu, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya, Hon. Dr. Tayo Oyetungli, Federal Commissioner, National Population Commission, Nigeria, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Home Affairs, South Africa and Hon. Stephen Kampyongo, Minister of Home Affairs, Zambia. The session was moderated by Mr. Oliver Chinganya, Director of the African Center for Statistics.

### **B. Discussion**

14. In the ensuing panel discussion the conference took stock of the challenges affecting the sound implementation of digitized CRVS systems in Member States and the solutions put forward based on the experience of Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Zambia. The meeting also discussed the issue of issuing a unique ID number to citizens for the collection of data in the digitized format towards building a paperless process. The advantage of an integrated and holistic approach for CRVS was noted with a view to build a reservoir of data useful for all socio-economic transactions such as education and banking operations. The Conference further discussed the importance of interoperability of CR with the health sector, the private sector, financial institutions, Ministry of education voiced the need for all stakeholders to work together.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the discussions Ministers recommended as follows:

- i) Member States should build CRVS integrated systems ensuring that no children lives hospital without a unique identifier at birth linking civil registration and identification records for the smooth issuance of birth certificate connected to the national population register;
- ii) Member States should establish integrated and interoperable CRVS systems to bring efficiency in the provision of services across different government functions as well as private sectors;
- iii) There is need for strong political will for Member to increase investments in modernized and digitization CRVS systems.

#### **IV. Session III: CRVS and Identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees**

##### **Presentation**

15. Chaired by Hon. Stephen Kampyongo (MP), Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia and the panel of the session on CRVS and Identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees was composed by: H.E. Mr. Mrs. Sagnon Tou Madiara, Deputy Minister for Teritorial Administration, Burkina Faso, H.E. Zeinu Jemal, State Minister for Peace of Ethiopia, Hon. Kahinda Otafire, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Dr. Abdoulaye Alkadi, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of Mali, H.E. Dr. Ahmadou Lamine Samateh, Minister health of Gambia.

16. Ministers took note of the UNHCR presentation that underlined: (i) the need for and integrated CRVS Systems taking into account refugees, (ii) the challenges encountered by unregistered refugees, (iii) the role of UNHCR for the registration of refugees on behalf of host countries, (iv) the problem of statelessness and (v) increasing need for taking into consideration the impact on climate change as a source of population displacement.

##### **Discussion**

17. Taking into account the experience of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia Ministers discussed the role of CRVS and identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees with a view to ensuring their well-being in hosting countries. It was noted that the number of refugees and internally displaced person's (IDPs) has increased during the last decade with regards to the resurgence of conflicts, insecurity due to terrorism and climate change effects. The importance of CRVS was for facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance and birth registration to children was discussed. Intensive discussion focused on the role of CRVS for preventing statelessness. Taking into consideration the experience of the United Nations High Commission for Refugee, it was noted that building inclusive CRVS systems and policies for refugees at national level was key to ensuring their well-being. Achieving this, Member States were encouraged to adopt an innovative approach aiming at linking registration of refugees to national registration systems. The case of the registration of children under five was also discussed in the perspective of facilitating their inclusion at birth in national registers to ensure their education avoid the problem of statelessness.

##### **Recommendations**

18. Following the discussion, Minister made the following recommendations:

- i) Member States hosting refugees should amend their legislation to create systems that formalize the integration, protection and assistance, including CRVS for refugees, returnees, IDPs and mainly;
- ii) Member States should design small business programmes for refugees to facilitate their integration in the socio-economic sphere of the host country;
- iii) Member States should foster robust and inclusive identification registration systems, including birth registration, identity and travel documents for refugees to avoid statelessness ensure their return;

- iv) Member States should adopt laws and policies that strengthen existing institutions responsible for CRVS to ensure timely, compulsory and free birth registration for all children including refugee, migrants, IDPs, stateless children within host countries;
- v) Member States should address the root causes of insecurity and conflicts to reduce prevent statelessness and work towards peace and security as well to achieve inclusive development.
- vi) Member States, with the support of the AUC, the UNECA and AfDB, should dedicate more financial, human and technical resources for the strengthening of their CRVS systems. Resource mobilization should be done through partnerships with other relevant stakeholders the private sector and development partners.

## **V. Session IV: Civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems**

### **Presentation**

19. Under the overall theme “Integrating CRVS, legal identity management and other systems in the digital era”, the session on civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems was chaired by Hon. Stephen Kampyongo (MP), Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia. Panellists were: Hon. Vincent Sowah Odetei (MP), Deputy Minister for Communication for Ghana, Hon. A. Viafee Tulay, Deputy Minister of Policy Planning, Research and Development of Liberia, Hon Edward Amine Soloku, Minister of Internal Affairs of Sierra Leone, Hon. Cain Mathema, Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage, Zimbabwe.

### **Discussion**

20. In the ensuing discussion, participants recognized CRVS systems, as a foundation for legal identity as it plays a key role in realizing many of the human rights embodied in the international conventions and declarations. It was noted that CRVS systems, integrated with national identification management systems, are essential for promoting good governance, creating inclusive societies, protecting human rights, ensuring the proper delivery of public services and tackling inequalities.

### **Recommendations**

21. In the light of the discussion, Ministers made the following recommendations:
- i) Member States should strengthen the effectiveness of their CRVS systems to ensure the protection of all citizens;
  - ii) Member States are encouraged to put in place data protection legislations to avoid manipulation and fraud.

## **VI. Session V: : Interim Committee of Registrars General**

### **VII. Session VI: Initiatives by Member States**

22. Under this session, the Conference took note of the experience, lessons learned and best practices of Zambia, Namibia, Angola...in the perspective of building inclusive CRVS and identity management systems.

23. The representative of Zambia, presented a situational analysis of CRVS based on the National CRVS assessment conducted between 2013 and 2014. It was noted that Zambia has been using the manual system and is now transiting to a digital CRVS system to ensure inclusion of all citizens in the CRVS and National Population register. He alluded to the interoperability of the new system (Smart Zambia) to ensure coordination of all stakeholders engaged in the CRVS and identification process. It was further noted that the digitization of the process will lead to the issuance of electronic cards capturing biometric data.

24. The representative of Namibia presented the successful actions conducted by his country to strengthen the CRVS and identity management systems. He noted the efforts towards building an integrated CRVS system linking public offices incorporated under the e-governance programme. He alluded to the support from United Nations, although the Government had played a major role in managing and sustaining the process. He noted the challenges encountered and the solutions put forward to ensure interoperability of all institutions including all Ministries.

25. The representative of Angola informed the meeting that more than 40% of citizens were not registered and hence could not enjoy legal identity. He elaborated the country's new CRVS strategy that aims at strengthening existing systems to provide registration and legal identity to all citizens by 2020. He noted that the new strategy will ensure that all births are captured in the registration system to allow children enjoy legal identity and inclusion in the legal socio-economic sphere. He underscored the importance of awareness campaigns, digitization and interoperability of government and private sector institutions for registration and legal identity management.

26. The representative of Sao Tome and Principe briefed the Conference about the challenges and policy responses of the government with a view to issuing birth certificates. She noted that the government has embarked on a digitization process to ensure that all birth are registered. She underlined the importance of a holistic and integrated approach including all relevant stakeholders. She also noted the role of development partners in that transformative process.

#### Recommendation

- i) Member States should ensure that people in rural areas are equipped with sufficient ICT skills to enable them utilize the digitalized system without challenges;
- ii) Member States are encouraged to adopt the 'best practices and lessons learnt on the CRV systems from the Compendium on civil registration, which could be downloaded from the CRV systems;
- iii) Development partners are urged to continue supporting Member States strengthening their CRVS and identity management systems.

## **VIII. Session VII: Statements by Partners**

27. In their respective presentations, representatives of AfDB, UNICEF, WHO, Centre of Excellence for CRVS and the Global Financing Fund, Plan International reaffirmed their commitment to support Member States in building improved national CRVS systems with enhanced birth registration.

### **Recommendation**

28. In the light of the discussion Member States commended the support of partners and called for increased and continued support for the improvement of CRVS and national identity systems in Member States.

## **IX. Session VIII: Presentation of the draft conclusions and recommendations from the Meeting of Experts**

29. The meeting took note of the report of the meeting of experts. In considering the report, Ministers made the following recommendations.

## **X. Session XI: Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial declaration**

30. The Ministerial declaration was adopted with amendments.

### **Any other Business**

31. The conference accepted the proposal made by the Republic.

## **XI. Session X: Closing of the conference**

### **Vote of Thanks**

32. Vote of thanks was read by the Minister of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Ministers, AU delegates and partners. The meeting expressed sincere appreciation to the Republic Zambia for graciously hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> conference of African Ministers in charge of CRVS. The meeting acknowledged the continuous support provided by the CRVS regional core group and other development partners. It was noted that the AU Commission should take the necessary steps for the effective establishment of the sub-committee of Registrar Generals before the sixth Conference of Ministers in charge of CRVS in 2021.

33. In his closing remarks the chairperson of the bureau thanked all participants for their interventions that enriched the discussion and recommendations and wished participants a safe journey back to their respective destinations.

34. The representative of the African Union Commission thanked the Government and People of the Republic of Zambia for the warm welcome, excellent organization of the conference and generous hospitality extended to all delegates. He also thanked partners, the management and staff of conference services and all others who worked for the successful organization of the conference.