



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
African Centre for Statistics

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS
SYSTEMS IN AFRICA**

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
29 June – 3 July 2009

REPORT AND DOCUMENTATION

Towards New Initiatives and Approaches



REPORT AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS IN AFRICA:

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BACKGROUND

The United Nations defines civil registration as the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population as provided through degrees or regulations in accordance with the legal requirements of each country¹. The vital events considered in the registration system include live births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages, divorces, annulments of marriage, judicial separation of marriage, adoption, legitimization and recognition.

According to the United Nations, civil registration has a dual purpose: administrative and legal on the one hand, and statistical, demographic and epidemiological on the other. The legal and administrative purpose of civil registration mainly relates to the establishment of legal relationships between Governments and their citizens through legal provisions in national constitutions and laws, international conventions and covenants. Civil registration records are the conventional instruments for implementing various human rights provisions embedded in national laws and international instruments. Moreover, civil registration systems have critical roles to play in a country's justice system, social and administrative services, and decentralization and democratization processes.

Civil registration is the conventional source of vital statistics information that is treated as one major function and branch of civil registration systems. Vital statistics derived from civil registration involve two major activities: collecting information on the frequency of occurrence of specified characteristics of events themselves and of the persons concerned, and compiling, processing, analyzing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form. Vital statistics produce two broad types of data: demographic and health. These data types or items are invaluable inputs for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of subnational, national, regional and global development programmes and interventions.

Integration of and functional collaboration between civil registration and vital statistics systems will result in a well-designed and functioning structure that fosters continuous improvement and sustainable development in the production and use of individual and aggregate legal, administrative, demographic and health information. Conversely, lack of integration and collaboration among the two systems will adversely affect the performance of the component parts, resulting in stagnation and ultimately disappointment for nations and the global community.

¹ United Nations (2002). Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems.

Generally speaking, civil registration and vital statistics systems are complete and functional in developed countries, while the contrary prevails in the developing world. The United Nations Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session held in 1991, after considering a report on the state of the civil registration and vital statistics systems that pointed out their stagnation in the past 40 years, particularly in developing countries, endorsed the “*International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*”, to assist countries in their efforts to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems². The International Programme was designed jointly by the Statistical Division of the United Nations, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics. The purpose of the programme has been to encourage countries to design and carry out long-term reforms using their own resources, in order to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems³. The very significant activities performed through this programme include the preparation of six handbooks dealing with specific topics on civil registration and vital statistics, and the conduct of five workshops in different regions of the world, including Africa.

As part of the International Programme, the African Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems that was held in Addis Ababa from 5 to 9 December 1994 concluded with the endorsement of a regional action plan for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics (CR & VS) systems in the region. Despite all these efforts, there have not been significant changes or improvements in the status of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa in the past 18 years, or since the endorsement of the International Programme by the Statistical Commission in 1991.

Today, it is becoming more evident that every African nation is suffering from the effects and consequences of a lack of reliable and routine population and health statistics due to the absence of complete civil registration systems. Absence of routine population dynamics information has affected the preparation of current population estimates and the updating of population projections. This has resulted in limited use of national census data and lack of reliable statistics for the designing, implementation and monitoring of development policies and programmes. On the other hand, most Millennium Development Goal (MDG) health indicators, including infant and under-five mortality rates, maternal mortality ratios and cause-specific death rates, are being affected by the absence of reliable and current mortality measures. Generally, lack of routine and current vital statistics in Africa are placing a

2 Report of the African Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, 1994.

3 United Nations. (1998). Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Preparation of Legal Framework, NY.

heavy burden on the statistical systems of countries, thereby affecting such things as the sampling frames of household survey undertakings. Considering increasing national, regional and global data demands and the shortcomings of indirect estimation methods in generating current and routine vital statistics information, the African Centre for Statistics of ECA, jointly with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and InWent, organized a regional workshop entitled “Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa” in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 29 June to 3 July 2009. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA) of the United Republic of Tanzania were joint hosts of the workshop.

A. Objectives of the workshop

The long-term objective of the workshop was to promote and strengthen the capacity of African Governments to produce accurate, reliable and timely registration-based statistics and indicators for measuring development progress and social change.

The specific purposes of the workshop were to (a) provide training to countries on the implementation of the United Nations guidelines and international standards on civil registration and vital statistics concerning concepts, definitions, data collection and compilation methods; (b) assess the current status of civil registration and vital statistics systems in participating countries and identify gaps to be filled; (c) establish the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians (AfCRVSNNet); and (d) facilitate the establishment of a partnership forum for countries and regional and international organizations on future support and assistance.

A special emphasis of the workshop was placed on assessing the possibilities of institutional and functional collaboration and integration and the exchange of information between data sources (civil registration authorities) and producers (national statistical offices) of vital statistics. In this respect, past practices that contributed to the poor performance of both sets of institutions were reviewed and new initiatives and approaches to future endeavors sought.

B. Expected outcomes

The following outcomes were expected from the workshop:

- i) Improved knowledge and understanding of CR&VS systems and their roles in measuring development progress and social change in Africa**

This outcome would be measured through the country reports (53),

the contributions made by experts and resource persons (10), and the workshop report (1). The workshop proceedings would be published and disseminated to all countries and development partners. The workshop was also expected to lead to the formulation of an action plan and a five-year medium-term programme on the establishment and accelerated development of the CR&VS agenda in Africa.

ii) Training, research and technical backstopping for addressing critical CR&VS challenges in Africa

Civil registration and vital statistics systems by their nature are multi-disciplinary and require continuous and permanent interventions that would lead to sustainable progress towards achieving acceptable coverage and data quality levels. Africa's knowledge base on CR&VS systems needs to be re-oriented and supported with formal training, and continuous study and research that would capacitate national Governments to sustain their systems. Accordingly, it was expected that the workshop would devise strategic measures for addressing national requirements for training, research and technical backstopping in CR&VS systems. In this regard, academic institutions, regional and international development partners were expected to engage in such long-term interventions.

iii) Establishment of the AfCRVSNNet to provide a regional platform for exchanging views, ideas and best practices on CR&VS in the continent.

The network was launched at the workshop and is expected to provide a forum for policy dialogue on CR&VS systems in Africa. It will provide an opportunity for statisticians, demographers, legal experts, government officials and policymakers to exchange views, ideas and experiences on the upgrading of CR&VS systems in Africa. This will be achieved by inviting experts and development practitioners in this field to collectively deliberate on the key above-mentioned issues. A preliminary launching proposal was presented to the participants detailing the mandate, objectives and technical structure of the network.

C. Implementation strategy

The strategy for implementing the regional workshop was based on four operational pillars:

- i) Partnerships: The workshop was organized jointly by ECA, UNSD, AfDB and InWent, and hosted by NBS and RITA of the United Republic of Tan-

zania. These organizations played different roles in the implementation of the workshop.

- ii) The ECA contingent included a consultant with vast experience and knowledge of civil registration and vital statistics systems. ECA and UNSD prepared the concept paper and agenda for the workshop, and ECA prepared a preliminary proposal for the establishment of the AfCRVS-Net. The consultant was tasked with finalizing the various preparatory activities, facilitating sessions and presentation of papers, and preparing the workshop outcomes and reports. The Commission provided administrative support and staff, reproduced all workshop documents and published the workshop proceedings. Also, it hosts the AfCRVSNet.
- iii) Most countries prepared their reports and participated in the discussions and presentation of documents. During the workshop, countries with advanced and successful CR&VS systems as well as countries that failed or encountered difficulties in implementing their systems shared their experiences with the participants.
- iii) Regional and development partners contributed papers and financial resources to the workshop. They participated in the discussions and presentations of papers. Also, they were expected to contribute to the preparation of the programme document.

D. Participants

The workshop brought together countries with CR&VS systems at various stages of development. The strategy was to enrich the discussion and outcomes of the workshop with a reasonable diversity of country experiences. In this regard, the regional workshop planned to gather all African countries (53 countries), with two (2) representatives per country representing respectively the National Statistical Office and the Line Ministry (Home Affairs, Interior or Justice) or Agency in charge of civil registration system.

Statistical training centres in the continent were also invited to the workshop: ENSAE (Dakar-Senegal), ENSEA (Abidjan-Côte d'Ivoire), ISSEA (Yaounde-Cameroon), IFORD (Yaounde-Cameroon), ISAE (Kampala-Uganda), University of Botswana (Gaborone-Botswana) and INSEA (Rabat-Morocco). The regional economic communities were also invited to attend the workshop: AFRISTAT, CEMAC, COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC. The following partners also helped with the planning and organization of the workshop: AUC, WHO, Health Metrics Network (HMN), UNFPA and UNICEF.

E. Venue and date

The workshop was held at New Africa Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 29 June to 3 July 2009. Interpretation services were provided in English and French.

ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

A. Attendance

The workshop was attended by 140 participants from 40 countries, 5 regional training institutions, 2 regional organizations, 1 subregional organization, 5 international organizations and 7 other organizations (annex 1). Among the 40 African countries, 19 were represented by both the civil registration authority and the national statistics office, while 13 were represented by the national statistics office alone, and 8 were represented by the civil registration authority alone. Some countries were represented by their directors of statistics, while others were represented by their registrar general. Ethiopia was represented at ministerial level by its Minister of Justice.

B. Agenda

The agenda was divided into six major themes, excluding the opening session. Under each theme, were apportioned presentations, working group and panel discussions, general and thematic discussions, and a plenary (annex 2). The major agenda items are briefly presented below.

Session one referred to orientation to civil registration and vital statistics systems, and was facilitated by ECA. Session two covered challenges and opportunities of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa, and was facilitated by the World Bank.

Session three included presentations and discussions on country experiences, focusing on challenges and opportunities, and was chaired by the African Development Bank (AfDB). The fourth session was devoted to new approaches and initiatives for improving CR&VS systems in Africa, and was chaired by UNSD. The fifth session was a panel discussion entitled "regional and international support and inter-country collaboration towards improving CR&VS systems in Africa", chaired by ECA, with the representatives of UNSD, the World Bank, AfDB, HMN and AFRISTAT participating. Following the panel discussion, countries were engaged in preparing action plans.

Finally, the sixth session was devoted to launching of the African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Network and workshop recommendations.





OPENING SESSION AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

Ms. Albina Chuwa, Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania, welcomed the participants on behalf of the host country. The workshop was officially opened by Honorable Lawrence K. Masha (MP), Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania. Representatives of various organizations also delivered official statements. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Pali Lehohla, Chairperson, United Nations Statistical Commission; Chairperson, Statistical Commission for Africa; and Statistician General, South Africa.

Highlights from those speeches are presented below, while the complete speeches are attached as annex 3.

A. Highlights from the opening speeches



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

"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 the civil registration and vital statistics systems."

The Director General started her speech by extending a special welcome to the guest of honor and the Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. She also welcomed representatives of the ECA, the UN, and the AfDB. The Director General re-iterated the challenges African Statistics Offices facing due to the incompleteness and inadequacy of the civil registration and vital statistics systems currently prevailing in most countries of Africa. Ms Chuwa has expressed the situation addressing the following serious messages: *"Today national statistics 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 the civil registration and vital statistics systems. However, every one of us here knows that the civil registration and vital statistics systems of many African countries are not functioning well, leading to difficulties and challenges when faced with the need of reliable source of statistics especially on vital events."*

Ms Chuwa also continued referring the timeliness and importance of the current workshop by stating that: *"The workshop is unique in the sense that it is meant to build the capacity of statisticians, demographers, government officials and policy makers in the area of civil registration and vital statistics. In particular the workshop is expected to improve the participant's knowledge and understanding of the civil registration and vital statistics systems and their roles in measuring development progress and social change in Africa as well as establishing civil registration and vital statistics systems network to provide a regional platform of exchanging of views, ideas and best practices."*

ii) **Prof. Ben Kiregyera**, Director, African Centre for Statistics, ECA

Prof. Ben on behalf of the organizers of the workshop extended a special thanks to the two ministers, the Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The Director made a very comprehensive and enlightening speech that brought to the attention of the participants of the workshop: covering the importance of the systems, the varied implications and impacts the ignorance brought in the past four decades and the urgency in ensuring the presence of a universal and complete civil registration and reliable vital statistics systems in every nation of Africa. The Director expressed that at the moment only few African countries have satisfactory systems, stating *"...at the turn of the third millennium, few countries in Africa and Asia have complete civil registration systems. In the case of Africa, only two small island countries of Mauritius and Seychelles have complete registration of births, deaths and causes of death. South Africa is another African country where registration of births and deaths is high but its cause of death data are suspect."* The Director called this ignorance "scandal of immense proportion" quoting the expression addressed by the Working Group on Monitoring Vital events: **"A scandal of Invisibility"** because **"Most people in Africa and Asia are born and die without leaving a trace in any legal record or official statistics. Absence of reliable data for births, deaths and causes of death are at the root of this scandal of invisibility, which renders most of the world's poor as**



"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"

***unseen, unaccountable and hence uncoun-
ted”.***

Prof. Kiregyera continued to assess the main reasons why civil registration systems are weak in Africa. He stated two major reasons leaving the details for the workshop to dwell on them. He put the two main reasons in the following statements: *“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. For instance, 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. Secondly, there has been little **political will** and commitment to develop effective civil registration systems in Africa.”*

Prof. Kiregyera further mentioned the limited efforts made by training institutions and professional associations in building the African knowledge base in civil registration and vital statistics systems and also indicated his future expectations from these organizations in the following words: *“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. In the near future, it is my expectation that statistical training centres which are represented at this workshop will take note of this huge gap in their training programmes and collaborate with the African Centre for Statistics and the African Development Bank in developing appropriate curriculum for proactively intervening and supporting our nations to develop and strengthen their civil registration systems. National Statistical Associations should also do more to advocate for resources to strengthen civil registration systems.”*

Prof. Kiregyera further stressed his discontent about past peace-meal and project type initiatives that contradict to the permanence and continuous nature and operational characteristics of civil registration, where he requested for the cooperation of all development partners to look for new approaches and initiatives that this workshop tries to address. He addressed the

situation as follows: *"Let me also mention that in Africa, attempts to address the problem of civil registration have used project-oriented and piecemeal approaches rather than the recommended long-term and sustained interventions. Africa must come up with new approaches and initiatives, hence the theme of this workshop."* Finally, Prof. Kiregyera expressed his organization's commitment in the following concluding statements: *"Let me state without equivocation that the African Centre for Statistics has taken civil registration and vital statistics systems as one important pillar in its strategy to change the statistical landscape in Africa in order to meet the data challenges of the 21st century including data for informing national development programmes and plans as well as the MDGs."*

iii) Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section, United Nations Statistics Division

Representing the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, addressed the workshop focusing on the importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems and its position in the UN Statistical System. Mr. Mrkic appreciated the theme the workshop has identified "Towards New Initiatives and Approaches" stressing the need for Africa to re-iterate its commitment in establishing the system firmly in the region. He has indicated the importance and the place civil registration and vital statistics takes in the UN statistical system in the following statements: *"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 and started to focus more closely and specifically implement in the past two decades. And vital statistics is crucial and irreplaceable component of national statistical systems as it generates numerical profile of the most precious resource of any country – its human capital. This paradigm of relationship of civil registration and vital statistics was unambiguously endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the apex body of international statistics,..."*



"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"

Mr. Mrkic expressed the differences between the various provisional methods being exercised in the absence of civil registration system and the conventional vital statistics method using the following strong words: *"There are several methods of obtaining critical vital statistics. Yet, none is able to gener-*

ate 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. Mrkic proposed three main actions that need to be taken in improving the situation in Africa: “Providing training on the implementation of the United Nations guidelines and international standards on civil registration and vital statistics, assess the current status of civil registration and vital statistics systems in participating countries, and establishing the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians.” Finally, Mr. Mrkic re-iterated the commitment of the UN in general, and the Statistics Division in particular, to continue strongly and consistently support the work at national, sub-regional and regional level to achieve the goals set for the region. He also expressed his appreciation to all the development partners present in the workshop in support of Africa in improving the very incomplete and weak civil registration and vital statistics systems currently prevailing in the region.



iv) Mr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, Director, Statistics Department, African Development Bank Group

“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...”

In his opening statement, Mr. Lufumpa expressed the commitment of AfDB to support and emancipate African countries from the situation he referred as an awful and sad condition that civil registration and vital statistics remains underdeveloped and in bad shape in most African countries. Mr. Lufumpa expressed his impression about the necessity and timeliness of the workshop by stating how it is coincided with various development initiatives going on in the continent, where he said: *“This meeting is a doubly auspicious one for Africa. It comes at a time when major development initiatives are being pursued at the global and regional levels, when the international community is giving serious attention to Africa’s development problems and is prepared to scale up the flow of investment resources, particularly ODA and debt relief, to the continent to help African countries make real progress towards in achieving the MDGs. It also comes at a time when African countries and their development partners are putting great stress on not only scaling up resources to the continent but also ensuring their development effectiveness. Emphasis is being placed on achieving measurable results on the ground, on evidence based planning and on putting mecha-*

nisms for monitoring and evaluating development results. This clearly has placed statistics at the center 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."

Mr. Lufumpa concluded his statement by expressing the AfDB's commitment in the following way: *"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 which we are emphasizing as part of our efforts to improve MDG monitoring on the continent. In these efforts, we are working very closely with our valued partners, ECA."*

v) Mr. Pali Lehohla, Chairperson, United Nations Statistical Commission; Chairperson, Statistical Commission for Africa; and Statistician General, South Africa

Mr. Lehohla through his delegate delivered an extensive, educative and comprehensive keynote statement to the workshop. Mr. Lehohla started his speech by thanking the organizers, specifically for bringing together representatives from the ministries or agencies in charge of civil or vital registration systems and representatives from national statistics offices. His speech was presented in a way that would give a general background on the historical development of civil registration and vital statistics systems globally and in Africa in particular. In his background statement, Mr. Lehohla comprehensively assessed the recognition of the importance and development of vital registration, since the London Bills of Mortality in 1592 and consecutive developments in England of more formal and systematic registration in 1603. He mentioned the contribution of John Graunt in 1662, which he called the founding classic of the modern sciences of vital statistics and epidemiology. He further reviewed the vital registration historical developments in various European countries, including the Netherlands back in 1575, in Sweden 1608, in Norway 1748, in France 1792, in England and Wales 1837, in Ireland 1845, in New Zealand 1848, in Scotland 1855 and also in North America in the United States 1632 and Canada 1860.



"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 system and availability of reliable and timely vital statistics"

Mr. Lehohla reminded participants that currently civil registra-

tion and vital statistics in the contemporary developed countries is complete and published figures on fertility, mortality and causes of death are up to the standard. Mr. Lehohla has tried to show the parallel situation in Africa, where he demonstrated the colonial influence in most African countries by witnessing the historical development and experience in Mauritius (since 1667), Ghana (1888), Tanzania (1920), Uganda (1904) and South Africa (1842). Mr. Lehohla revealed the discriminations practiced in registering vital events by the colonial powers on the Africans, where in most cases Africans were not allowed and included in the registration system before independence. He further testified reviewing the situation in his own country where he stated that it was only from 1986 that the vital record registrations included the black population in South Africa. He also mentioned Ethiopia and Malawi among countries that do not have functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems and also those countries where their civil registration operation affected by civil war and conflict, like Sierra Leone and Rwanda. Mr. Lehohla concluded the background part of his speech by summarizing some of the lessons that need to be drawn: *(1) registration of vital events took place in an incremental manner, that is, registration started with one event, followed by one more and so on; (2) registration started to cover only a portion of the population, before it extended to all people; (3) African countries are still lagging behind in their civil registration systems; (4) systems may be in place but may be affected by armed conflicts and political instability.*

Mr. Lehohla continued his speech presenting on the importance, challenges and opportunities of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa. Though the system provides legal evidences that testifies a person's identity, serves in protection of several human right privileges and as critical data source for policy makers and in designing and provision of social, economic and administrative services, he has also brought the abuses and misuse of civil registration records to commit targeted atrocities and discrimination in Rwanda. Mr. Lehohla identified which he thought as critical problems and challenges that make the systems inefficient in Africa as follows:

- *Inadequate registration facilities*
- *Lack of motivation to register on the part of the population due to ignorance about the importance of registration, lead-*

ing to low levels of registration

- *Delays in registration of events*
- *Inadequate field personnel*
- *Lack of infrastructure*
- *Delays of administrative procedures in force*
- *Poor management of data on vital records and poor preservation of vital records on civil registration*
- *Multiple registrations*
- *Unavailability of data processing and analysis tools*
- *Poor quality of data*
- *Penalty for late registration of events*

All these above problems, Mr. Lehohla said, which are not exhaustive, cause the data collected in Africa to be unreliable, outdated and lead to lack of information needed for decision-making and for development planning. He also mentioned what the ignorance cost Africa in the past 50 years, by quoting from AbouZahr's statements, "*Collecting statistics may seem expensive, but it is much more expensive to misallocate your resources because you don't have good data*".

Mr. Lehohla in his extensive keynote address reminded representatives of national statistical offices on their role and responsibilities in strengthening civil registration systems and production of vital statistics, which he has referred the experience and speedy progress achieved in his country in the coverage and completeness since post-Apartheid. He specifically emphasized the need and necessity for close collaboration between the different government departments such as the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education that contributes indirectly by requiring birth certificates when administering the childcare grant and school registration, respectively, which is also the case with the issue of a burial order by traditional leaders and local government authorities.

Concerning the advantages and benefits that would be gained from the current developments on ICT in improving civil registration in a developing world, Mr. Lehohla thoroughly presented the experience of South Africa and advised countries to grab IT as an opportunity and enabler in their civil registration improvement agenda. He put the situation as follows: "*South Africa has also benefited from ICT development. Internet and wireless technology have reduced the time for transferring reg-*

istration data between registration points, producers and users. As with any form of record keeping, the civil registration system has to have the ability to store, file, abstract, and retrieve records. This has been shown in countries such as Chile, Thailand, and India that have made large investments in ICT over the last decade or so. Another example is Mauritius which has achieved exceptional levels of civil registration coverage-it has a fully computerized system. Conversely, the industrialized countries took a long time to have the best systems due to limited technological developments in the past. It is important to note that ICT will be a vital registration enabler only to the extent to which the confidentiality of information continues to be maintained."

In his final speech, Mr. Lehohla stressed and detailed the role and responsibilities of national statistical offices in improving civil registration and the need for them to be more outward looking, where he said: *"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. Once systems are in place, then quality products would follow."* He further elaborated on the need for the establishment of national coordination mechanism and the required working modalities in the following statements: *"At the national level, coordination committee made up of representatives of each government group with an interest in civil registration and vital statistics (for example, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Health, National Statistics Office, etc.) must be set-up. In addition, there must be an establishment of expert teams to critically review their national civil registration systems in terms of the legal framework, organizational issues, system design, training needs and control issues. This inter agency body should also provide leadership in securing political commitment to vital registration especially commitment to long term funding of the system. It must also promote civil registration through advocacy and, also focusing on identified hard-to-reach populations and ensuring that the public trust the system."*

In his final concluding remarks, Mr. Lehohla stressed the value, linkages and impacts of civil registration records in measuring development results as follows: *"Managing for results incorpo-*

rates strategies for both Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRs), and for targeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as other national development plans and programmes which aim to make an impact on the development performance in developing countries. 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 system and availability of reliable and timely vital statistics."

vi) Honorable Mr. Berhan Hailu, Minister of Justice, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Honorable Minister, Mr. Hailu addressed the participants of the workshop in his opening statement about his government's commitment in establishing and developing conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems following the UN principles and recommendations. Mr. Hailu expressed his regrets that his country has not had a functioning civil registration law until this date and indicated the challenges the country facing in addressing data and information needs in national and sectoral development planning and programme design, implementation and monitoring. In the initiatives currently going on in establishing the registration and statistics systems in the country, Mr. Hailu expressed his belief about the objectives and the essences of the systems and their differing character from previous attempts in the following phrases: *"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. Since past*



"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"

practices and exercises of civil registration have not been addressing the above mentioned major components, we agreed to re-engineer the system and put it on the right track."

The Minister, with strong words expressed the impact rendered due to lack of the systems in the country and the implications of further delays by stating the following necessities and compulsory situations:

- *As a government we should know the people we serve;*
- *Our planning and budgeting system has its own deficiencies due to the limitations of the census;*
- *The national identity and security system needs legal records of our citizens;*
- *The court system in order to provide speedy justice, requires properly registered evidences of occurrences of vital events;*
- *Some basic rights and privileges of citizens enshrined in the Constitution for their proper implementation require records of vital event registration; and*
- *Our health extension workers in the communities could not effectively deliver life saving services without systematically recorded birth and death registration information.*

The Honorable Minister further noted on the currently prevailing conducive programmatic and administrative arrangements and political situation in establishing the registration system in the country. He further expressed about the studies and researches conducted in addressing technical and operational preparatory activities that would facilitate the implementation of the various components of the registration and vital statistics systems. Specifically, he mentioned the need for taking advantages of parallel sectoral development programs and the need for integration and collaboration with other departments in ensuring the sustainability and permanence of the systems. For instance, the need for the civil registration to benefit from the ICT developments was specifically mentioned as follows: *"The government of Ethiopia gives more emphasis and priority to the application and adaptation of latest Information and Technology solutions in all arenas of development programs and poverty alleviation strategies. The government already started*

implementing wereda/district-net program that will connect the over 700 woredas/districts of the country with IT technology that in the near future will scale-up to cover and connect over 20 thousand kebele administrations. Such parallel technology advancements will lend its resources to civil registration operations at the local level that will highly reduce the cost of civil registration to the lowest level."

Finally, Mr. Hailu urged the delegates to cooperate and support each other in the following message: *"On behalf of the government of Ethiopia, I urge delegates of this workshop whom representing Africa, to cooperate and support each other in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems that would benefit each and every individual citizen of our nations and request your commitment in promoting civil registration as priority development agenda for Africa. At this juncture, I would also urge regional and international development partners, to join hands in supporting Africa in managing this critical development intervention that promotes democracy and good governance in Africa."*

vii) Honorable Lawrence K. Masha (MP), Minister for Home Affairs, United Republic of Tanzania

The Hon. Minister started his speech by warmly welcoming Hon. Berhan Hailu, Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Honorable Minister, Mr. Lawrence K. Masha in his opening speech addressed the global, regional and country level challenges and situations facing Africa and despite these shortcomings the progress achieved. In his speech, the Hon. Minister linked civil registration services and poverty eradication efforts in the following words: *"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. Civil registration mechanisms as a means of ascertaining births and deaths in a particular country would help African countries in facilitating accessibility to social services such as public schools, hospitals, social security matters and social welfare. By doing so the lives of many Africans would have been improved hence the war against poverty, diseases and literacy could become a story of the past."* Mr. Masha further stated the critical role of civil registration system in the production of vital statistics information, which he stated



"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"

as: *"The vital statistics that are compiled from the civil registration systems enables compiling annual vital rates, such as birth rates, death rates, causes of death and the expectancy information that is crucial in the preparation of annual population estimates, government projection and provisions of basic health and demographic indicators, including crucial MDG indicators, like infant mortality and maternal mortality rates. Due to lack of complete civil registration system, Africa is compelled to rely on unconventional and periodic data sources such as surveys and censuses that cannot adequately account for the demographic dynamics of populations. This has brought a negative impact on the accuracy and reliability of our data sources in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of our development policies and programs at macro as well as micro levels. It can be concluded that the statistical base of African countries cannot be established on a firm basis due to lack of efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems."*

Mr. Masha further reminded country delegates on the need to ensure country ownerships of initiatives and support programs and also on the need to work on long-term and sustainable programs. He further said *"Collaboration and coordination among the various actors of civil registration and vital statistics systems are the critical element that should be maintained as a key strategy in developing the systems. In this respect, the primary responsibility for maintaining the interface or integration between the various system lies on registrars, statisticians and demographers that are gathered here today."* The Minister urged African countries to reiterate and re-visit their commitments and act urgently and strategically on this long overdue critical development agenda. He further said that *"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. African governments need to give more attention and support to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, realizing that without appropriate data and information sources, it would be hard and impractical to fully attain the objectives of the various national and sectoral reform programs currently going on in most African countries, which otherwise would be difficult for countries to achieve their commitments in monitoring national development policies and programs and MDG progress."*

Finally, the Honorable Minister, pledged a call for action message to African leaders and scholars that was stated as: "*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, which is the first requirement in acknowledging and safeguarding the basic principles of human rights and dignity. We need also to register death as soon as it occurs, because death registration is a vital source of information for the provision of timely health services and the monitoring of the health status of the population.*"

IV

DELIBERATIONS

Session 1: Orientation to civil registration and vital statistics systems

Chair: ECA

Presenters: UNSD and HMN

Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Chief of the Social and Housing Statistics Section of UNSD, delivered five presentations on various aspects of civil registration and vital statistics following the guidelines, principles and recommendations of the United Nations.

i) Need for a civil registration system

In his first presentation, Mr. Mrkic defined civil registration as the universal, continuous, permanent and compulsory recording of vital events. He said that civil registration should be run by the Government, which has the primary responsibility of providing official and permanent records serving general and individual interests. He listed civil registration outputs in two main categories: individual outputs and aggregate outputs. He further displayed the individual record types and their use for individuals and for society as a whole. On the aggregate aspect, he showed how the individual records were aggregated and used to generate statistical information.

Mr. Mrkic elaborated on the components of the registration system, namely, law, civil registration infrastructure, participation by the population, service to the public, confidentiality, and checks and balances. He made a pictorial presentation on the various components of the registration system. The importance of civil registration was presented in several slides, which highlighted the various human rights services of civil registration. He demonstrated the inter-linkages between various provisions of the United Nations human rights conventions and civil registration by quoting relevant articles from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. Mrkic further elaborated on the importance of civil registration records, noting that lack of registration records could lead to the denial of basic human rights. He cited examples of some

basic rights and privileges and demonstrated how the lack thereof affected individuals and societies. Some of the examples he presented included the right to own identity, right to non-discrimination by reason of birth, right to education, right to marry and right to vote and get elected.

Civil registration was also important because it served as the best source of vital statistics, which are essential for planning and providing the numerical profile of a country's population. He demonstrated the effects of lack of complete civil registration, using the example of population estimates from two different sources that were completely at variance with each other. Finally, Mr. Mrkic made a pictorial presentation that showed the inter-linkages and inter-dependence of civil registration, governance, human rights and vital statistics, finishing off with the following summary points:

- Good and efficient governing must be based on informed decisions, which is why it needs qualitative and accurate vital statistics
- Ensuring basic human right is crucial for the normal functioning and governing of societies worldwide
- Civil registration is, without a doubt, the best source for accurate and reliable vital statistics
- The exercise of many human rights depends directly on the existence of a functioning civil registration system
- Efficient and legitimate governing at all levels requires civil registration for its legal implications – citizenship, for example
- The lack of vital statistics directly affects the exercise of human rights

ii) Civil registration systems and their use for vital statistics

In the second presentation, Mr. Mrkic first introduced the list of vital events recommended by the United Nations to be registered by member States, including live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment, judicial separation, adoption, legitimation and recognition. He further recalled the three basic legal, administrative and statistical functions of civil registration. Mr. Mrkic discussed the technical details, specifically the type of variables and information collected, the techniques used in the calculation of indices and how to use them in the analysis of fertility and mortality measures and indicators. He explained the different ways of

recording and producing statistical reports in different countries, noting that the two most common were either to use the same forms for legal documentation and statistical reporting, or to use separate forms for the two purposes.

He then cited the recommended items or variables to be included in birth and death statistical reports including date of occurrence and registration, place of occurrence, type of birth, attendance at birth, underlying causes of death, certifier, date of birth of the deceased, usual place of residence, sex and marital status. Finally, Mr. Mrkic explained that the data inputs required for calculating fertility and mortality rates need to be based on registration data, and suggested that such data be used even if they were incomplete.

iii) Integration and coordination of civil registration and vital statistics systems

The third presentation highlighted the need for coordination and integration within and between civil registration and vital statistics systems. Three aspects of coordination were addressed: a) coordination within the civil registration system, b) coordination within the vital statistics system; and c) coordination between the two systems. The presenter said that coordination was important for two reasons: to improve coverage and accuracy of civil registration; and to improve availability and quality of vital statistics generated from the civil registration system.

In the presentation, the two most prevalent organizational structures for civil registration were displayed pictorially, namely, the centralized structure with dual agencies and administrations, and the decentralized structure with a national office for general legal oversight or with cooperative or advisory responsibilities. In the case of a centralized civil registration system, uniform and nationwide legislation and regulation that provides clear procedures for each registration function was indicated as a primary requirement. It was also stated that the procedures should be prepared in a manual form and disseminated at each level. The major issues that need to be incorporated include:

- Legal requirements for reporting vital events
- Definition of vital events
- Design and use of collection forms
- Training, education and publicity campaigns

- Copy issuance
- Burial permits, recognitions, legitimizations, adoptions, amendments and delayed registration
- Coding, data entry and verification methods
- Classifications and tabulations
- Changes to current year records

For the decentralized system, it was suggested to enforce consistency mechanisms and measures among States/provinces, and use joint government committees or professional associations that might assist in keeping common standards and consistencies of functions and services.

Common coordination measures that need to be taken into account in both cases include the establishment of a functional inter-agency coordination committee that involves reporting sources such as, hospitals, clinics, courthouses, private physicians, midwives, funeral directors, and cemetery operators, and users of the registered data - family planning programmes, immunization campaigns, etc. In all the coordination activities, communication was stated as key component that helps to improve motivation through establishing protocols, periodic meetings, site visits and integration of operations within the national programme.

With respect to coordination in the vital statistics system, uniform and nationwide legislation and regulation across all sources were required, covering definition of vital events, characteristics of persons experiencing these events (occupation, level of education, place of usual residence, etc.), coding schemes and classification and utilization of base population in calculating vital rates (residents/non-residents/both, defined sub-geographic areas). Again, good communication was a requirement for keeping uniform processes and practices at every level throughout the system. The mechanisms could be disseminated through periodic workshops and conferences, national conventions, newsletters, travelling field consultants, and in communications through electronic networks. Finally, the presenter explained the coordination requirements for both civil registration and vital statistics systems. They included clear definition of administrative and management roles, need for coordinating committee, consistent definitions and standards of vital events, including geographic areas, health-care facilities, and demographic and social variables such as education and occupation.

iv) Cause-of-death data collection through the civil registration system

The presentation on causes of death was delivered by Dr. Yoko Akachi of HMN. She explained the problems associated with data collection on critical health variables and indicators, specifically in the area of adult mortality and causes of death. The presenter raised some critical questions on the need and importance of death and cause-of-death information, and noted why such information was needed:

- To know who dies from what
- To guide policy decisions, because it is the basis for health information:
 - o To set priorities
 - o To evaluate programmes
 - o To support research
 - o To inform individual family members
- Because it is proof of a well-governed State responsible for its people

Such information was also necessary for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The shortcomings of the currently available data sources in the developing world for the critical MDG indicators, such as the under-five mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio and HIV-, malaria-, and tuberculosis-related mortality rates, were demonstrated and the need for conventional civil registration systems emphasized. The presenter made a comparison, in matrix form, of the various available data sources for births, child mortality, adult mortality and causes of death. She demonstrated how civil registration met all data demands at national level and within lower administrations, and in differential analysis. Accordingly, the presenter confirmed that civil registration was the only way to ensure comprehensive, continuous, permanent and compulsory population coverage for births and deaths, and was also the only means of generating public health information that conferred benefits (social, civil and political) to the people who were the source of the data.

Dr. Yoko further argued that civil registration was the gold standard source of data for cause-of-death information. However, she reminded participants about the need for strict quality assurance

methods and mechanisms. She elaborated on how cause-of-death information was collected through the civil registration method and on the tools used. The content and format of the standard medical certificate of death was displayed, showing the different parts used to record immediate cause, underlying and contributing causes. The presenter revealed some of the commonly seen errors made in recording the underlying causes of death. The other related statistical undertaking presented was the international statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, followed by the presentation of an alternative to the standard death certificate, which she called a verbal autopsy tool or method.

Dr. Yoko defined verbal autopsy as an approach that used to determine cause of death by asking caregivers, friends, or family members about signs and symptoms experienced by the deceased in the period before death. This was usually done using a standard questionnaire that collects details on signs, symptoms, and any medical history or events prior to death. She said that its purpose was to obtain information on cause of death at the community or population level, where there was no (or limited) death registration with medical certification. She also talked about the availability of implementation manuals showing the application of verbal autopsy questionnaires and guidelines for cause-of-death certification and coding with corresponding ICD-10 codes.

Finally, Dr. Yoko asked about what could be done in the next five years and proposed questions for further discussion. She made two proposals for the next five years for countries with relatively complete data and those with incomplete data, as follows:

- Where data is complete:
 - o Quality improvement
 - Accuracy of certification and coding
- Where data is incomplete:
 - o Start with what you have; then increase the volume in data availability and use
 - Urban civil registration data
 - Hospital records
 - Survey data
 - o Set standards to enhance data comparability and consistency (e.g. standard verbal autopsy tools)
 - o Data must be brought to light for systematic evaluation

Concerning questions for discussion, she proposed the following:

- a) How can we pool resources to address the problem of availability and quality of cause-of-death data
- b) How can we actually use the administrative system to build capacity and bring in all the stakeholders?
- c) (c) How can we stop focusing and relying on interim measures and go directly to civil registration system (with medical certification of deaths) development?

v) Evaluating the completeness of civil registration systems

Integrating stringent assessment measurement on the completeness and reliability of civil registration and vital statistics systems is one of the recommendations of the United Nations that countries should implement in their effort to improve their systems. To maintain the goal of universal coverage, continuity and quality of registration systems, registration and statistics offices are required to apply appropriate and conventional evaluation methods on an ad hoc and a continuous basis. Based on these premises, Mr. Mrkic shared with participants the different evaluation methods developed and recommended by the United Nations and other organizations. Accordingly, the technical details and varieties of the direct and indirect evaluation methods were presented.

Under the direct evaluation method, four techniques were described, which included: varied matching mechanisms, including hand and electronic matching; comparison with administrative and social records; comparison with population censuses and survey records; and use of dual records.

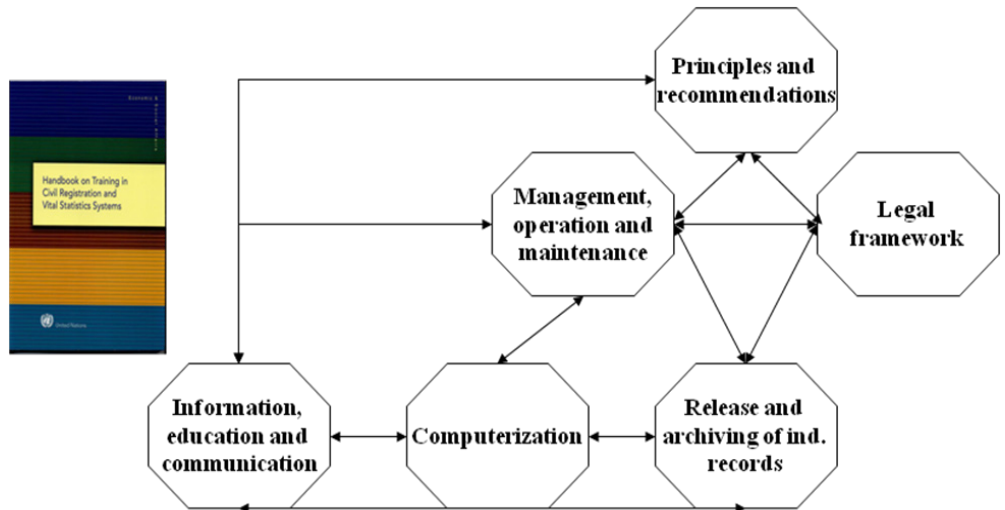
Under the indirect method, the evaluation techniques developed primarily to assess the completeness and quality of vital statistics were described. These techniques include comparison of trends, monitoring of delayed registration, reviewing patterns in the sex ratio of births, comparison with census data, comparison of rates observed in similar or previous periods, and application of indirect demographic techniques. In summary, it was recommended to use a combination of direct and indirect assessment methods to obtain the best approach, and also to use computerization to increase checking opportunities and improve efficiency.

vi) United Nations Statistics Division's expertise and resources for improving civil registration and vital statistics around the world

In his fifth and final presentation, Mr. Mrkic reiterated the need for civil registration and the different sources used to generate vital statistics. He presented a matrix that showed the pros and cons of the three sources of fertility and mortality data, rating them on a scale of high, medium and low based on 12 dimensions. The three sources were censuses, surveys and civil registrations. The comparison matrix is presented below.

Dimension	Censuses	Surveys	Civil Registrations
Cost	H	M	L
Rapidity of processing	L	H	M-H
Detailed socio-demographic information	M-H	H	L
Continuity	L	M	H
Timeliness of estimates	L	M	H
Information on causes of death	L	M	H
Small area statistics	H	L	H
Affected by age misreporting	M	M	L
Availability of time series	L	M	H
Presence of sampling errors	L	H	L
Need for assumptions and models for converting responses into vital rates	M	M	L
Geographical detail	M	L	H

Mr. Mrkic continued presenting the instruments and methodological framework of the United Nations Statistics Division



The recently prepared guidelines and their major contents were also presented as follows:

- Principles and recommendations for vital statistics systems
 - Definitions
 - Sources of data
 - Core and additional topics
 - Data collection and processing
 - Analysis
 - Dissemination
 - Use
- Handbook on civil registration and vital statistics: preparation of a legal framework
 - Theory of civil registration
 - Legal events and acts
 - Civil registration function
 - Structure and organization
 - Jurisdiction
 - Human rights and civil registration
 - Model civil registration law
- Handbook on civil registration and vital statistics: management, operation and maintenance
 - Centralized, decentralized and local civil registration systems
 - Management
 - Operational functions and activities
 - Maintenance of civil registration and vital statistics

components

- Integrating civil registration and vital statistics
- Handbook on civil registration and vital statistics: developing programmes for information, education and communication
 - Development of national programmes for information, education and communication
 - Setting of goals
 - Identification of target groups
 - Strategy and methods
 - Resource mobilization
 - Implementation of a campaign
- Handbook on civil registration and vital statistics: computerization
 - Computation/automation in civil registration
 - Problems, obstacles
 - Purpose
 - Organization
 - Civil registration register
 - System functionality
- Handbook on training in civil registration and vital statistics systems
 - Modular training handbook
 - Cross-referencing other handbooks
 - Questions, exercises
 - National examples

Mr. Mrkic concluded his presentation by describing the purposes and types of interventions provided to countries by UNSD, which included workshops and direct technical cooperation.

Discussion and summary points

Some of the issues and questions raised in the general discussion session were related to the hindrance effect of the outdated laws inherited from colonial powers in improving CR&VS systems in the countries, as reflected mainly by Malawi, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire. Different practices of issuing birth, death and marriage certificates and in some countries the exaggerated fees required were some of the major factors stated as contributing to the low coverage and completeness of the registration systems. It also had a deterrent effect on law enforcement, as mentioned by Malawi, Senegal, Uganda, Gabon, Chad and the Republic of the Congo. The effects and implications of low capacity in using ICT were also mentioned

by a participant from an Ethiopian ICT company.

Lack of cooperation from politicians and their tendency to manipulate statistics for political and other interests was also indicated by some participants. In reference to the presentation on the contents of the registration and statistics forms, the Ethiopian delegate suggested that the statistics and registration forms should be simplified, citing as an example the difficulties in including variables like birth weight. Eritrea mentioned the use of denominators from sample surveys as one major problem in calculating demographic rates and ratios. It was also indicated that civil registration and other enumeration methods should be seen as complementary rather than competing undertakings, which need to be harmonized.

Representatives from different countries like Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire enumerated major challenges from their country perspectives: high illiteracy rates, over 70 per cent of women giving birth at home, incorrect or concealed causes of death, as with HIV/AIDS cases, registration of abandoned children, problem in transmitting records from districts to the centre, funding problems, lack of training, registration being conducted by volunteers, etc. Representative from Senegal cited a positive experience the country had, working with the World Bank and UNICEF on birth registration projects, of giving money to mothers as incentive for registering their children. However, such actions were deemed to have a long-term negative impact on registration, because they would run counter to the principles of civil registration. Rather, it was suggested to use and promote the civil registration benefits as incentives that would help to build sustainable improvements into the systems. In reference to the practice for registering and coding causes of death, one of the participants asked whether the responsibility should be with the national statistics office or the ministry of health. The presenter responded that such decisions should be based on the organizational and administrative arrangements that exist in the country, but it was suggested that coordination mechanism can be set that involves both institutions.

Session 2: Challenges and opportunities of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa

The purpose of this session was to review the challenges and opportunities of the civil registration (CR) and vital statistics

(VS) systems in Africa and to come up with proposals for their improvement. Three topics were identified for discussion in three different groups: a) reviewing and updating civil registration laws in Africa; b) government policies and programmes for civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa; and c) maintaining the interface between civil registration and vital statistics systems.

The first group worked on civil registration law and was facilitated by Prof. Ann Seidman of Boston University, a specialist in legislative drafting. It focused its attention on the preparation of evidence-based, effective and implementable law. The topic was found to be very relevant to the current situation of African civil registration laws, which are generally not effective or compulsory. The second group worked on challenges and opportunities of government policies and programmes for civil registration and was facilitated by ECA. Given that lack of government support for civil registration is a complaint persistently raised by registration and statistics offices, the working group was expected to explore opportunities for attracting policymakers towards civil registration.

The third group worked on one of the critical problems of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa, namely, maintaining coordination and interface between the two systems. The session was facilitated by UNSD and it gave countries an opportunity to outline objective problems on technical and operational issues and to obtain appropriate advice.

Each group was given two hours for the group work and then to make a presentation in the plenary. As per the template prepared for reporting, each group made a presentation covering the situation analysis, challenges and opportunities, and all the presentations are attached as annex 4.

Session 3: Country experiences, focusing on challenges and opportunities

Chair: AfDB

Presenter: Country delegates

This session was chaired by the AfDB and Mauritius, Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal, the Niger, Madagascar and Seychelles made presentations on the status of civil registration and vital statistics

systems in their respective countries following the major areas indicated below.

- Civil registration process and completeness status, including situation on political commitment
- Vital statistics compilation, analysis and report dissemination
- Cause-of-death registration and reporting status
- Measures taken to cover vulnerable groups in the registration system
- Coordination between the registration and statistics offices and involvement of partner institutions
- Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to civil registration
- Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to vital statistics
- Opportunities for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the specific country
- Way forward

A summary of the reflections on the major issues indicated by each of the countries is presented below.

Country: Mauritius

Population size: 1.2 million

Registration: since 1720, major changes in 1861 and 2001

Major issues	Situation or status
Civil registration process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informants are required to produce documents to register an event • Time limit - 45 days to 3 months for births • Services provided for celebration of civil marriages
Completeness status	Not mentioned
Vital statistics compilation, analysis and report dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical information on births, deaths and marriages published annually • Dissemination of information to different ministries and departments

Major issues	Situation or status
Cause-of-death registration and reporting status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical certificate produced at time of registration of death • Compiled and classified data forwarded to Ministry of Health • Data forwarded back to Central Statistical Office
Measures taken to cover vulnerable groups in the registration system	Not mentioned
Coordination between the registration and statistics offices	Coordination mechanism established among the following organizations: Civil Registration Office, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Security, Passport Office and other relevant departments
Challenges and measures taken in relation to civil registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computerization of all civil status offices by the end of 2010 • Completion of central population database from where different ministries and departments can retrieve information for their day-to-day business
Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to vital statistics	No specific issue indicated
Opportunities for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the specific country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place an e-registration system • Train the staff • Install a customer care system • Install a cashier module system

Major issues	Situation or status
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ministries and departments to be fully computerized • Government commitment of one computer in each home • E-service: registration of births and deaths and application for civil status certificates online

Country: Ghana

Population size: 23.9 million (Source: 2009 African Statistical Yearbook)

Registration: since 1888, major changes in 1895, 1912, 1948 and 1965

Major issues	Situation or status
Civil registration process	Handled by different line agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Births, deaths, foetal deaths - births and deaths registry; • Marriages, divorces, annulments - Department of the Registrar General
Completeness status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Births and deaths Registry; current coverage: births 51 per cent, deaths 21 per cent; foetal deaths currently not compiled • Department of the Registrar General: No information on coverage.
Vital statistics compilation, analysis and report dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At best data summarized into tables by district and regional offices for the district assemblies, regional coordinating councils, but not disseminated • Head Offices of registering agencies compile whatever data they receive but do not disseminate • National Statistical Office receives data from agencies; however, data not analyzed and disseminated because of its inadequacy

Major issues	Situation or status
Cause - of - death registration and reporting status	Reporting systems in place for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaths occurring in hospitals / health facilities • Deaths occurring outside health facilities
Measures taken to cover vulnerable groups in the registration system	No special arrangements made for registering vulnerable groups
Coordination between the registration and statistics offices	Generally, coordination between the National Statistical Office and the registration offices has not been strong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No proper harmonization of data collection instruments • Data gaps: reporting formats to ensure improved report not standardized No inter-agency committee exists at the moment
Challenges and measures taken in relation to civil registration	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular data in-flow, low completeness • Polygamous marriages not backed by legislation so they are not registered • Enforcement of legislation on compulsory basis lacking • Lack of personnel, lack of adequate infrastructure, organization and management structure • Lack of political support, low literacy, lack of awareness of importance to register events on time • No motivation to register events Measures taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to increase completeness • Use mobile registration facilities • Advocacy for the enforcement of legislation on compulsory registration

Major issues	Situation or status
Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to vital statistics	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak public knowledge about importance of registering events • Few births in hospitals or attended by doctors • No enforcement of legislation on compulsory registration • Inadequate staff and inability to attract and retain highly qualified personnel • Absence of training opportunities for sector staff • Inadequate funding • Weak monitoring and supervision mechanisms <p>Measures taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness creation - public education initiated through various mechanisms, UBR campaign led by "Goodwill Ambassadors"; "Births and Deaths Registration Day" celebration instituted • Building partnerships with relevant organizations • Computerization • Training in statistical data analysis, management and reporting • Development and use of standard operating procedures country wide • Reviewed data capture documents to conform with international standards

Opportunities for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the specific country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of NSDS • Implementation of the Community Population Register Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a combination of periodic population updates and continuous vital events registration
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Major issues	Situation or status
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening capacities of relevant agencies • Scaling up publicity • Making registration facilities accessible to rural populations • Establishing national technical committees to address issues on CR&VS • Training and scaling up verbal autopsy nationwide

Country: Tanzania

Population size: 41.1 million (Source: 2009 African Statistical Yearbook)

Registration: since 1917, major changes in 1920, 1960 and 1967

Major issues	Situation or status
Civil registration process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RITA-vested with registration - MoCAJ • NBS – vested with National Statistics, -MoFEA • Normal registration below 90 days - time of birth registered at health facilities/hospitals • - Late registration – above 90 days
Completeness status	Not mentioned
Vital statistics compilation, analysis and report dissemination	Not mentioned
Cause - o f - d e a t h registration and reporting status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of death captured upon death • Causes of death captured during registration at districts • No formal report issuing on causes of death except on demand • Health facilities located countrywide
Measures taken to cover vulnerable groups in the registration system	Not mentioned

Major issues	Situation or status
Coordination between the registration and statistics offices	Current-systems not harmonized, linked, shared, interfaced or integrated
Challenges and measures taken in relation to civil registration	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low completeness level of registration of vital events • malfunctioning structural and institutional systems • Uncoordinated efforts in civil registration • Inadequate financial resources • Low level of awareness among citizens • Cumbersome procedures on registration • Stigma inherited from the colonial rulers on registration • Voluntary civil registration Measures taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RITA-initiated awareness campaign on civil registration • Execution of registration campaigns in districts • Development of NCRS • Digitization of hard copy records • Mandatory registration
Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to vital statistics	Not mentioned

Major issues	Situation or status
<p>Opportunities for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the specific country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service is highly demanded • Some services attach birth/death certificates as a requirement • High data demand for proper planning • Improvement of political commitment • Challenges of globalization require integration/ harmonization
<p>Way forward</p>	<p>Vital registration with UNIQUE NUMBER at birth will be the foundation for the integration of national registration databases, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National ID • Voters register • Censuses • Passports • Integrated payroll and human resources systems • Taxpayer registration • Banking and financial institutions systems • Education system • Health system • Crime investigation system • Employment systems • Licensing systems • Social security systems • Etc.

Country: Seychelles

Population size: 18,956 persons

Registration: since 1771, major change in 1893

Major issues	Situation or status
Civil registration process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central office for births, deaths, stillbirths and marriages• Judicial department for divorces• According to legal requirement, live births are to be registered within 30 days and stillbirths and deaths within 24 hours
Completeness status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces have 100 per cent coverage<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government provides Rs 1000 for each newborn and Rs 1600 as death benefits
Vital statistics compilation, analysis and report dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The National Statistics Bureau has been compiling vital statistics since the early 1960s; previously this was done by each department• Vital events compiled are births, deaths, marriages and divorces• No data compiled for foetal deaths• Data on live births and deaths are transmitted both electronically and in printed summary reports• Data on marriages and divorces collected directly from the registers by the NSB• Dissemination is done through statistical bulletins and disseminated electronically; they are also posted on the Web

Major issues	Situation or status
Cause-of-death registration and reporting status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data registered by the civil status office from the medical certificate of the deceased • Causes of death are coded using ICD 10 by the Statistics Section of the Ministry of Health and then transmitted to NSB electronically
Measures taken to cover vulnerable groups in the registration system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mention
Coordination between the registration and statistics offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent coordination exists between the civil status offices, the National Statistics Bureau and the Statistics Section within the Ministry of Health to ensure 100 per cent registration
Challenges and measures taken in relation to civil registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of staffing • Crowded working environment at the central office • Some coordination problem between head office and other units • The law should be revised and improved to further improve the collection of data • No measures taken to alleviate these problems as yet
Challenges and measures taken to alleviate problems related to vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understaffed • Heavy workload • No measures are being presently taken to alleviate these problems

Major issues	Situation or status
Opportunities for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the specific country	Civil registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online registration of vital events • Participation in future workshops Vital statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of manual capture for marriage data • Automated validation of age and gender for deaths • Need for statisticians and demographers to be familiar with the civil status law and acts • Participation in future workshops
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to commit itself to improve civil registration and vital statistics as both have a crucial impact on individuals and society at large, and for better planning, development and decision-making

Discussion and summary points

In relation to the successes achieved in Mauritius in the coverage of birth registration, questions were raised about the measures taken to improve the motivation of individuals to register vital events on time. It was indicated that financial incentives and the high literacy level in Mauritius may have contributed to such achievements. When requested to elaborate on the strategies followed to improve coverage in recent years, the presenter for Senegal mentioned the intervention of UNICEF through the universal birth registration project. When asked how the country's geography affected the registration process, the presenter agreed that it represented a challenge. However, as the organizational arrangement of the registration system in the country extended to the lowest administrative unit, the registration office was more accessible to the people.

Niger was asked how it treated vulnerable groups in its registration process. The response was that no fees were requested for people in difficult circumstances, which gave them an incentive to register. The difficulties in registering orphan and vulnerable children (OVCs) were discussed in relation to the practice in Tanzania, Madagascar and Seychelles. Based on Madagascar's presentation on the difficulties it has in registering twins due to the traditional and very conservative taboos and practices in the country, some participants raised specific procedural issues. Questions were also raised on how registrations are conducted for events occurring outside the country. Tanzania, Seychelles and Madagascar responded that they did not have laws to register such events.

Session 4: New approaches and initiatives for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa

Chair: UNSD

Presenter: Country delegates and representatives of organizations

This session was meant to give countries, organizations and individuals a chance to detail the special efforts made in the recent past to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems in diverse situations. Accordingly, from countries South Africa and Ethiopia were identified to share their experiences, where South Africa in reference to the coping mechanisms and approaches it applied after the 1990s, while Ethiopia as one of the largest and populous country in Africa without civil registration, to share its initiatives and progress made in establishing the systems in the country. On the other hand, three presentations representing different organizations and addressing special efforts in their area of competence were delivered. Among these organizations, HMN presented in reference to the different initiatives and workshops conducted on civil registration in 2009 in Geneva, Paris and Washington DC. The second was presented by the Executive Director of the African Child Policy Forum, Dr. Assefa Bequele on universal birth registration initiatives implemented in collaboration with different partner organizations, primarily UNICEF and PLAN International. The third presentation referred to legislative drafting presented by Prof. Ann Seidman from Boston University on law drafting techniques and its application to civil registration laws.

The major issues addressed in the various presentations are summarized hereunder.

i) South Africa: *"South African civil registration and vital statistics systems after the 1990s: coping mechanisms and approaches"*

a) General background

The development of civil registration and vital statistics in South Africa (SA) was presented under three scenarios: pre-1994, 1994-2008 and 2009 and beyond. The first scenario was characterized by fragmented systems, low coverage and selective and untimely reporting. The second scenario represented major changes in the systems that resulted in the revision of legislation, improved coverage, improved reporting on vital statistics and improved operation of the national population register. The third scenario focused more on maintaining the quality of data, especially certification of causes of death.

b) Legal framework

It was indicated that births, deaths stillbirths and marriages were the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs, while divorce fell under the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. The different laws currently in place in South Africa are the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1992, the Marriage Act of 1961, the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998, the Civil Union Act of 2006, and the Divorce Act of 1979.

c) Registration of deaths and stillbirths and challenges encountered

Registration of deaths in South Africa follows different registration procedures depending on the situation and place of death, namely, deaths due to natural cause, other than natural cause, or deaths outside South Africa. It was indicated that burials would only be allowed after notice of the death has been given and a burial order provided. In South Africa, stillbirth is considered for pregnancies with at least 26 weeks of gestation. Burial permits for stillbirths are also required. Registration of death and stillbirth is free in South Africa.

Progressive improvement in the completeness of registration of death was depicted using a gender-based graph for 2001-2006. It increased from 75 per cent in 2001 to 85 per cent in 2006 for males and from 65 per cent to 79 per cent for females for the same period. A time series data on the distribution of registered deaths and late registrations from 1997 to 2005 were also presented. In conclusion, the presenter listed the challenges encountered in death and stillbirth registration as follows:

- No control over collection of information (registration and completion of forms)
- No control over completion of forms
 - Data subject to content errors and omissions
 - Information on education, occupation, industry, place name, population group incomplete and therefore limits analysis
- Under-registration of deaths, particularly among children and the rural population
- Misreporting and insufficient reporting of causes of death on death notification forms
- Late registration of deaths
- Time lag between the event, its registration and its public announcement

d) Registration of births and marriages and challenges encountered

Births are generally required to be registered within 30 days of the event. However, different age categories are provided for late registrations: up to one year, between 1 year and 14 years, and 15 years and older. It was also indicated that no registration of birth is done for a person who dies before notice of birth has been given. Concerning registration of births occurring outside the country, it is required to give notice to the head of SA diplomatic or consular mission, or a regional representative in South Africa. Like for deaths and stillbirths, registration of birth in South Africa is free of charge.

Marriage registration procedures are defined for the different marriage types: civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions. It was indicated that there is a system that allows marriage registration by licensed marriage officers. It was also

indicated that in civil unions, registration services are provided for marriages of persons of the same sex. Time series data on birth registration by status and level of completeness were explained through a graphical presentation. Though there were fluctuations in completeness level, generally there was a general improvement between 2001 and 2006, with the highest completeness level of 95 per cent being recorded in 2006.

The following were the challenges identified in reference to birth and marriage registration:

- No control over collection of information (registration and completion of forms)
- No control over data processing
 - Cannot undertake quality assurance at different stages of data processing
- No access to original forms
 - No way of verifying or investigating non-plausible cases
- Late or non-registration of births and customary marriages

e) Registration and acquisition of data on divorce and observed challenges

Collection of data and information on divorce for statistical purposes is arranged through Statistics South Africa, which designs the form requiring provision of information from the parties after the divorce decree has been granted. The major challenges indicated in reference to divorce registration and data collection include the following: no control over completion of forms, non-response to certain questions, acquisition process resulting in delays and sometimes loss of divorce forms, and inability to determine complete coverage of granted divorces.

f) Availability of vital statistics

It was indicated that statistical reports are produced and disseminated for live births, foetal deaths (stillbirths), deaths, marriages and divorces. However, data are not processed and made available for annulments, judicial separations, adoptions and legitimization.

g) Plans to improve civil registration and vital statistics in the country

The presenter expressed South Africa's conviction that it can make improvements in the following areas:

- Tightening the system to prevent fraud and corruption
- Accessibility of registration centres
- Targeting of hard-to-reach population (orphans, child-headed households, abandoned children, old people, children residing in farms, children born out of health facilities)
- Establishment of efficient infrastructure for recording, processing and storage of the information
- Production of relevant information that meets user-needs
- Correct and detailed certification of causes of death
- Collaboration and statistical partnership with suppliers in order to build capacity to collect (and process where applicable) quality information

ii) Ethiopia: "Preparations for establishing civil registration and vital statistics systems in the country"

a) General background

Ms. Samia Zekaria, Director General of the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia, explained the current status of civil registration and vital statistics systems in the country. It was indicated that the country does not have functional civil registration law and hence has no civil registration system. Currently, registration services are provided through fragmented and non-standard civil status evidence production institutions. It was also revealed that the civil registration method as a source of vital statistics has never been adopted in the country. Nevertheless, several attempts made since the 1900s to enact civil registration laws and other initiatives were demonstrated in the presentation.

b) Shifts in approaches and methods and preparations for establishing conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems

Ms. Zekaria presented details of the activities performed in re-orienting the engagements of the statistics office in the area of

vital statistics to secure vital statistics information through civil registration system. It was indicated that wider consultation and technical debates (in-house and outside the statistics office) were conducted on the limitations of provisional methods of vital statistics, which resulted in a broader recognition for the Government to establish conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems. It was indicated that extensive technical and operational preparations, including awareness and advocacy campaigns were being conducted by different actors from the Government and non-governmental organizations. The presenter also shared the initiative and the commitment showed by the Government in preparing civil registration law supported by research and studies that was drafted following evidence-based legislative techniques. One other aspect of the preparation was the parallel development of user-friendly and integrated civil registration and vital statistics computer program.

c) Strategies followed to put CR&VS on the national agenda

The task explaining the benefits of civil registration to policymakers and legislators was a challenge for a country with no tradition of a systematically working civil registration system. The following were among the strategies recommended:

- Aborting and re-directing the activities of the statistics office's vital statistics department from sample- and survey-based exercises to the full development of conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems
- Conducting technical preparations focusing on methodological research, piloting and assessment
- Establishing close communication, collaboration and involvement of regional States
- Establishment of a national advocacy task force under the leadership of high-ranking government officials and the technical leadership of the Central Statistics Agency
- Advocacy work targeting law-making bodies and parliamentarians

d) Important lessons learned

The following are among the lessons learned:

- Treat civil registration as part of the public service administration and avoid parallel systems of administration and operation of civil registration at the local administration levels.
- Use evidence-based legal drafting techniques to revise or update civil registration laws in Africa.
- Before launching a reform programme or improving civil registration, ensure thorough technical preparations.
- Use United Nations principles and recommendations as standard guiding tools in all endeavours of civil registration and vital statistics improvement.
- Seek government commitment by showing evidence-based demonstrations that reveal the inter-linkages and interdependence between civil registration and the national and sectoral development agendas of the country.
- Keep structural interfaces between statistics and registration offices and develop institutional commitment.

e) Way forward

The following were among the stated future engagements and planned achievements.

- Ethiopia to enact new civil registration laws before the end of 2009
- The CSA to re-engineer its capacity to respond to the new demands for civil registration and vital statistics
- Need for strong support from regional organizations, such as ECA-ACS and international development partners
- Continued collaboration with the rest of Africa in addressing challenges and sharing experiences on CR&VS systems

iii) HMN: "HMN initiatives in civil registration"

Dr. Yoko from HMN/WHO talked about the activities and commitments of international organizations and development partners in helping Africa improve its CR&VS systems. Dr. Yoko said that it was important to answer some fundamental questions in order to enhance health information systems: Who is born? Who dies? Why do they die in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world? She said that those questions could be addressed by generating accurate, reliable and timely data on

population, especially births and deaths. In this respect, the presenter further described the intervention of HMN between 2005 and 2008 through the implementation of the Monitoring of Vital Events (MoVE) project which produced and disseminated the following products: Lancet series 2007, verbal autopsy tools, stepping stones resource kit, computer-assisted training for death certification and coding, and a vital statistics assessment tool.

The presenter shared lessons learned from the recently concluded meetings on civil registration and vital statistics held in Geneva and organized by HMN, in Paris and organized by PARIS21 and HMN, and in Washington DC organized by the World Bank and HMN. The Geneva meeting was a small brainstorming session focusing on countries with low coverage: Ethiopia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia. The meeting addressed the need for a “gold standard” tool that could be practically applied in various country settings at each stage of CR&VS development. It also underscored the need for pooling CR&VS resources to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of health systems. During the PARIS21 meeting, a seminar on CR&VS was organized which called for more advocacy to raise the profile of CR&VS and noted the need to invest in infrastructure in order to improve CR systems in Africa. It also recommended that the PARIS21 secretariat should work with HMN and other partners to integrate CR&VS into national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS). Concerning the World Bank meeting, the presenter shared the issues raised about putting CR higher on the operational agenda. In addressing this question the following issues were proposed for further consideration and action:

- The need to work on the costs and benefits of developing, then running a CR system in different circumstances
- The need to collect and compile evidence that such systems can be developed even in countries with weak local government infrastructure
- To conduct case studies of countries similar to where the Bank works even if there is limited experience
- To conduct a country-by-country regional assessment in Africa, similar to that carried out in Latin America.

The presenter raised a number of issues and proposals for

making a case for civil registration at the global, regional and national levels:

- Increasing interest from countries, international agencies and donors for CR&VS
- Hesitance in stepping out of the comfort zone for all parties involved (health, statistics, governance)
- Critical challenge in bringing together the heads of governments and organizations
 - VS from CR as essential building blocks of country statistical systems for measuring progress (such as MDGs);
 - Civil registration is the only means of generating public health information that confers benefits (social, civil and political rights) to the people, who are the source of the data
- Civil registration needs to be viewed beyond health and statistics. Aggressive advocacy on civil status registration as an instrument for implementing and safeguarding basic human rights and human security:
 - Rights to name, nationality, protection from child marriage, inheritance, welfare scheme
 - Social services such as education and health
- Countries to acknowledge that CR is the information source and a proof that the State recognizes and respects the lives of its citizens

Finally, Dr. Yoko concluded her presentation with some critical questions for the audience:

- Where are the gaps in CR&VS development?
 - Tools
 - Resources
 - Advocacy
- How can we bring in all the stakeholders that would benefit from civil registration systems (at country and international levels)?
 - New technology, involving non-traditional stakeholders in system development
- What can be learned from other regions?
- How do you accumulate knowledge where there is no dedicated professional/academic discipline?

iv) Presentation by Dr. Assefa Bequele: *"The first right - the challenge of universal birth registration in Africa"*

Dr. Assefa gave an overview of the different initiatives on birth registration currently being undertaken in various countries by partner agencies such as UNICEF and PLAN International. He briefly introduced his organization and the recently launched report entitled: "The African Report on Child Wellbeing". Dr. Assefa recalled the relevance of birth registration with international and regional legal foundations, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter. He recalled that birth registration by itself is a right and also an instrument for the implementation and safeguarding of other rights. He demonstrated this by citing examples of some of the critical human rights provisions: birth registration and parenthood; birth registration and nationality; birth registration and social and economic rights; birth registration and property rights and orphan-hood; birth registration as a weapon against age-related abuse and exploitation; birth registration and children in armed conflict; birth registration as an instrument for access to justice; and birth registration and development and governance. He listed some of the most relevant rights that are dependent on birth registration, which include rights to:

- secure a nationality
- access to health care
- ensure universal primary education
- enforce laws on exploitative child labour
- Combat trafficking
- Special protection for children in conflict with the law
- Combat early marriage
- Protect against under-age military service;

Dr. Assefa noted that over 55 per cent of births are unrecorded in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly in rural and among underprivileged groups. Among the obstacles, he mentioned lack of public awareness, traditions, beliefs and taboos; governments' lack of awareness and commitment to implement international obligations; political calculations; weak legislation; inadequate resources and infrastructure; and lack of coherence with other programmes. As a way forward, he called for harmonization of various ongoing initiatives with international principles and the

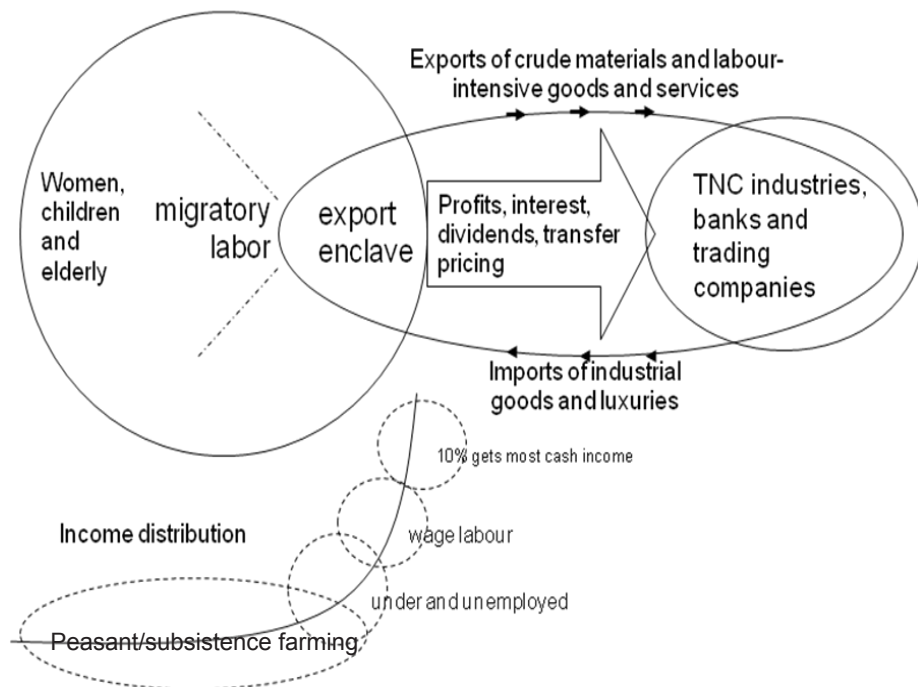
recommendations of CR&VS advocated by the United Nations. In this respect, he proposed to avoid isolated birth registration initiatives that would not satisfy the demographic and health information requirements of civil registration systems. He further mentioned the shortcomings and disadvantages of such isolated birth registration initiatives, such as wastage of resources; burden on registration offices; non-sustainability; and lack of coordination and resource-sharing.

v) Presentation by Prof. Ann Seidman: *"Drafting evidence-based legislation for collecting vital statistics and beyond"*

Prof. Ann started her presentation by taking a broader view of legislative drafting, demonstrating the imbalanced and distorted nature of global resource allocation and utilization. A graphic representation of her analysis is reproduced below.

Four fifths of the world gets one fifth of the world's cash income...

... one fifth of the world gets four fifths of the world's cash income



The presenter explained the shortcomings of current practices of legislative drafting, such as the lack of proper theory or methodology for conceptualizing how to draft evidence-based laws that will help resolve targeted social problems. Legal drafting without theory or methodology falls into one of the four “entropic” drafting methods: interest group bargaining; copying laws from another country, regardless of differing circumstances; criminalizing unwanted behaviours; or drafting in vague, ambiguous terms which grant the relevant social actors discretion to behave as they wish. Prof. Ann introduced the four steps involved in gathering evidence to design effectively implementable legislation, which were developed through institutional legislative theory and methodology for evidence-based legislation.

The four steps that would lead to the preparation of legislative research report, which is a pre-request in drafting evidence-based legislation presented as follows:

Step I: Description of the social problem

- Problem’s surface appearance
- Whose and what problematic behaviors: the institutions that comprise the social problem
 - Role players
 - Implementing agencies

Step II: Explanations for the problematic behaviors

Step III: The legislative solution: detailed provisions

Step IV: Monitoring and evaluation

Prof. Ann further discussed the detailed technical procedures under each of the four steps. Finally, she proposed three possible ways of supporting African countries in their effort to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems. The three propositions are the following:

- African legislative drafting clinic
- Chance to collaborate in preparing research reports and holding critical workshops on social problems or to actually draft needed bills yourselves
(Contact: aseidman@bu.edu; rseidman@bu.edu)
- African parliamentary knowledge network
(Contact: Google search African parliamentary knowledge network for East African resource book)
- International Consortium for Law and Development (ICLAD)

- ICLAD will help create a learning-by-doing process to equip people in countries to write effective research reports and bills.

Discussion and summary

Questions were raised about the procedures used in South Africa to register same-sex marriages, specifically about differentiating between males and females on the registration forms. It was indicated that these are very recent phenomena in Africa, but that in keeping with the United Nations recommendation the gender indicated on birth certificates would not be changed. South Africa shared its experience with divorce registration, including the difficulties in transferring records from the courts to the statistics office. It further elaborated on its experience with the registration of foetal deaths. The basic difference between population registration and civil registration was explained during the discussion. In the case of South Africa, it was mentioned that population registration only referred to citizens, while civil registration referred to the entire population.

A question arose as to the registration of children living in refugee camps. It was indicated that in some cases UNHCR gives certificates for births. The types of registration evaluation methods used in South Africa were explained using a combination of data sources and mechanisms, such as comparing the expected and actual sources, and cross-checking registration data with immunization data. It was also indicated that South Africa uses incentive mechanisms for poor families to register events, including the awarding of cash to families. A question was raised as to Ethiopia's plan to implement its registration system. The presenter indicated that registration would be decentralized with a coordinating agency at the centre.

From the participants, the Ethiopian delegate explained his country's legislative drafting technique and advised other countries to apply it. Some doubts were raised about its proper application in the absence of democracy. In response, it was indicated that drafters should base their conclusions on facts and focus on service delivery and improvement of the justice system. It was also mentioned that CR laws in Africa, which were inherited from colonial times and do not reflect today's context, should be revised and updated as a matter of urgency. Some participants noted that even when good laws are prepared, the problem is often with implementation. Most

participants also pointed to the imbalance created by the economic powers at the international level to bring a real social change to developing countries. The presenter explained the advantages of evidence-based legislative drafting technique in addressing all the challenges indicated during the discussion, as it is based on logic and evidence.

Session 5: Regional and international support and inter-country collaboration for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa

i) Panel discussion

Chair: ECA

Panelists: Development partners

This session was designed for development partners to discuss critical civil registration and vital statistics intervention issues. The panelists included UNSD, AfDB, World Bank, HMN/WHO and AFRISTAT. The focus areas identified as per the organizations' interventions and areas of expertise are presented in annex 5.

The panel discussion was facilitated by Prof. Ben Kiregyera, Director of ACS. The major issues reflected by the panelists and during the panel discussion are summarized below.

The panelist from UNSD indicated that CR&VS was one of the statistical pillars of the Division and confirmed the Division's commitment to continue supporting African countries. He further listed the technical and operational instruments developed by the Division and the technical support extended to countries. He talked about the limitations or absence of sustainable and long-term training programmes in CR&VS for the developing world. He affirmed that UNSD is ready to provide its technical support for the development of appropriate curriculums for CR and to provide courses in regional training institutions and universities. He urged participants to go to the United Nations website to access best practices and other documentations. He reiterated that UNSD was more a professional institution than an advocacy institution, available primarily to serve and support developing countries in

their endeavor to improve their statistical systems, including their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

The panelist from AfDB gave a general background of the Bank's intervention areas, specifically in the region's statistical capacity-building programme and its implementation modalities. The panelist elaborated on the Bank's programme to scale up its multinational statistical capacity-building programme in regional member countries for MDG monitoring and results measurement. The components and focus areas of the programme were as follows: improving statistics on social and poverty issues and on ADF-XI focal areas, which include agriculture and rural development, governance, infrastructure, gender, environment and climate change, data development, archiving and dissemination. The Bank disclosed the resources earmarked for statistical development of the region and urged countries to approach the Bank with feasible projects and programmes. It also stressed on the need for collaboration with other regional and sub-regional organizations, such as SADIC, AFRISTAT and STCs in mobilizing additional technical support and in resource leveraging. It was also mentioned that, as its first priority is to support poor countries, the Bank does not give any money to the rich countries. The panelist indicated that country ownership was the underlining criteria for the Bank support policy and that NSDS was one of the umbrella statistical support programmes of the Bank, into which CR&VS could be mainstreamed.

The panelist from AFRISTAT introduced the mandate, major activities and accomplishments of AFRISTAT and also indicated that while his institution was regional in scope, it was still not well known in some countries. He reviewed, from the technical point of view, the dysfunctional situation of the civil registration system in most African countries. He also examined the failure of demographers to use their expertise to support initiatives going on in various countries. The panelist indicated the competence of AFRISTAT, specifically in the analysis and presentation of data. He further demonstrated the various activities surrounding the five-year statistical capacity development project currently going on with AfDB, where CR could be used to improve the demographic statistics of countries.

The panelist concluded his presentation by emphasizing three important needs: to integrate statistics and registration offices; to enhance the contribution of demographers; and to work on the

analysis of the data existing in countries.

The panelist from the World Bank assured the participants about the Bank's readiness to support civil registration initiatives in Africa. He said the Bank was a major user of statistics and that it considered it an obligation to support countries in their quest to improve their statistical systems. He said that, for the Bank, statistics represented a tool for monitoring its interventions and efforts in various sectors, such as poverty eradication and monitoring of MDGs and debts. It was indicated that country initiatives, ownership and level of commitment are the major criteria considered in resource allocation and endorsement of proposals.

The panelist also called on countries to allocate enough resources for civil registration, which is considered as a measure of commitment to obtain the Bank's support. The Bank also expects countries to update their laws, and working modalities and prepare national statistics strategies that consider the data needs of poverty monitoring systems. The panelist expressed the commitment of the Bank to be active both globally and in the region. He also suggested the need for integrating civil registration in initiatives and new programmes that would be coordinated in the larger national statistical development system.

The panelist from HMN/WHO reiterated the commitment of HMN to support civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa and elsewhere in the developing countries. It was indicated that HMN is more interested in global, regional and national health information systems focusing on births, deaths and causes of death to improve the unsatisfactory situation currently prevailing in Africa.

The panelist from the ECA African Centre for Statistics reiterated how statistics had evolved at ECA in the early 1960s around one of the Divisions of the Commission, where it had stagnated for some years, before being re-establishing as a Division in current ECA organizational chart. The panelist listed the major responsibilities of the Centre, including statistical advocacy; support to countries in undertaking statistical reforms; mainstreaming statistics into national development strategies and processes; preparing handbooks; working on gender statistics; participating in various capacity-building programmes, building the African statistics knowledge base through knowledge- and information-sharing; organizing forums such as workshops; issuing an African newsletter,

and serving as secretariat of the African Statistics Commission. The panelist then pointed to the very vibrant partnership being built with AfDB, HMN, PARIS21, InWent, the World Bank and others, and extended his pledge to continue in the same spirit.

During the plenary session, some of the issues raised were related to the procedures required for submitting proposals and accessing resources available from the banks. Questions were also directed at the banks on the measures being taken to shorten their lengthy processes and to reconsider various preconditions required to access their resources. The panelists from the banks explained the established procedures and improvements being made and also asked the participants to visit their websites for further clarification. Some of the countries, like Malawi, talked about the problems they faced to access the banks, such as being required to go through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some participants requested the banks to establish a separate component for civil registration and vital statistics, noting that the presentations did not show a clear commitment to CR&VS systems. They also mentioned the need to have clear guidelines and action plans for supporting training components and to allocate resources for civil registration as is the case for censuses and surveys. Finally, the non-representation of specialized United Nations agencies such as UNFPA and UNICEF in the panel was raised. The organizers noted that the two agencies had been included in the programme, but that due to conflicting schedules they could not participate in the panel discussion. Nevertheless, though the efforts and interventions of these agencies were appreciated, it was suggested to work more in the future on harmonization, integration and coordination of the various efforts, in order to avoid effort duplication, resource wastage and confusion.

ii) Development of country action plans

Following the panel discussion, individual countries presented their action plans. The purpose of developing the action plan was to obtain a snapshot of country impressions and immediate actions for the improvement of their civil registration and vital statistics systems of their respective countries, based on the inputs they had gathered from the workshop. The organizers further introduced the content of the plan, which was suggested to have the following:

- Brief narration on country situation on CR&VS – one

- paragraph;
- Challenges, opportunities and successes in CR&VS – three paragraphs;
- Objectives of the plan;
- Action points for improving CR&VS in the specific country with time lines and responsible body (including, separate points for CR &VS); and
- Suggested areas for support by development partners, specifically from regional and international organizations if possible by indicating names of the organizations.

Each country delegation was instructed to develop its own action plan and also delegates from statistics and registration offices represented from the same country to work together in producing one plan for the country. Accordingly, countries represented in the workshop have developed their respective action plan and displayed for others to comment on it, specifically on the action point part of the plan. Finally, after incorporating the feedbacks countries have submitted the draft action plans to ACS and also agreed to improve it after going back home.

Session 6: Launching of the African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Network and workshop recommendations

i) Launching of the African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Network

One of the main objectives of the workshop was the launching of the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians. Accordingly, ACS presented a draft proposal for establishing and maintaining the network. The objective of the network is to provide a regional platform for exchanging views, ideas and best practices on civil registration and vital statistics systems in the continent. It also provides a forum for policy dialogue on civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.

All countries in the region are expected to be members of the network, with each country designating two senior experts, one from the registration office and the other from the national statistics office. In addition, the heads of the registration and statistics offices are expected to be copied on all communications related

to the network. Furthermore, the proposal indicated that pertinent regional and international organizations would also delegate representatives to the network, which is expected to be hosted and administered by ACS. The proposal also included the details of the technical structure and major activities of the network, and is attached as annex 6.

ii) Recommendations

The key recommendations of the workshop are presented in four subsections, advocacy, operational, technical and partnership.

Under advocacy, the three major recommendations were that the theme of the 2009 African Statistics Day should be on CR&VS systems; a high-level ministerial meeting of ministers in charge of civil registration should be called; and all African Governments should take appropriate measures to strengthen their CR&VS systems. On the operational side, it was recommended that countries and development partners should participate actively in the network; AfDB, the United Nations in general and UNSD in particular, regional training institutions and other development partners should continue supporting Africa by providing technical, financial and other necessary resources. The workshop further recommended that ACS together with AfDB and other development partners should prepare a medium-term programme and that ACS should organize similar biennial regional workshops on civil registration and vital statistics systems.

On the technical side, the workshop recommended that countries should revisit and update their civil registration laws; cross-training should be encouraged among civil registrars and statisticians; and countries should be encouraged to use United Nations guidelines and recommendations on CR&VS systems. The partnership part of the recommendation included three major issues: ACS and UNSD should strengthen their institutional linkages; other relevant United Nations agencies, NGOs and training institutions should be involved; and also countries should mainstream CR&VS in their NSDS.

Finally, for follow-up actions, there was a call for post-workshop activities, which included the preparation of a compendium of CR&VS systems in Africa and the preparation of a medium-term regional programme. The full content of the workshop recommendations are attached in annex 7.

V

CLOSING OF THE WORKSHOP

The Director General of the National Statistical Bureau of Tanzania, representatives of UNSD, AfDB and the Director of the African Centre for Statistics of the ECA made closing remarks before the workshop was officially closed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Director of the African Centre for Statistics recalled the unique characteristics and benefits of civil registration and its limitations in Africa, as follows: "Vital statistics, that is, statistics on number of births, deaths by age and sex, and medical causes of death, are crucial for good public-health decision-making, and civil registration is the most effective and efficient method of generating these statistics. Civil registration, unlike all other information systems, provides benefits to individuals and communities in terms of legal status, nationality, inheritance, and human rights. Unfortunately, investment in civil registration systems has been fragmented and inadequate in the last four decades, and as a result, few African countries have comprehensive and complete civil registration systems."



The Director re-iterated on how the idea of holding this workshop was evolved and how the participation was enlarged to involve all African countries with the support of AfDB and other development partners. The Director appreciated and greatly honored the presence of the Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in participating in the workshop. He further thanked the host country, and the participants who accepted the invitation and participated very actively in the five day heavily packed workshop programme. He also extended special thanks to individuals who contributed for the successful conclusion of the workshop.

"Civil registration, unlike all other information systems, provides benefits to individuals and communities in terms of legal status, nationality, inheritance, and human rights. Unfortunately, investment in civil registration systems has been fragmented and inadequate in the last four decades, and as a result, few African countries have comprehensive and complete civil registration systems"

Finally, the Director promised to take forward the recommendations made at the workshop with the seriousness and vigor they deserve. In particular, he mentioned to publish the proceedings of this workshop and to disseminate them widely and also to activate the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians using the knowledge management portal of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The Director also promised to continue consultation with the leadership of ECA as well as the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia about the possibility of convening the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in 2010.

The Permanent Secretary called on the participants representing the 40 African countries to collaborate with each other in building the African knowledge base by sharing experiences and information through a network as recommended by the workshop. He also requested the partners and supporters to align their initiatives, harmonize their interests, and integrate their efforts to capacitate the regional platform at ECA. In that respect, he said that “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 in channeling technical assistance, resource mobilization and coordination of international support to African countries to further develop the source of vital statistics.”



“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 in channeling technical assistance, resource mobilization and coordination of international support to African countries to further develop the source of vital statistics”

The Permanent Secretary further expressed the commitment of his Government to correct past drawbacks that neglected civil registration, as was the case in most African countries, and mentioned recent improvements and activities undertaken to strengthen the systems through the Tanzania Statistical Master Plan. Finally, he thanked all the participants and organizers of the workshop and urged the participants to use the knowledge and information they had acquired to improve the civil registration and vital statistics systems in their respective countries. The full closing statements by the Director of ACS and the Permanent Secretary are attached in annex 3.





ANNEXES

Annex - 1

List of Countries and Institutions Represented at the Workshop

Organization	Country
National Statistics Offices	
à l'INSAE COTONOU/INSAE	BENIN
National Statistics Office	Burkina Faso
Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi	République du Burundi
National Statistics Office	Cameroon
National Institute of Statistics (INE)	Cape Verde
Institut Centrafricain Des Statistiques Et Des Etudes Economiques Et Sociales	République Centrafricaine
National Statistics Office/INSEED	Chad
Institut National De La Statistique	Cote d'Ivoire
National Statistics Office	Congo DR
National Statistics Office	Djibouti
National Statistics Office	Eritrea
Central Statistical Agency	Ethiopia
Ghana Statistical Service	Ghana
Institut National des Statistiques	Guinea-Conakry
Ministerio Da Economia, Direcção Geral Da Estatistica (INE)	Guinea-Bissau
Kenya National Bureau of Statistics	Kenya
Bureau of Statistics Lesotho	Lesotho
Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)	Liberia
National Statistical Office	Malawi
Instituto Nacional de Estatistica	Mozambique
Central Bureau of Statistics	Namibia
Institut National de la Statistique	Niger
National Institute of Statistics	Rwanda
NSO/ANSD	Senegal
National Statistiques Bureau	Seychelles
Statistics Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone

Organization	Country
Statistics South Africa	South Africa
Central Statistical Office	Swaziland
National Bureau of Statistics	Tanzania
Central Statistical Office	Togo
National Statistics Office	Tunisia
Uganda Bureau of Statistics	Uganda
Central Statistical office	Zimbabwe
Civil Registration Offices	
Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale	Burkina Faso
Ministère de l'Intérieur	Burundi
Mairie De Bangui	Republique Centrafricaine
Direction Generale Du Plan	Comoros
Adjoint de l'Office National d'Identification (ONI)	Cote D'Ivoire
Ministere de L'Interieur et Securite	DR Congo
CAPMAS	Egypt
Civil Registration System in the Central Region Administration	Eritrea
Ministry of Justice	Ethiopia
National Intelligence and Security Service	Ethiopia
Residents Identification and Civil Status Registration Service Office	Ethiopia
Ministère de l'Intérieur Gabon	Gabon
Births and Deaths Registry	Ghana
Ministère de la Décentralisation et du Developpement Local	Guinea-Conakry
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare	Liberia
Ministère de la Justice	Madagascar
National Registration Bureau	Malawi
Civil Status Division	Mauritius
Hant Commissore of an flan (HCP)	Morocco
National Directorate of Registries and Notaries	Mozambique
Central Registration, Ministry of Home Affairs	Namibia

Organization	Country
Ministère de l'Intérieur de la Sécurité Publique et de la Décentralisation	Niger
MINIJUST	Rwanda
Centre National d'état civil	Senegal
Civil Status Office	Seychelles
RITA	Tanzania
Registrar General's Office	Tanzania - Zanzibar
Uganda Registration Services Bureau	Uganda
Registrar General's Department	Zimbabwe
Regional Training Institutions	
ISSEA	Cameroun
EASTC	Tanzania
IFORD	Cameroun
ENSAE	Senegal
ENSEA	Cote d'Ivoire
Regional Organizations	
ADB	Tunisia
UNECA-African Centre for Statistics (ACS)	Ethiopia
Sub-regional Organization	
AFRISTAT	Mali
International Organizations	
UNFPA	Tanzania
UNICEF	Tanzania
World Bank	Tanzania
WHO	Tanzania
WHO/HMN	Switzerland
Other Organizations	
UDSM	Tanzania
UCGS	Tanzania
NIDA	Tanzania
DATA	Tanzania
The African Child Policy Forum	Ethiopia
ICLAD	USA
Cybersoft PLC	Ethiopia

Annex - 2

Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa

Programme of Work

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
Monday, 29 June 2009		
8:00–8:30	1. Registration of participants	
Opening Session		
8:30–9:00	2. Welcome remarks: Ms. Albina Chuwa, Director General, NBS	
	Opening Statements:.	
	Director, African Centre for Statistics	
	Director, UN Statistics Division	
	Director, Statistics Department, AfDB	
	Hon. Minister of Justice, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	
	Keynote Speaker: Mr. Pali Lehohla, Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission; Chairperson, Statistical Commission for Africa and Statistician General, South Africa	
	Opening Speech: Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, United Republic of Tanzania	
Thematic Issue 1: “Orientation To Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems” Chair: UNFPA		
9:00–9:20	3 Vital statistics and their sources. The presentation introduces and compares the three sources used to obtain vital statistics - civil registration, population censuses and sample surveys— and discusses the purposes for which they are best suited, their major advantages and limitations.	UNSD

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
9:20–9:40	4 The need for a civil registration system. The presentation examines why every country needs a civil registration system. It covers the legal and protective advantages of vital records to individual citizens and considers the administrative and statistical advantages of a well operated and maintained civil registration system.	UNSD
9:40 – 10:20	General discussion	
10:20 – 10:40	Coffee break	
10:40 – 11:00	5 Civil registration system and its use for vital statistics. The presentation identifies the vital events that should be registered and reviews a list of topics and themes and their definitions to be investigated in the registration process for vital statistics purposes.	UNSD
11:00 – 11:20	6 Integration and coordination in the civil registration and vital statistics systems. Civil registration system includes civil registration and all its institutional and technical associations. The process of the compilation, analysis, evaluation, presentation and dissemination of these data in statistical form completes the definition of the vital statistics system. This presentation provides an overview of the coordination necessary among the parts of the civil registration system and the vital statistics system. It also examines the integration of the vital statistics system with other agencies related to registration and vital statistics.	UNSD
11:20 – 12:00	General discussion	
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break	

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
13:30 – 13:50	7 Cause-of-death data collection through the civil registration system. The presentation provides an overview of the international standards on the collection of cause of death data through the civil registration system. The presentation also creates a platform for countries in the region to share good practices in gathering cause of death statistics.	UNSD/ WHO
13:50 – 14:10	8 Evaluating the completeness of the civil registration system. The presentation reviews techniques, both direct and indirect, that can be used to evaluate the completeness of a civil registration system and reported vital statistics.	UNSD
14:10–14:50	General Discussion	
14:50-15:20	Coffee break	
15:20 – 15:50	9 The UN Handbooks on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Introduction and their scope of application in the African Countries	UNSD
15:50-16:30	General Discussion	
Tuesday, 30 June 2009		
Thematic Issue 2: “Challenges and Opportunities of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa”		
Chair: World Bank		
	10	Workshop participants will breakout into working groups: the following are working group topics
8:30-10:20	Group 1: Reviewing and updating Civil Registration Laws in Africa – Challenges and Opportunities	Dr Ann Seidman
	Group 2: Government policies and programmes towards CR&VS systems in Africa – Challenges and Opportunities	UNECA
	Group 3: Keeping the Interface between CR and VS systems - Challenges and Opportunities	UNSD

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
10:20-10:50	Coffee break	
10:50-12:00	11 Working Group presentations and discussion	
12:00-13:30	Lunch Break	
Thematic Issue 3: "Country experiences – Focusing on challenges and opportunities"		
Chair: AfDB		
13:30 – 14:10	12a. Civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries. The presentation provides a platform for countries to share experiences. Countries will present their national civil registration system, focusing on the legal framework, administrative structure, technical settings and government and public involvement. Difficulties and challenges facing while using civil registration system for vital statistics are also covered.	Mauritius, Tunisia & Ghana
Country presentations :		
14:10 – 14:50	General discussion	
14:50 - 15:20	Coffee break	
15:20- 16:00	12b. Civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries (cont.)	Egypt, & Tanzania & Niger
Country presentations		
16:00 – 16:30	General discussion	
Wednesday, 1 July 2009		
8:30 – 9:10	12c. Civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries (cont.) Country presentations:	Madagascar & Seychelles
9:10 – 10:00	General discussion	
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30– 12:00	13 Visit to the Tanzanian Department of Registrar General	

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break	
Thematic Issue 4: “Emerging New Approaches and Initiatives towards Improving CR&VS systems in Africa”		
Chair: UNSD		
13:30-14:00	14 South African CR&VS systems after the 1990s: Coping Mechanisms and Approaches	South African Experience
14:00-14:30	15 Preparations to establish CR&VS systems following the conventional registration method – the presentation will start with the concepts and principles of registration method and its application in the Ethiopian context, how to pilot CR&VS, procedures and techniques applied in reviewing CR law, advocacy strategies and stakeholders involvement, development of CR&VS computer software, register-based vital statistics reporting, data capturing, compilation and data utilization. Also application of CR&VS principles in a federal and decentralized administration system will be reviewed.	Ethiopian experience
14:30 – 15:10	General discussion	
15:10 – 15:30	Coffee break	
15:30 – 15:50	16 Introducing Monitoring of vital events (MoVE) toolkit, sharing lessons learnt from Geneva, PARIS21 and World Bank meetings on civil registration and vital statistics	HMN/WHO and other relevant partners
15:50-16:10	17 Universal Birth Registration (UBR) and related initiatives	UNICEF/ African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)
16:10-16:30	General Discussion	

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
Thursday, 2 July 2009		
8:30-9:10	18 International experience on law drafting techniques and its application to civil registration laws Presentation & Discussion	Dr ANN
Thematic Issue 5: "Regional and international support and inter-country collaboration towards improving CR&VS systems in Africa" Chair: TANZANIA		
9:10-9:40	19a. Panel discussion: Delegates from Regional & International organizations	Lead: UNECA-ACS List of Panelist: UNSD, WB, ADB
9:40 – 10:20	Discussion	
10:20 – 10:50	Coffee break	
10:50 – 11:20	19b. Panel discussion: Delegates from Regional & International organizations	Lead: UNECA-ACS List of Panelist: HMN/WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA
11:20 – 12:00	General Discussion	
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30 – 16:30	20 Country action plan development on Civil registration and vital statistics systems	Country delegates
Friday, 3 July 2009		
Thematic Issue 6: Way forward/Recommendation Chair: UNECA		
9:00 – 10:00	21 Plenary: Feed back on Country action plan	
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30 – 12:00	22 Conclusions and Recommendations	UNECA-ACS/UNSD

Time	Topic	Presenter/ Facilitator
	Presentation and discussion of the summary of the workshop's proceedings: conclusions and recommendations on how to improve civil registration and the quality of vital statistics in African countries.	
12:00 – 12:30	23	Closing: Remarks: ECA, UNSD Closing statement: Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs

Annex - 3

Opening and Closing Speeches and Statements

Opening Statements

Welcoming Remarks by Albina A. Chuwa

The Director General, National Bureau of Statistics: Tanzania

The Hon. Minister of Affairs Tanzania,
The Hon. Minister of Justice, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
The Director, African Centre for Statistics, UN Economic Commission for Africa,
The Director, Statistics Department African Development Bank,
The Chair, UN Statistical Commission and the Statistical Commission for Africa,
The Representative of the Director, UN Statistical Division,
Your Excellencies Representative of International Organizations,
Invited Guests,
Workshop Participants,
Member of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honourable Guest of Honour, on behalf of the National Bureau of Statistics and on my own behalf I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to Tanzania and to thank you for agreeing to come to Tanzania to participate in this important workshop on Civil and Vital Registration System.

In particular I would like to extend my special welcome to the Minister of Justice of Ethiopia and his delegation, the Director of African Centre for Statistics at ECA, the Director, Statistics Department the African Development Bank, the Chair and the Representatives of the UN Statistical Division. Let me extend my special thanks and appreciation to UNECA for availing the opportunity of hosting the regional workshop on Civil and Vital Registration Systems to Tanzania. To us Tanzanians, it is a pleasure.

Honorable Guest and Honour, today National Statistics Offices are facing a lot of challenges on the production of official statistics for better and evidence based planning. One way of alleviate this problem is by collecting official

statistics through the Civil and Vital Registration System. However, every one of us here knows that the civil and vital registration systems of many African countries are not functioning well, leading to difficulties and challenges when faced with the need of reliable source of statistics especially on vital events.

Honorable Guest and Honour, this workshop is unique in the sense that it is meant to build capacity of statisticians, demographers, government officials and policy makers in the area of civil and vital registration. In particular the workshop is expected to improve the participant's knowledge and understanding of the Civil and Vital Registration Systems and their roles in measuring development progress and social change in Africa as well as establishing Civil and Vital Registration System network to provide a regional platform of exchanging of views, ideas and best practices on Civil and Vital Registration System in the continent.

As such the National Bureau of Statistics is calling upon the participants to actively participate in the workshop discussions so as to come up with the best ways to improve the civil and vital registration system first in our countries and later on in Africa.

Honorable Guest and Honour, I am convinced that the participants are eager to hear from the organizers. I do hope that the workshop will be fruitful by ensuring that the presented materials are thoroughly digested and that at the end of the workshop the participants are well equipped to face the challenges that are hampering the functioning of our Civil and Registration Systems. With this few remarks may I take this opportunity to welcome you again to this workshop and I wish you a happy stay in Dar-es-Salaam.

Thank you for your attention.

Opening Statement

Prof. Ben Kiregyera

Director, African Centre for Statistics
UN Economic Commission for Africa

The Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania,

The Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
The Chairperson, UN Statistical Commission and the Statistical Commission for Africa,

The Director of the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank,
The Representative of the Director of the UN Statistics Division in N.Y,
Your Excellencies representatives of international organizations and agen-

cies,
Invited Guests,
Workshop participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

The UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa would have liked to be here to make a statement. In the event, his other demanding engagements could not allow him to be with us at the opening of this very important workshop. He has, therefore, asked me to tell you that he is very much supportive of the important work we are embarking on together.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to join our host, the Director General of the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, in welcoming you all to this regional workshop. In a very special way, permit me to welcome the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and to thank them for gracing this workshop with their presence. It is rare that a Minister attends a workshop as a participant. I am happy to inform you that the Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be a distinguished participant in this workshop this whole week. Permit me also to extend special welcome to the Keynote Speaker at this opening function, Mr. Pali Lehohla, who is the current Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission and the Statistical Commission for Africa. He is also the Statistician-General of South Africa.

Civil registration systems record vital events, on a continuing basis, particularly on births, deaths and causes of death. The information from these systems is essential for compiling vital statistics and establishing and protecting identities, citizenship and property rights. The systems can also be an instrument for protecting human rights and information from them is undoubtedly important to inform public policy and monitor social and economic development. At least six (6) Millennium Development Goals rely on data that derive from these systems. We also need these systems to be able to project population size on an annual basis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a scandal of immense proportion that at the turn of the third millennium, few countries in Africa and Asia have complete civil registration systems. In the case of Africa, only two small island countries of Mauritius and Seychelles

have complete registration of births, deaths and causes of death. South Africa is another African country where registration of births and deaths is high but its cause of death data are suspect. The Working Group on Monitoring Vital events has called this “A scandal of Invisibility” because “Most people in Africa and Asia are born and die without leaving a trace in any legal record or official statistics. Absence of reliable data for births, deaths and causes of death are at the root of this scandal of invisibility, which renders most of the world’s poor as unseen, unaccountable and hence uncounted”. This scandal has serious implications for vital statistics, human and constitutional rights, policy and national development.

There are many reasons why civil registration systems are weak in Africa. The workshop will go into these reasons, so I will not pre-empt the deliberations of the workshop on this. But permit me to say that the main actors in the development of the 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. For instance, 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. Secondly, there has been little political will and commitment to develop effective civil registration systems in Africa. Therefore the presence at this workshop of the Ministers from Tanzania and Ethiopia under whose docket civil registration falls, is testimony of the political will to develop civil registration systems in these two countries. Our challenge is how to get the message across to other Ministers in Africa. Should we organize a Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration Systems in Africa? This is something this workshop may want to consider.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In the last few years, leading pan-African institutions have been strengthened so that they can better support the development of statistics in African countries. At the UN Economic Commission for Africa, an African Centre for Statistics was established with full Division status in late 2006. At the African Development Bank, the Statistics Division was up-graded to a full Department of Statistics. And at the African Union Commission, a Statistics Unit was established. In 2007, these institutions established an African Statistical coordination Committee to harmonize their delivery of assistance and services to countries. These institutions, working under the Statistical Commission for Africa, which is the apex inter-governmental body in charge of statistics in the continent, believe that they have a historic duty to handle

seemingly intractable issues that have hindered statistical development in Africa – issues related to gender statistics, informal sector statistics, climate change and environmental statistics, governance statistics, civil registration and vital statistics, etc. These regional institutions are also working in partnership with external partners such as the UN Statistics Division, InWent of Germany, the World Bank, PARIS21, UN agencies and bilateral donors. It is in this spirit that this regional workshop has been jointly organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the UN Statistics Division and InWent of Germany. I should mention that the UN Statistics Division has a special role to play in this workshop. It has produced 7 handbooks, including the “Principles and Recommendations for Vital Statistics System”. These should guide the development of civil registration and vital statistics systems in the developing world.

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. In the near future, it is my expectation that statistical training centres which are represented at this workshop will take note of this huge gap in their training programmes and collaborate with the African Centre for Statistics and the African Development Bank in developing appropriate curriculum for proactively intervening and supporting our nations to develop and strengthen their civil registration systems. National Statistical Associations should also do more to advocate for resources to strengthen civil registration systems. Let me also mention that in Africa, attempts to address the problem of civil registration have used project-oriented and piecemeal approaches rather than the recommended long-term and sustained interventions. Africa must come up with new approaches and initiatives, hence the theme of this workshop. We should do more to explain the urgency of the matter and to elicit more commitment from our ministers and policy makers. Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Ethiopia and other countries have shown us the way.

Let me state without equivocation that the African Centre for Statistics has taken civil registration and vital statistics systems as one important pillar in its strategy to change the statistical landscape in Africa in order to meet the data challenges of the 21st century including data for informing national development programmes and plans as well as the MDGs. In this connection, we plan to launch at this very workshop, an African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Network (AfCRVSN) that will provide a regional platform for policy dialogue, exchange of views, ideas and best practices on this important subject in our continent.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

This regional workshop brings together officials from government departments responsible for civil registration and the National Statistical Offices from 48 African countries; representatives of regional statistical training centres; representatives of regional economic communities; and representatives of international and bilateral organizations. We could not have got a better mix of experts to address issues germane to civil registration and vital statistics. These experts will also share experience. We have a packed programme running for a whole week and at the end of the week, I am sure, we will have made some progress at least in understanding what needs to be done to address issues that have constrained development of civil registration systems in our countries.

Why did we choose Tanzania as a venue for this workshop? Tanzania like many other countries in Africa have devolved administration and planning functions to lower tiers of government – districts. Several districts in this country are implementing sentinel demographic surveillance systems that entail routine monitoring of vital events. Secondly, the country has designed the Tanzania Statistical Master Plan (TSMP) as a framework for the development of sustainable capacity for statistical development in the country. It is crucial that issues to do with civil registration system are addressed in the implementation of this master plan. We will hear from our colleagues from Tanzania about their efforts in developing the civil registration systems and the statistical master plan. Let me take this opportunity to thank the National Bureau of Statistics and the government of Tanzania for agreeing to host this important regional workshop.

On behalf of the African Centre for Statistics, I would like to present the 2009 Statistics Calendar and pad folios with a lot of advocacy materials to: the Honorable Ministers from Tanzania and Ethiopia, the Keynote Speaker, the Director of the Statistics Division of the African Development Bank, the Representative of the Director of the UN Statistics Division and our good host, the Director General of the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics. The calendar and other advocacy materials have important messages about how statistics are used in various areas of development.

Finally, let us together build a strong network of experts and a community of practice to take forward recommendations from this important workshop. Let this regional workshop have footprints on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa.

Thank you for listening to me.

Opening Statement

Mr. Srdjan Markic

Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section, UNSD

Honorable Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania,
Honorable Minister of Justice of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia,
Chairman of the United Nations Statistical Commission, Mr. Pali Lehohla
Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA,
Chief Statistician of the African Development Bank
Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of the United Republic
of Tanzania, Ms. Albina Chuwa

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues

On behalf of Prof. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, it is my honor and privilege to have this opportunity to address such a distinguished audience at the opening of the Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa titled “Towards New Initiatives and Approaches”.

The basic premise of this workshop – 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 and started to focus more closely and specifically implement in the past two decades. And vital statistics is crucial and irreplaceable component of national statistical systems as it generates numerical profile of the most precious resource of any country – its human capital. This paradigm of relationship of civil registration and vital statistics was unambiguously endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the apex body of international statistics, whose current chairman’s keynote address to this workshop will no doubt reinforce the importance of this approach.

The lack of relevant statistics on births, deaths, marriages and divorces has an adverse impact on the ability of defining and identifying proper priorities in shaping policies that reach every citizen in the country. It also makes it very difficult to deeply analyze the inner development of societies in the area of basic social constructs – childbearing, family formation, marrying and the dissolution of marriages, aging and mortality, to name a few.

As this workshop will elaborate, 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.

As much as statistics is concerned about civil registration there are many other stakeholders that have vested interests in its proper functioning and coverage. Civil registration is closely associated with the exercise of essential human rights. It is also critical in ensuring that all have equal access to government provided services based on eligibility that is often documented by having a birth certificate, for example. Civil registration is entrusted in issuing legal documents that last one's whole life and attest to its passing.

Most distinguished high-level officials, ladies and gentlemen

We all know very well that civil registration system, with notable few exceptions, is not really functioning well in most of Africa. One of the direct consequences is the shortage of timely, reliable, frequent and small area vital statistics.

Hence the challenge: establish civil registration system in a universal, mandatory, continuous and permanent basis, ensure direct connection to the national statistical system and the production of reliable vital statistics; protection of human rights; equal access to service; dignity of citizenship; government protection if and when needed.

Let remind all of us of the basic purpose of this workshop:

Strengthen national capacities to build and operate complete and universal civil registration system that will generate accurate vital statistics by

- Providing training on the implementation of the United Nations guidelines and international standards on civil registration and vital statistics
- Assess the current status of civil registration and vital statistics systems in participating countries, and
- Establish the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians

Also, we hope to spark the civil registration/vital statistics momentum that will hopefully be maintained for years to come. The presence and support of such impressive number of high level officials gives us hopes that ultimately Africa will be able to register every single birth, death, marriage and divorces and generate consistent, reliable and valuable vital statistics.

Allow me to assure you that the United Nations in general, and its Statistics Division in particular, will continue to strongly and consistently support the

work at national, sub-regional and regional level to achieve these goals. It is therefore encouraging and rewarding to witness the joint efforts of so many institutions and agencies that are put together for this occasion: the African Development Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, World Health Organization and so skillfully hosted by the National Statistical Bureau of the United Republic of Tanzania in this dynamic and radiant city of Dar es Salaam. The United Nations Statistics Division, as a co-organizer of this event, is confidently looking forward to the successful outcome and results.

In that spirit, I thank you for your attention.

Opening Remarks

Charles Leyeka Lufumpa

Director, Statistics Department
African Development Bank Group

Honorable Ministers
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

On behalf of the African Development Bank Group, I would like to welcome all participants to this workshop on civil registration and vital statistics in Africa. Let me also take this opportunity to thank our hosts the Tanzania Statistics Office and the Government of Tanzania for the wonderful hospitality extended to all of us and for making this workshop possible. We are particularly honored by the presence of the two Honorable Ministers from Ethiopia and Tanzania who in spite of their busy schedules have made it a point to be with us today. We thank you Honorable Ministers for your kind support.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting is a doubly auspicious one for Africa. It comes at a time when major development initiatives are being pursued at the global and regional levels, when the international community is giving serious attention to Africa's development problems and is prepared to scale up the flow of investment resources, particularly ODA and debt relief, to the continent to help African countries make real progress towards achieving the MDGs. It also comes at a time when African countries and their development partners are putting great stress on not only scaling up resources to the continent but also ensur-

ing their development effectiveness. 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 center 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. Beyond the obvious benefits of informing development policy management, civil registration and vital statistics are at the center of the interface between population dynamics and planning and implementation of development programs in such areas as education, health, housing, urban development and public utilities.

Unfortunately, in spite of their obvious benefits for fostering development, civil registration and vital statistical systems in Africa remain awfully underdeveloped. We are all here because we recognize this sad situation and we want to commit ourselves to bring about improvements in this area and ensure the availability of more reliable and timely information to support development efforts in our countries.

The Role of the AfDB

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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 which we are emphasizing as part of our efforts to improve MDG monitoring on the continent. In these efforts, we are working very closely with our valued partners, ECA. Together we have been able to bring about some notable improvements over the years in the statistics landscape in Africa and this workshop marks the beginning of our joint efforts to bring about similar improvements in the area of civil registration and vital statistics. I have no doubt that with the full commitment of everyone, we shall indeed succeed.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Opening Statement

H.E. Mr. Berhan Hailu

Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania,
The Chairperson, UN Statistical Commission and the Statistical Commission
for Africa,

The Director of the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank,
The Representative of the Director of the UN Statistics Division in N.Y,
Your Excellencies representatives of international organizations and agen-
cies,

Invited Guests,

Workshop participants,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and privilege for me and my government to participate and deliver an opening statement on this important and historic workshop that brought delegates from all corners of Africa to learn and share their experiences on this timely and delicate subject; Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. To be honest with you, it is very recently that I had the chance to know very closely about civil registration and vital statistics and that is why I decided to be part of this workshop primarily to learn from you experts on the subject.

Ethiopia as you all know has a huge population; well over 73 million people. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia that was enacted in 1995, structured the country following a federal and decentralized administration system, with nine regional governments and two city administrations. The country's political system is made up of two tiers of parliament, the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation. The State governments are autonomous that they have their own legislative, executive and judicial branch of administrations. Generally, the administrative hierarchy within the state is composed of a regional capital, zones, weredas or districts, and kebeles, where kebeles are the lowest administrative units in urban and rural areas.

The provision of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia provides the executive branch to take measures that empower the people to self administration, and ensure their participation and leadership of their own socio-political and economic issues at the local administration level.

After the downfall of the former military dictatorial regime in 1991, Ethiopia has been embarking on new democratic and developmental system registering significant economic, social and political achievements. The democratization process of the country with the popular participation of the general public has encouraging results both in the economic, social and justice sectors. Among others the economy has been registered double digit growth which is on the average 11% per annum for the last five consecutive years that never ever happened in the country's contemporary history. Even at times of the current global financial crisis, despite the challenges of inflation and shortage of hard currency, the economy is expected to grow by 10.2% this year. The country has also significant performances in the social sector like education and health towards achieving the millennium development goals. This is a significant economic and social development in non-oil producing country, Ethiopia and benefiting the majority of the population, especially the disadvantaged and the rural poor.

The government is also committed to enhance democracy and good governance through its civil service and justice system reform programmes and bring about radical and fundamental change in the country to the advantage of the people. All together these are the efforts and successes of Ethiopians and the efforts and successes of Africans.

However, despite enormous political, economic, social and good governance efforts made in the past decade, specifically in the devolution of power to the local administration and the people, the government realized the need for the basic information link that legally binds the government with the individual, the family (which is the basic social unit) and the community. That source of legal and social information which brings the linkage between the government and the individual through the administration system is the civil registration system.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ethiopia is among the very few African countries with no functional civil registration law. In fact, from the literature of country experiences, we have understood that having a law by itself is not enough to ensure and guarantee the effectiveness of civil registration system. Because, for some African countries with over 100 years old laws, progress achieved in the coverage and completeness of civil registration is still unsatisfactory.

Ethiopia has civil registration laws in the book, since 1900s and the practice of issuing certificates of vital events in a scanty and sub-standard proce-

dures in big cities is being practiced since the 1930s. However, after reviewing the laws and the practices we found that these laws, practices and services do not involve the general public; that they do not align with the very basic principles of the Constitution; and also that do not consider the standard and international recommendations of registration of vital events. 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. Since all the past practices and exercises of civil registration have not been addressing the above mentioned major components, we agreed to re-engineer the system and put it on the right track.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Re-engineering a system and putting on the right track is not an easy task. In the course of this workshop, you would be hearing more about the initiatives and methodologies we followed in Ethiopia in establishing comprehensive and complete civil registration and vital statistics, from the presentation of Ms Samia, the Director General of the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, I would like to mention here just a few important landmark activities. From reviewing other African countries experience, we have realized the importance of accomplishing meticulous type of technical preparations and also ensuring the political leadership and ownership of the system development initiatives, before embarking on actual registration operation. Accordingly, with the technical leadership of the CSA and the involvement of regional states, and through the collaboration of other government and non-governmental organizations, such as, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, UNICEF, PLAN Ethiopia and The African Child Policy Forum; intensive and pragmatic type of studies and researches on the management, operation and feasibility of the system were conducted. On the other hand, based on the findings of the study various advocacy works for technicians, policy makers and even MPs were conducted.

As to the political leadership and ownership, the process has started by involving the ministerial committee, that is, the Justice System Reform Board, which I am a member, in reviewing and endorsing the civil registration leg-

islative research study and the draft law. The very peculiar situation that I should mention here for you with respect to the legislative research study and the draft law is that drafting of civil registration law was taken as one of the four priority laws to be drafted following evidence-based legislative drafting technique, which is exercised for the first time in the country. I am also informed from the workshop agenda that there would be a session that would use the Ethiopian legislation exercise as a case study in reviewing and updating civil registration laws in Africa.

In connection with the initiatives and efforts being underway in establishing conventional civil registration and vital statistics systems in Ethiopia, I would also like to invite you to visit the exhibits of a local computing firm, called CyberSoft, here with us that brought demonstrations of the efforts made in developing a customized integrated civil registration and vital statistics computer program for Ethiopia. At this juncture, I would like to thank CyberSoft PLC for its dedication and relentless effort in developing such a user-friendly computer program and for being here by sponsoring itself. The government of Ethiopia gives more emphasis and priority to the application and adaptation of latest Information and Technology solutions in all arenas of development programs and poverty alleviation strategies. The government already started implementing wereda/district-net program that will connect the over 700 woredas/districts of the country with IT technology that in the near future will scale-up to cover and connect over 20 thousand kebele administrations. Such parallel technology advancements will lend its resources to civil registration operations at the local level that will highly reduce the cost of civil registration to the lowest level.

In the above statements, I just tried to highlight you, how much the government of Ethiopia is committed to establish the system and also the urgency that the country is looking forward for a speedy, efficient, sustainable and cost-effective techniques to reach acceptable completeness level in a very short time span. Ethiopia would not tolerate further delays of this long overdue development agenda, primarily because:

- 1) as a government we should know the people we serve;
- 2) our planning and budgeting system has its own deficiencies due to the limitations of the census;
- 3) the national identity and security system needs legal records of our citizens;
- 4) the court system in order to provide speedy justice, requires properly registered evidences of occurrences of vital events;
- 5) some basic rights and privileges of citizens enshrined in the Constitution for their proper implementation require records of vital event registration; and

6) our health extension workers in the communities could not effectively deliver life saving services without systematically recorded birth and death registration information.

Furthermore, our MDG progress monitoring and tracking system is again incomplete due to the absence of current and sustainable flow of information coming from vital statistics: where critical development indicators, such as, infant mortality, maternal mortality, causes of death and current and accurate population estimates and projections could not be availed at the required level, frequency and on a timely basis without a universal and complete civil registration system. These are just to mention the major and few benefits and services of civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We delegates from Ethiopia are very much delighted for having this opportunity to share with you our initiatives and also learn a lot from your experience and challenges. Beyond our participation in the plenary, I would be glad to meet in bi-lateral discussion with some of the country delegates here. I am also very much honored to meet Honorable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania and would like to congratulate him for hosting this important meeting.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Finally, allow me to thank Prof. Ben Kiregyera, the Director of African Centre for Statistics of UNECA for inviting me to this workshop and facilitating my travel to the beautiful city, Dar es Salaam. To be honest, this mission has not been in my schedule and hence the support of the UNECA has been very critical. I would like also to extend my appreciation for the generous support provided by the African Development Bank in sponsoring this workshop and also facilitating my mission here in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I also would like to join my colleagues to congratulate all those directly or indirectly supported the workshop to be a reality.

Lastly, on behalf of the government of Ethiopia, I urge delegates of this workshop whom representing Africa, to cooperate and support each other in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems that would benefit each and every individual citizen of our nations and to request your commitment in promoting civil registration as priority development agenda for Africa. At this juncture, I would also urge regional and international development partners, to join hands in supporting Africa in managing this critical development intervention that promotes democracy and good governance in Africa.

I thank you all and wish you a successful workshop.

Keynote address

Pali J. Lehohla,

Chairperson of the UN Statistics Commission,
Chairperson, Statistical Commission for Africa and Statistician General,
South Africa

“PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS IN AFRICA – THE ROLE OF STATISTICAL AGENCIES”

I wish to thank the organizers and sponsors of this workshop: the African Centre for Statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Statistics Division and the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania – Asante Sana. I wish to extend my gratitude for having been given the opportunity to give a keynote address at this regional workshop meant to promote and strengthen the capacity of civil and vital registration systems in Africa.

I am specifically grateful that arrangements were made to have representatives from the Ministries or Agencies in charge of Civil and Vital Registration Systems) and representatives from National Statistics Offices (responsible for the production of vital statistics from civil registration). I believe that following this workshop, each African country represented here will be able to promote and strengthen the capacity of civil and vital registration system in their respective countries to produce accurate and reliable indicators for measuring development progress and social change. I strongly encourage that the deliberations from this workshop should also be forwarded to all other African countries that are not represented in this workshop.

It is hoped that we will all take an important lesson from the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development work in which the statistical community in Africa continue to show great commitment to statistical development and census undertaking and work towards complete vital registration of our populations.

Background

The importance of vital registration system dates as far back as the times of the London Bills of Mortality, which began to be made in London after an outbreak of plague in 1592. The number of deaths was compiled on a weekly and an annual basis. In many parishes, the bills were rough accounts of the causes of death, and over the years this information became more precise, though it was not necessarily consistent from one parish to another. The procedure was made more formal and systematic throughout England in 1603, and continued until it was superseded by the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1836. John Graunt published his analyses in *Natural and Political Observations ... on the Bills of Mortality* in 1662, a work that became the

founding classic of the modern sciences of vital statistics and epidemiology. He was interested in the impact of epidemic outbreaks of plague, the impact of death and its causes on men and women, and the relative merits of living either in a city such as London or in the country.

Civil registration for births, marriages and deaths has a very long history, dating back to 1575 in the Netherlands, 1608 in Sweden, 1632 in the United States, 1748 in Norway, 1792 in France, 1837 in England and Wales, 1845 in Ireland, 1848 in New Zealand, 1855 in Scotland and 1860 in Canada (to cite just a few examples).

The earliest vital records in the Netherlands were made by the churches. Civil authorities began recording marriages of nonconformists in 1575. France annexed the country between 1795 and 1811 and made civil officers responsible for keeping vital records. Civil registration was accomplished by requiring the people to report all births, marriages, and deaths to a civil registration office located in the municipality. After the Kingdom of the Netherlands became a country in 1814, the government continued the civil registration system.

Population registration in Sweden was originally maintained by the Church of Sweden and the oldest preserved records are from the early 17th century. The first law regarding registration of the population was enacted in 1608. The oldest continuous national records system is that of Sweden (since 1741). In England and Wales, civil registration was expanded in 1927 to include stillbirths and adoptions. Initially in Ireland, legislation provided for the registration of civil marriages and for the regulation of non-Catholic marriages. It was in 1864 that Catholic marriages, births and deaths were included. Roman Catholic priests in New France (Quebec) began keeping vital records in the 1620s. In 1860, some provincial governments recognized the need for accurate vital records but it was in the late 1920s that complete registration in all provinces and territories was achieved. In Denmark, civil registration system was established in 1968, although national registration of Danish residents was first established in 1924.

Today, civil registration is almost complete in many developed countries. Setel et al. (2007) noted that published figures on fertility, mortality and cause-specific mortality in developed countries are based on data from functioning civil registration system. It was estimated that death registration was 86% complete and birth registration 92% complete in Europe during the period 1995-2004 (Mahapatra et al., 2007).

Africa

Some African countries in many ways followed the same kind of a historical development of civil registration system, mainly influenced by their colonial governments. In Mauritius, the first general order requiring the clergy to keep a register of baptisms, marriages and burials was passed in 1667 under the French rule. By 1799, the responsibility of the registration of vital events was transferred to the Municipalities and in 1803 it was decreed that each district should have a Civil Commissioner responsible for the keeping of registers of births, marriages and deaths. Stillbirths were included in 1807. The registration of births and deaths has been complete in this country for many decades.

Vital registration in Ghana (then Gold Coast) began in 1888. However, at its inception, it was restricted to the registration of deaths mostly of expatriate workers of the then colonial government who were mostly resident in the few commercial towns in the country. The registration of births was introduced in 1912. The Births and Deaths Registration Act was passed in 1965 and makes the registration of births and death compulsory in all parts of the country. The Act also provides for the registration of foetal deaths.

In Tanzania, the Law on births and deaths was written by the colonial British Government in 1920 and started to function in 1921. The registration that was conducted during this time was targeted at Europeans and the Asians. Indigenous Africans were not encouraged to register. In 1981, the United Nations Population Fund assisted Tanzania through the Civil Registration Project that aimed at ensuring that births and deaths were registered immediately after occurrence. Currently, the government has managed to cover 66 districts but registration only takes place at the health centre level.

Civil registration in Uganda was created in 1904 and covered the entire country by 1930. This success was completely unraveled as a result of political turmoil in the country. Similarly, birth registration was 80% in 1973 in Rwanda, but is currently one of the countries with the lowest levels of birth registration. In addition, Sierra Leone, also affected by civil war, had their vital registration infrastructure destructed. In 2002, it was estimated that birth registration ranged from 40% among children aged below five years living in rural areas, to 66% for those living in urban areas.

The registration of deaths in South Africa goes as far back as 1842 in Cape, while that of marriages to 1848 in the same province and births to 1868 in Natal. In South Africa, the development of the national vital statistics system occurred within the context of the political history in the country. Before 1910, the registration of births, marriages and divorces was decentralized for each

of the four colonies (Cape, Transvaal, Natal and Free State). In 1923, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act was passed, which made registration compulsory for all races in urban areas but voluntary for Africans in the rural areas. The National Population Register was implemented in 1972 for the white, colored and Indian population groups. It was only from 1986 that the records included the black population group. In 1991, the Population Registration Act Repeal Act was passed to abolish the distinction made between population groups. The Births and Death Registration Act was passed in 1992, making registration of births, deaths and stillbirths compulsory. In essence, South Africa started with a system that only covered the white population group, but the country now has a system covering the whole population.

It has been noted that other African countries are making good progress in civil registration and vital statistics but generally, civil registration in Africa is not functioning properly. Only 7% of births and 5% of deaths were registered during the period 1995-2004 (Mahapatra, 2007). There are still other countries in Africa that do not have a functioning civil registration and vital statistics system, for example Ethiopia and Malawi. However, there are a number of ongoing efforts by various institutions towards creating this system.

The background provided on civil registration in several parts of the world has lessons for us: (1) registration of vital events took place in an incremental manner, that is, registration started with one event, followed by one more and so on; (2) registration started to cover only a portion of the population, before it extended to all people; (3) African countries are still lagging behind in their civil registration systems; (4) systems may be in place but may be affected by armed conflicts and political instability although countries such as Rwanda have been able to make sterling progress after 1994 and currently has registered approximately 95% of its population including those in the Diaspora.

Civil registration system and vital statistics

A good registration system should be continuous, complete, permanent and compulsory, as prescribed by the United Nations. Vital statistics generated through civil registration systems are the major source of continuous monitoring of births and deaths and other vital events over time. We all recognize the importance of civil registration and vital statistics. Through civil registration, a person's existence is recognized – identities, citizenships and property rights are established and protected, crucial data is provided to policy makers charged with designing and planning health systems; and access to services is enabled. However, the system may also be abused as was the case in Rwanda. During the genocide, birth certificates were used to identify the ethnic origin of children and to commit targeted atrocities (UNICEF,

2001, cited in UNICEF, 2007).

However, not everybody recognizes these important aspects, which is where our challenge lies. Civil registration system in Africa has significant difficulties pertaining to the following problems, which makes the system inefficient:

- Inadequate registration facilities
- Lack of motivation to register on the part of the population due to ignorance about the importance of registration, leading to low levels of registration
- Delays in registration of events
- Inadequate field personnel
- Lack of infrastructure
- Delays of administrative procedures in force
- Poor management of data on vital records and poor preservation of vital records on civil registration
- Multiple registrations
- Unavailability of data processing and analysis tools
- Poor quality of data
- Penalty for late registration of events in some countries and not in all

All these problems, which are not exhaustive, cause the data collected to be unreliable, outdated and lead to lack of information needed for decision-making and for development planning. The lack of reliable and good-quality statistics is a major obstacle to assessment of changes in development indicators in many African countries (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007). As Boseley (2007) quoted AbouZahr, “collecting statistics may seem expensive, but it is much more expensive to misallocate your resources because you don’t have good data”. It has been noted that only a few developing countries have been able to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems in the past 50 years.

As a representative of a statistical agency, I will now focus my attention on the production of statistics from civil registration and how statistical agencies can contribute in promoting and strengthening civil registration in Africa and the production of vital statistics. I will largely draw on issues pertaining to the situation in South Africa. As indicated earlier, the development of the national vital statistics system in South Africa occurred within the context of the political history, which had parallel systems that were not linked to a central system. As a result, the vital statistics data from these systems were of poor quality and were produced late. Until recently, South Africa’s death registration system was recognized as inadequate to provide such statistics for the majority of the population. However, the post-Apartheid government has prioritized civil registration and the production of vital statistics. Birth

registration coverage is at approximately 86% in 2007 and death registration at 85% for males and 79% for females in 2006.

Vital events are registered by the Department of Home Affairs. Statistics South Africa, through the Health and Vital Statistics Division processes, analyses and disseminates information on births, deaths, marriages and divorces from the country's civil registration system. Its mandate is to produce vital statistics that meets the following eight quality dimensions of quality: relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence, methodological soundness and integrity. The Department of Health is one of the main users of vital statistics.

Vital registration in South Africa has benefited greatly for enabling legislation and collaborative efforts between departments. That is, the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Act 51 of 1992) and the Statistics Act (Act 6 of 1999). Furthermore, in order to improve registration in South Africa, the Department of Home Affairs provided mobile service points and online registration in hospitals. There are also campaigns in the regions and collaboration between government departments such as the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education contributed indirectly by requiring birth certificates when administering the childcare grant and school registration, respectively. This is also the case with the issue of a burial order by traditional leaders and local government authorities.

South Africa has also benefited from ICT development. Internet and wireless technology have reduced the time for transferring registration data between registration points, producers and users. As with any form of record keeping, the civil registration system has to have the ability to store, file, abstract, and retrieve records. This has been shown in countries such as Chile, Thailand, and India that have made large investments in ICT over the last decade or so. Another example is Mauritius which has achieved exceptional levels of civil registration coverage-it has a fully computerized system. Conversely, the industrialized countries took a long time to have the best systems due to limited technological developments in the past. It is important to note that ICT will be a vital registration enabler only to the extent to which the confidentiality of information continue to be maintained.

Statistical agencies must be able to provide reliable figures on fertility, particularly teenage fertility; reliable figures on infant, child, adult and maternal mortality; and reliable figures on family formation, marriage patterns and family dissolutions to be able to address social and developmental challenges in our continent. To be able to produce quality vital statistics, statistical agencies therefore require the civil registration system to fulfill these

requirements:

- Complete coverage of events;
- Timely registration of events;
- Correctly and fully completed information;
- Collection of key data elements based on international standards;
- Use of standard concepts, definitions and classifications; and
- Professional code of conduct of staff.

The mandate traditionally given to national statistical offices (NSOs) is to provide statistical information needed

- To perform an audit function by providing data primarily for monitoring and, to a lesser extent, evaluating outcomes of policies, development programmes and service delivery; and
- To perform an information function by providing data for use in policy formulation, and planning and decision-making.

The biggest challenge is insufficient capacity of the NSOs to upscale their own work and to lead the transformation of statistical production in respective countries, specifically lack or limited coordination of the production of statistics by organs of state. Thus, lack of coordination of the production of vital statistics among organs of state is an urgent issue to address. Such coordination would address the three gaps that currently characterize the production and use of vital statistics in most African Statistical agencies, namely:

- An **information gap** whereby vital events are not registered or registered but for example, the cause of death is not provided.
- A **quality gap** resulting from a lack of international or peer-agreed shared standards among data producers to assess the reliability of the available data as well as data in the production pipeline.
- A statistical **skills gap** whereby there is not sufficient statistical capacity to produce the required statistics - the registration office or the national statistical office may not, for example, have the capacity to code the cause of death, etc. Put simply, there are usually not enough people with the necessary skills to guide the production as well as to manage the required data. In addition, there may be a lack of a comprehensive infrastructure and skills for essential for efficient data management.

National statistics offices have to provide extensive and on-going training of data processors and analysts of vital statistics. Where coding of causes of death is undertaken at these offices, officials must be trained in ICD-10, including verification of the codes provided. There must be robust and effective national statistics systems that will ensure timely and accurate dissemination of information. As official statisticians, we face a considerable challenge in providing relevant and accurate data, maintaining their independence from political powers, and communicating statistical results in an

effective way to policy makers and citizens. The range of statistics and the ways in which they are used have become increasingly important. It is also our role to engender statistical literacy among users and policy-makers. Different avenues for dissemination must be explored, including publication of hard-copies and CDs that include data for further analysis and release of data and information on the web. Data warehousing also become important and so is metadata, application of standards and easy retrieval.

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. Once systems are in place, then quality products would follow.

Civil registration in Africa still has a long way to go and statistical offices still have a huge task of producing information that can be used to inform policy development and monitoring of policies, programmes and service delivery. Close collaboration between these two agencies, and others, is required to be able to finally reach complete and accurate coverage of events and production of quality information that is processed and disseminated in a way that it will inform decision-making.

In addition to the role of the national statistical agencies, it is crucial that other main stakeholders contribute to civil registration and the production of vital statistics in the following manner:

The Public

For the public, greater awareness of the importance of timely and complete registration of vital events is required. The public should also have a responsibility of contributing towards complete and timely coverage of events.

The National coordinating mechanism

The importance of a well-functioning civil registration system and subsequent reliable and good quality vital statistics produced must be viewed as an important tool in the development process. At the national level, coordination committee made up of representatives of each government group with an interest in civil registration and vital statistics (for example, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Health, National Statistics Office, etc.) must be set-up. In addition, there must be an establishment of expert teams to critically review their national civil registration systems in terms of the legal framework, organizational issues, system design, training needs and control issues. This inter agency body should also provide leadership in securing political commitment to vital registration especially commitment to long term funding of the system. It must also promote civil registration through advo-

cacy and, also focusing on identified hard-to-reach populations and ensuring that the public trust the system.

Civil registration offices

For civil registration offices, an evaluation of the quality of the existing information must be undertaken, including the review of registration procedures. Also, there must be training of local registrars and for records management staff and that of medical officers on how to properly complete the medical certification section and usage of the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10). It is important to ensure that records are safely stored. To improve coverage, accessibility to registration centres can be improved by introduction of mobile service points and online registration in health facilities.

Concluding remarks

Most developing countries, including those in Africa, have made a commitment to the results agenda or managing for development results (MfDR) which aims to achieve sustained improvement in the well-being of people in developing countries: more children educated, fewer infants dying, more families lifted out of poverty. Managing for results incorporates strategies for both Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), and for targeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as other national development plans and programmes which aim to make an impact on the development performance in developing countries. It is important that countries recognise 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 system and availability of reliable and timely vital statistics.

Even in the production of vital statistics, NSOs need to confront challenges linked to the fact that there is need for intellectual, technological, logistical, political and administrative competency in data collection and processing and in ensuring data integrity.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

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

Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to welcome you especially our brothers and sisters who traveled from so far away to come to our peaceful country to attend this august workshop. In the same spirit let me extend my sincere appreciation to the organizers of this constructive event for making it a reality.

The government and people of Tanzania are profoundly honored to host this historic gathering. This is a clear sign that you appreciate our efforts towards ensuring that principles of good governance and human rights are respected not only in Tanzania but also around the world.

Dear Participants,

As we are aware, Africa is experiencing numerous changes in various sectors. While the changes are still underway, Africa is looking for new techniques and instruments to consolidate its efforts towards alleviating poverty and restoring peace and justice in areas affected by conflicts. At the same time, Africa is also struggling in addressing the challenges emanating from globalization, climate change as well as civil war, the current global economic slowdown, shortage of food and diseases.

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. Civil registration mechanisms as a means of ascertaining births and deaths in a particular country would help African countries in facilitating accessibility to social services such as public schools, hospitals, social security matters and social welfare. By doing so the lives of many Africans would have been improved hence the war against poverty, diseases and literacy could become a story of the past.

Dear Participants,

Although civil registration is among the universally accepted principles of human rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), CEDAW, and other human rights conventions and declarations, municipal laws regulating civil rights in many African countries were enacted during colonialism. This being the fact, those laws are outdated and do not cater

for our current needs.

Countries with well established and complete civil registration systems use birth certificates and National IDs in the various day to day Provision of Social Survey and public administration. However African countries in general are not benefiting from such registration systems due to outdated laws, low level of registration of vital events as well as the malfunctioning structural and institutional systems. In Africa today, millions of human beings are born and die without leaving any record of their existence. In this respect, for instance, Africa accounts for the major bulk of globally unregistered children whereby over 55 percent of children born annually are not registered. Children with no document to prove who they are and how old they are, in practice are categorized as 'invisible persons' or in legal terms they are 'non-existent' persons.

Civil registration plays a key role in the provision of vital statistics. The vital statistics that are compiled from the civil registration systems enables the compiling at annual vital rates, such as birth rates, death rates, causes of death and the expectancy information that is crucial in the preparation of annual population estimates, government projection and provisions of basic health and demographic indicators, including crucial MDG indicators, like infant mortality and maternal mortality rates. Due to a lack of a civil registration system, Africa is compelled to rely on unconventional and periodic data sources such as surveys and censuses that can not adequately account for the demographic dynamics of populations. This has brought a negative impact on the accuracy and reliability of our data sources in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of our development policies and programs at macro as well as micro levels. It can be concluded that the statistical base of African countries can not be established on a firm basis due to lack of efficiency civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Dear participants,

Despite varied critical development that civil registration and vital statistics have progress in the improvement of the systems in the developing world in general and in Africa in particular is staggered, where in some countries on the continent, progress has stagnated for several decades. Even in some countries, colonial ruins of systems of registration of vital events and records found in hospitals are no longer existent. This solution was documented by the WHO/HMN as "the single most critical failure of development over the past 30 years".

Nevertheless, there were notable efforts made in the past at country and regional levels that have aimed at improving civil registration and vital statistics

systems in Africa. Among the regional initiatives was the African Workshop on Strategies for accelerating the improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems that was conducted in 1994. The regional workshop was concluded by proposing a plan of action for Africa. However, the plan of action and the resolution of that workshop could not result to improvements at regional or country levels that could have been cited as a model for future endeavors. Again this is one of the indicators of neglect on the issue.

Dear Participants,

In the process of improving civil registration, most African countries may need to revise their civil registration laws and structures. They may be required to align their systems of civil registration to their justice system as well as civil service reform programs and adaptations to the information technology developments. Country initiatives and ownership are the critical elements that should be ensured in maintaining the sustainability of efforts and achievements. Civil registration requires long-term and persistent efforts and investments to reach the required level of coverage and data accuracy, where countries should prepare themselves in embarking new initiatives. Collaboration and coordination among the various actors of civil registration and vital statistics systems are the critical element that should be maintained as a key strategy in developing the systems. In this respect, the primary responsibility for maintaining the interface or integration between the various system lies on registrars, statisticians and demographers that are gathered here today.

Dear Participants,

Africa needs to reiterate and re-visit its commitment and hence act urgently and strategically on this long overdue critical development agenda. 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. African governments need to give more attention and support to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, realizing that without appropriate data and information sources, it would be hard and impractical to fully attain the objectives of the various national and sectoral reform programs currently going on in most African countries, it is also difficult for countries to achieve their commitments in monitoring national development policies and programs and MDG progress assessments without having an efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems in place.

Dear Participant,

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, which is the first requirement in acknowledging and safeguarding the basic principles of human rights and dignity. We need also to register death as soon as it occurs, because death registration is a vital source of information for the provision of timely health services and the monitoring of the health status of the population.

As I understand from the workshop agenda, the focus is more in search of new initiatives and approaches, through sharing of experiences and innovative thinking. We should not dwell much on our past failures and repeat our endless histories with no tangible results. In the contemporary developed countries, civil registration was set 200 years ago, but for us Africans, in this era of high technology in communications, civil registration to be a challenge is a paradox.

Dear Participants,

At this juncture, I would like to share with you the achievements we have realized on the agenda before us (civil registration and vital statistics) in Tanzania. The Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA), a government agency vested with civil registration has made two commendable developme3nt on the agenda. Firstly, is the digitization into a computerized system, which will have two critical benefits; security and safety of the records and easy accessibility of the records through the use of this index. Secondly, is the development of a national registration system which is capable of producing unique number to all births at the time of occurrence. It is expected that the unique number will be used as unique identification number and a reference for all dealings done by a person during the course of their lifetime.

It is my expectation that the experiences which we shared during this workshop, the resolutions and agreements which will come out of this workshop, will catalyze African countries to move this agenda forward to develop and implement an integrated Civil Registration System within their countries.

Dear Participants,

With these remarks, I have the honor to declare that the Regional Workshop on Civil Registration Vital Statistics Systems in Africa is officially opened.

I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST

Closing Statements

Closing Remarks

Prof. Ben Kiregyera

Director, African Centre for Statistics
UN Economic Commission for Africa

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs,
Workshop participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Vital statistics, that is, statistics on number of births, deaths by age and sex, and medical causes of death, are crucial for good public-health decision-making, and civil registration is the most effective and efficient method of generating these statistics. Civil registration, unlike all other information systems, provides benefits to individuals and communities in terms of legal status, nationality, inheritance, and human rights. Unfortunately, investment in civil registration systems has been fragmented and inadequate in the last four decades, and as a result, few African countries have comprehensive and complete civil registration systems.

This workshop was organized to address the shortcomings that have hampered civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa. In particular, the workshop has provided training to countries on the implementation of the UN guidelines and international standards on civil registration and vital statistics, enabled assessment of current status of civil registration and vital statistics systems and identification of gaps, and enabled the establishment of the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statistics.

The idea of holding this workshop was mooted more than two years ago as one of the key activities of the Development Account Project between the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN Statistics Division in New York. It was expected then that about 45 participants would attend the workshop. When the Bureau of the Statistical Commission for Africa reviewed the Project on the margins of the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development in Angola in January this year, the African Development Bank proposed enlarging the workshop so that all African countries could attend. We would like to thank the AfDB for providing resources to support about 45 participants and for meeting other costs of this workshop. Our other partner, InWent of Germany provided resources to meet the cost of interpretation and venue. I should also mention that the Health Matrix Network provided resources to enable Prof. Ann Seidman and Ms. Yoko Akachi to attend the workshop as facilitators. Altogether, we have had about 130 participants from 45 African

countries at this workshop.

The participants included representatives of government departments responsible for civil registration, National Statistics Offices, statistical training centres, regional economic communities, and regional and international organizations. We were greatly honored to have the Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia participating in this workshop. In addition to the discussion of issues and sharing of experience, participants were taken on a guided tour of RITA. They also designed individual country action plans for improving their civil registration and vital statistics systems. We also had a panel discussion in which regional and international organizations outlined support that they are giving or are planning to give to countries in support of their civil registration and vital statistics systems as well as related statistical work.

We would like to thank all participants who accepted our invitation, came to the workshop and participated very actively in the five day heavily packed workshop programme. In a special way, we would like once more to thank the Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for attending the workshop. Secondly, we would like to thank all facilitators for a job well done. Mr. Srdjan Mirkic of UN Statistics Division, Mr. Oumar Sarr and Mr. Genene Bizuneh of UN ECA and Mr. Robert N'gong of AfDB played a critical role in the organization of this workshop and we are grateful to them. Thirdly, permit me to thank our good hosts, the NBS and RITA, and especially the Director General and Mr. Massawe of the National Bureau of Statistics as well as the management and staff of this hotel and other hotels where participants have been staying.

In the past, nothing much happened after workshops of this nature were conducted. On behalf of the African Statistics Coordination Committee and in particular, on behalf of the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, I can promise that we will take forward the recommendations made at this workshop with the seriousness and vigor they deserve. In particular, we plan to publish the proceedings of this workshop and to disseminate them widely. We also plan to activate the African Network of Civil Registrars and Vital Statisticians using the knowledge management portal of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. We will be consulting with the leadership of our organizations as well as the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia about the possibility of convening the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in 2010. We wish you God's mercies as you go back home.

Thank you and bon voyage.

CLOSING REMARKS
THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS – ON 3rd JULY -2009 – NEW AFRICA HOTEL
12:00 NOON

The Director, African Center for Statistics, UN Economic Commission for Africa

The Director, Statistics Department, African Development Bank,
The Representative of the Director, UN Statistics Division

Your Excellencies representatives of international organizations

Invited Guests

Workshop Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Workshop Participants

Chairperson,

I am very much impressed to see this important gathering, discussing the important theme “Towards New Initiatives and Approaches” to civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa, at a time when Africa is struggling to secure reliable data and information for monitoring and evaluation of national development plans and programs as well as the MDG targets. With a few exceptions, every African nation has in the past enacted civil registration laws. However, in almost all countries in the region, improvements and progress towards complete and universal civil registration system has not been attained. I am hoping that the gathering has critically deliberated on this challenge.

Chairperson,

I am aware that you are all well informed of the importance and benefits of civil registration and vital statistics systems as it is a globally acknowledged and universally accepted procedure that has been practiced since the 17th and 18th centuries. Accepting this fact then the issue that we should question ourselves as individual and delegates of countries should be why this has remained a challenge for Africa and why Africa has been off track for so long in achieving complete and universal civil registration systems.

Chairperson,

I understand that, on this workshop you have gone beyond listing problems and reasons such as budget limitations, lack of commitments, and lack of manpower which are – the usual reasons. We need to turn these problems

and reasons to challenges and then act on them. Improving civil registration and vital statistics systems require a change in our behaviors; in our thinking and actions in response to the problems and challenges facing us. That is why this workshop focused on new initiatives and approaches to gear us towards innovative and indigenous approaches based on the realities of Africa.

Chairperson,

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals brought a new global partnership spirit that we Africans should leverage to our mutual advantage. In the era of globalization, country level development efforts and achievements are being measured from country, regional and global development perspectives. There are standard development indicators and targets set and also comparison tools developed for countries and regions to track progress. All the measurement tools and indicators would be meaningless without appropriate and reliable statistical data and information. In this respect, Africa is lacking the very basic source of statistical information flow that should have been available on annual basis as well as down to the lowest administrative level that is critical in tracking the above mentioned development measurements. Civil registration systems are the conventional source of flows of these statistics. Due to lack of comprehensive civil registration systems, almost all African countries are relying on stock and periodic statistical methods to produce vital statistics information.

Chairperson,

Africa as a region, including my own country Tanzania, has not done well with regard to the development of administrative data sources including civil registration systems. We plan to correct this situation in Tanzania by implementing the Tanzanian Statistical Master Plan (TSMP). This is a medium-term plan that has been designed to provide strategic directions and appropriate mechanisms for guiding and accelerating the development of sustainable statistical capacity and promoting evidence-based policy formulation, planning and decision-making in support of the national regional and international development agenda. It is very important to underscore the fact that the TSMP covers all sectors and all sources of statistics.

As we implement the TSMP, we will give special focus to strengthening the national civil registration system so that we can know at least the number of persons, new born or in-migrants added each year to our population and the number of persons deducted each year. This is one of the minimum statistical requirements national governments need to have for them to be

able to plan for better delivery of services and to become accountability to the public. The information from this system is also vital for making population projections, and for supporting other sources of data like censuses and surveys.

Chairperson

A civil registration system also serves legal purposes, addresses human rights issues, provides public administration services, guides social service implementations and also provides statistical units for compiling vital statistics. This is the unique characteristic and advantage of civil registration that enables provision of multi-purpose functions from information generated from a single source, that is, the local registrar. From the statistics point of view, it is the only information source that provides population dynamics information at all levels of a country's administration on a continuous and permanent basis. It is therefore unacceptable and unjustified to neglect such an important data source to support national and international development agenda.

Chairperson,

I have seen from the workshop agenda that you have reviewed the international standards and recommendations as presented by the UN Statistics Division. The UN handbooks are prepared in order for us to utilize them as technical benchmarks and guides. However, Africa as a region requires adapting and domesticating these handbooks and guidelines. In this respect, African countries expect more efforts and initiative from the ECA to do the said adaptation and domestication.

We expect 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 in channeling technical assistance, resource mobilization and coordination of international support to African countries to further develop the source of vital statistics.

Unlike many other development programs, civil registration is a continuous and permanent undertaking that needs to be developed on long-term perspective. In this respect, we should avoid piecemeal and project type approaches. At this point, I would like to request our partners and supporters to align their initiatives towards the common platform and harmonize our interests and integrate our efforts in capacitating our regional platform at ECA. Let me also highlight the need for the UN Headquarters and its divisions to continue to provide support to our countries in a more pragmatic manner and

to give special attention to the requests of Africa.

Chairperson,

Finally, let me thank the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the UN Statistics Division for choosing Tanzania as a venue for this very important workshop. I have no doubt that this workshop has been very informative and useful to all participating countries and I would like to encourage you all to ensure that the knowledge and information you have acquired is put to best use in improving the civil registration system in your country.

With this remarks, I declare this workshop closed.

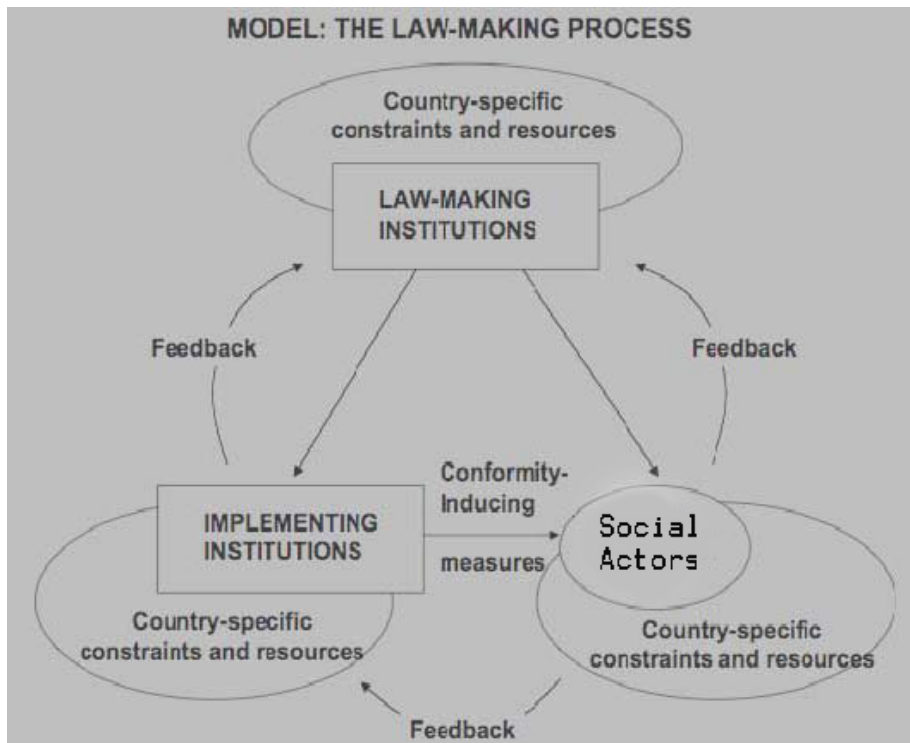
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR LISTENNING AND WISH YOU ALL SAFE
JOURNEY BACK HOME

Annex – 4 Working Group Reports

Report of Working Group – 1: Reviewing and Updating Civil Registration Laws in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

Problem Solving Methodology

- Step I: describe the social problem-- who is doing what that is causing the problem
- Data collectors and data providers
- Step II: Explanations for the Problematic - Behaviors (Use ROCCI-PI)
- Step III: The Legislative Solution: Bill's Detailed Provisions
- Step IV: Monitoring and Evaluation (see if solutions work and how can improve; involve all stakeholder in this process)
-



Institutional Legislative Theory's ROCCIPI Categories

How do we explain why vital statistics are not submitted and collected???

Rule - Existing law does not specify who does what.

Opportunity- lack forms, names are not given at birth (Uganda); woman are not allowed to submit vital statistics

Capacity- distance from registration center and lack of transportation (Rwanda); inability to fill out forms adequately

Communication: people don't know what the law prescribes;

Interest (Incentive) people don't realize the implications of vital statistics; others people have incentives not to record vital events

Process- many involved in process of vital statistics system are not involved in law making process; (we need to consider how actors make decisions and why they may be choosing not to register vital statistics)

Ideology: (attitude of people, worldview that impacts whether or not actor fulfills obligation). For example, in some countries people only report the birth of males.

Solutions: How to remedy the problematic behavior:

Need to address all the kinds and dimensions of behavior that explain social problems

(Can use ROCCIPI categories to address specific elements of behavior. We lacked time to address all causes of failure to collect vital statistics, but here are some early attempts:)

- Have laws that detail exactly who does what
 - Law must identify who should be providing information
- All stakeholders should be involved in drafting the laws; statisticians should inform drafters on barriers to data collection
- Laws must consider broader impact of legislation

Recommendations from Group One

- Have laws that detail exactly who does what
 - Law must identify who should be providing information
- All stakeholders should be involved in drafting the laws; statisticians should inform drafters on barriers to data collection
- Laws must consider broader impact of legislation
- Need to ensure that policies are communicated to even the most distant members of society
- Statisticians need to play active role in shaping laws that impact submission and collection of data

Report of Working Group – 3

Keeping the interface between civil registration and vital statistics systems: challenges and opportunities

Situational analyses/opportunities

- Communication and collaboration working
 - Seychelles, South Africa, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Uganda, Cape Verde, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania (indirect), Namibia
- Fully aware; addressing communication and coordinating mechanisms
 - Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Burundi, DRC, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Malawi, Guinea
 - Legislation
 - Establishment of coordinating mechanisms
- Doesn't exist, no efforts currently to establish the communication
 - Eritrea (produces vital stats from DHSs)
- Cote d'Ivoire/Ivory Coast
 - Not good-does not exist, no conference, no regulations, data collected by CV not transmitted to stats
 - 2005-currently deliberating new law of stats to take care of delivering data to stats and coordination. Don't know when this will be passed.
 - Any foreseen problems-none-consultation encompassing everyone and this problems are not expected
 - Production of information started and one publication for the capital city disseminated in 2007
- Zimbabwe
 - Coordination somehow perfect. There is legislation mandating Stats office to collect and the stats division working on vital registration is based in the civil registrar's office to enable access and processing. However, they continue to report to the Stats office. There is collaboration relating to training such as ICD10; systems
 - Problems unrelated to coordination-but overall national problems
- Eritrea
 - Do not compile vital stats. No legislation. Sources-Regular DHS. Some regions register vital events (unregulated by law). For instance if a child needs a birth certificate, they would get it, but people are not compelled to register vital events and this information is not collated

- DRC
 - Similar to Ivory coast-CV under interior-none/limited coordination. Justice responsible for divorces does not communicate with Stats office. Solution: introducing regulations/legislation that mandate communication in an effective and direct manner and currently there are no such initiatives. Unit within stats office produces vital statistics from sources other than vital registration.
- Burkina Faso
 - No communication-Interior ministry is in charge and in 2005 collected this information and stats office doesn't get this information-establish within Stats a division for census, vital registration etc
 - Collection of data by interior for voting lists is for different purposes and cannot be used (nature)
 - Decentralization will affect production of this statistics and we might run into problems at sub-regional levels
- Ethiopia
 - No production of VS from VRS -just isolated certification activities; Stats office 1980/1990s conducted practice vital registration exercises. Now there are plans; draft legislation put before parliament. Challenges (foreseen): low level of awareness; advocacy; inaccessibility of some parts of the countries; cultural/traditions may be problematic given that it is a large country with large population and ethnic groups; resource constraints
- Senegal
 - Restructuring of statistical system-new scheme put in place and functioning up to a point-there is regional level activity- Central registrar's office coordinating all these activities. Communication mechanisms now being put together
- Burundi
 - Similar to Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast-no communication but law was changed in 2007 –national statistical office have offices at regional levels and have started the communication with registrar office at the same level
- Niger
 - Communication going back to 1988 though it wasn't functioning well- Interior, Health, Foreign affairs –In 2008 coordinating mechanism started. submit data to Stats and currently operating
- Guinea
 - 2 ministries responsible for collection, namely health and interior; no communication; compilation by stats sa; she will start this process when she leaves here. Health is also producing some statistics

- Rwanda
- Seychelles
 - Excellent coordination. There are no problems probably because the country is small. No coordination body as the need arises.
- Cameroon
 - No coordinating body and no communication. Civil registers are supposed to submit copy of the third page of certificates but they don't.
 - Problems are institutional in nature.
 - Solution-re-enforce mandates given by the law. Sensitization/ discussions and sharing experiences
- South Africa
 - Collaboration is well Department of health (certification of deaths and confirmation of births) and that of home affairs
 - Although there isn't a functioning coordinating mechanism, there are regular meetings.
 - The collaboration has been further strengthened by the signing of MOUs between the Statistics office and the department of health and that of home affairs within the framework of the National Statistics System and the statistics act.
- Zanzibar
 - Vital statistics existed for 100 years and have a Stats act of 2007 and allows the Stats collect information. Coordinating body exists between civil registration office and stats office. The problems with coordination and there are monthly meetings, especially now during training on vital registration.
 - 75% births and 25% death completeness probably due to availability of incentives to birth registration and none for births
- Tanzania
 - No direct coordination however the bodies work together when there is need for birth certificates. There is no legislation governing this, however the presence of a national identity office which coordinates all registers in the country (from companies, births and deaths etc) is an enabler and possibly common data inter phase.
- Rwanda
 - No provision in the law to mandate coordination/production of VS from CR
 - They addressed this in the new law to be adopted next month. This will set the framework for production of VS from CRS.
- Tunisia
 - The law in existence since 1967-Coordination good and registrar filling in forms. Problems: quality, especially COD;

coverage

- Namibia
 - None-produces from surveys. B4 independence backlogs of certification/registration forms. Coordination/committee is there to address backlogs which will enable production. meets often
- Uganda
 - Cooperation exists because of the statistics act mandating Stats office to process and produce vital stats and the act mandating registration bureau to transmit this info to Stats office. Task force on births and deaths meeting every month. Stats office-design of instrument; data capturing; processing. Registration Bureau issues undertakes registration and issues certificates
- Malawi
 - Do not produce from CRS-Non Africans-National registration bureau established and to design the forms. Bill written in 2005 still to be passed by parliament
- Cape Verde
 - 2 institutions- Ministry of Justice-Regular and good communication between municipal offices (submit monthly) problems – births reg delayed-population estimates

Annex - 5

Panel Discussion Focus Areas: Suggested from the workshop organizer's perspective

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

- Preparedness in terms of capacity and technical expertise in supporting and responding to technical support requests from African countries;
- Specific strategies in addressing technical support requests of countries in weak or worst civil registration situation, including fragile states;
- Strategies foreseen in creating sustainable and permanent training programs on civil registration and vital statistics systems at global and regional levels;
- UNSD's expectation from African countries in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Any immediate or short-term commitments already endorsed or in progress by the UNSD in supporting African countries in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

The World Bank and African Development Bank

- Preparedness of the Bank in supporting Africa in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Specific strategies foreseen in addressing the long overdue capacity gap (technical, structural and financial) prevailing in almost all African countries in regards to civil registration;
- The Bank's strategy in ensuring country ownership and sustainability of interventions in regards to civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- The Bank's expectation from African countries in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Any immediate or short-term commitments already endorsed or in progress by the Bank in supporting African countries in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

UNICEF

- Preparedness of UNICEF in supporting Africa in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- UNICEF's readiness and strategies in aligning its initiatives and

interventions in the area of universal birth registration (UBR) being practiced in some African countries, with the conventional civil registration method of the UN principles and recommendations;

- Any immediate or short-term commitments already endorsed or in progress by UNICEF in supporting African countries in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

UNFPA

- It is a well acknowledged fact that UNFPA has been actively supporting countries on civil registration and vital statistics in the 70s and 80s, however, in the past 10-15 years it seems UNFPA declined to intervene in the area: Is UNFPA in the state of frustration or renovation, may be countries would like to hear UNFPA's current position;
- Any immediate or short-term commitments already endorsed or in progress by UNFPA in supporting African countries in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

HMN/WHO

- Preparedness of HMN/WHO in supporting Africa in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Improving causes of death data and information from civil registration is one of the areas, where HMN/WHO working in the past: Countries may need to know the technical approaches followed and their feasibility and HMN/WHO's position in supporting African countries in improving their causes of death data and information;
- Any immediate or short-term commitments already endorsed or in progress by HMN/WHO in supporting African countries in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems;

Annex – 6

Launching Proposal for Establishing and Maintaining African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Network “AfCRVSNet”

Brief Background

The coverage and completeness of civil registration in almost all African countries is very low. All countries in the region more or less share similar problems and challenges in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region. Strategies in improving civil registration systems in the region require far more interactive inter- and intra country communications, knowledge and experience sharing, and also provision of technical support through fast-tracking IT technology. In this respect, one of the strategies that the African Centre for Statistics envisaged and is proposing in relation to the regional workshop is the establishment and maintenance of a network of civil registrars and vital statisticians in the region. Accordingly, the establishment of the network will be launched at the workshop and countries will be urged to make every effort to contribute towards maintaining the Network.

Goal

- Improve and maintain civil registration and vital statistics systems to the internationally acceptable standards of completeness and data quality levels in all countries of Africa.

Objectives

- The objectives of the regional Network is to provide a regional platform for exchanging views, ideas and best practices on civil registration and vital statistics systems in the continent. It also provides a forum for policy dialogue on civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.

Membership

- All countries in the region will be members of the Network. Each country will designate two senior experts, one from the registration office and the other from the national statistics office. In addition, the heads of offices from the registration and statistics offices will be linked and copied with the communication of the Network.
- International and regional development partners will designate one

- representative for the Network;
- All regional statistical training centre's will each designate one senior expert.

Management responsibility

- The African Centre for Statistics will host the Network. The Centre will have the responsibility to coordinate, manage and administer the Network;
- A management committee of six members will be established. The members will be composed of the following: 2 country representatives among members of the Network; 1 representative from regional training centres; 1 representative from development partners; 1 representative from the Centre;
- The members of the committee will be identified and designated by the Centre through consultation with respective partners. The committee will be chaired by the Director of the Centre. Details of the committee working modalities will be defined accordingly.

Technical structure

- The Network will be administered under the auspices of the Director of the Centre;
- A senior expert in civil registration and vital statistics systems will be designated at the Centre. An assistant communication specialist will support the day to day communication activities of the Network.
- Financial and administrative requirements in establishing and maintaining the Network will be allocated and provided by the Centre;
- The Network will liaison with other sections and relevant structures of the Centre in its day to day activities;

Major activities of the Network

- Facilitate country requests on technical assistance, knowledge sharing and training requirements;
- Facilitate in organizing periodic policy dialogue forums on improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa;
- Encourage countries in taking pragmatic actions in improving civil registration and usage of vital statistics;
- Facilitate sharing of study and research outputs from countries, universities, training institutions and other international and regional organizations on CR&VS;
- Link countries with development partners in availing resources for improving the systems;
- Work on harmonization of techniques and approaches in civil registration; and link sister international and regional agencies to

- cooperate and work towards the same goal;
- Advise and support NSOs in addressing civil registration and vital statistics principles and operations in their National Strategy for the Development of Statistics documents;
- Post on ACS web page technical resource materials on civil registration and vital statistics;
- Develop civil registration and vital statistics status and progress standard reporting formats, share with countries and endorse; and use it for compiling country reports;
- Facilitate reporting of annual vital statistics data and information to the UN and other development partners;
- Initiate and encourage countries to look for more innovative and indigenous approaches in addressing country specific problems and challenges;
- Devise regional and sub-regional induction training programs on UN handbooks on civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Work with the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and regional training centres to adopt and develop regional and country level guidelines on civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Encourage and support countries in developing customized computer programs using local computing firms in computerizing civil registration system;
- Inform development partners on the activities and progress of the Network;
- Keep track of addresses and bio-data of members of the Network;
- Document all communications and documents of the Network;

Budget

- The Network will present its budget requirements to the Director for endorsement as per the planning and budgeting schedule of the Centre;

Reporting

- The Network will present periodic progress reports to the Director;

Annex – 7

Recommendations of the Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa

29 June – 3 July 2009 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

PREAMBLE

A Regional Workshop on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa was held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania from 29 June – 3 July 2009. The workshop was organized jointly by the UNECA - African Centre for Statistics (ACS), UN Statistics Division (UNSD), African Development Bank (AfDB) and InWent of Germany and jointly hosted by the National Bureau of Statistics and the Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA) of the United Republic of Tanzania. The workshop was initiated by the ACS and the UNSD to address what has been called a Scandal of Invisibility because “many people in Africa and Asia are born and die without leaving a trace in any legal record or official statistics. Absence of reliable data for births, deaths and causes of death are at the root of this scandal of invisibility, which renders most of the world’s poor as unseen, unaccountable and hence uncounted” – a scandal with serious implications for vital statistics, human and constitutional rights, property rights, policy and national development as well as MDG monitoring.

The regional workshop was attended by 140 participants drawn from national civil registration offices and National Statistics Offices (NSOs) of 40 countries and 5 regional training institutions, the UN Statistics Division, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, HMN/WHO and other development partners resident in Tanzania (the full list of countries and institutions represented at the workshop is attached). Among the participants were a number of Heads of NSOs and the Minister of Justice of Ethiopia.

The workshop noted that a fully functioning civil registration system is the source of legal identity and related information for the individual, the community and the government in claiming and safeguarding rights and privileges enshrined in national laws and international conventions and covenants. Civil registration is an instrument in facilitating health, education and other social services to individuals, families and communities. Civil registration is also the conventional and most appropriate source of vital statistics. Vital statistics are crucial and irreplaceable component of national

statistical systems as they generate numerical profile of the most precious resource of any country – its human capital. Managing human capital appropriately, in turn, is an indisputable and most visible indicator of good governance or the lack of it.

The workshop noted, with utmost concern, the fact that in the majority of countries in Africa, and in almost all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the civil registration system operates on a sporadic and incomplete basis. In those countries, there are no adequate systems that enables citizens be recognized by the state and hence the justice system and public administration services could not be improved in a manner that promotes development and security of citizens. Because of low coverage of civil registration systems in most African countries, some important vital rates such as life expectancy at birth, infant and child mortality rates could not be measured from vital statistics. Household surveys and censuses have been undertaken to fill the information gaps created by lack of effective vital registration systems. These are largely ad-hoc exercises and interim measures that should not be taken as long-term solutions for generating vital statistics.

Of the many components of both civil registration and vital statistics systems, only a handful of African countries can confidently claim to have well functioning systems. Whether it is the lack of adequate legal framework, low coverage of civil registration due to a number of circumstances, the non-existence of cooperation and coordination between civil registration and official statistics, low statistical capacity or simply lack of awareness of the need to develop both in a simultaneous manner, the outcome is disappointedly the absence of coherent, functioning and regular generation of accurate, reliable and timely vital statistics from the civil registration system.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The workshop adopted the following recommendations:

ADVOCACY

- Dedicate the Theme for the 2009 African Statistics Day to civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- All African governments are called upon to take appropriate measures in availing the necessary resources and support to civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Explore the possibility of organizing a high-level Ministerial Conference on Improving Civil Registration in as near-future as possible to maintain the momentum.

OPERATIONAL

- Civil Registration Offices and National Statistics Offices, development partners and regional training institutions are urged to actively participate in the regional Network on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa;
- Countries are encouraged to use as opportunities sectoral reform programs, democratization and decentralization processes currently going on in Africa to bring civil registration services to their populations;
- All governments are strongly encouraged to revisit the topic of fees for issuing documents based on civil registration records – the Workshop reiterated that the United Nations recommend that the registration is always free of charge and that the fee for documents should be as low as possible;
- The African Development Bank, being a regional development bank, is requested to continue its support for African countries and devise a special program that promotes speedy improvements for civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa;
- Regional training institutions are urged to take the initiative in developing appropriate curriculum for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa and to actively participate in evaluation studies and research undertakings and also in strengthening the aforementioned Network;
- Countries need to proactively interact with each other to share knowledge, experience and resources using various mechanisms, such as, study tours, workshops, technical support, ...;
- Organize biennially the regional workshop on civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- African Centre for Statistics to continue leading and serving as regional platform for civil registration and vital statistics systems and in leveraging resources, technical support and coordination among countries in Africa;
- UN Statistics Division to continue its support and, in close collaboration with regional institutions in Africa and other partners, devise a special programme for Africa in general and fragile states in particular;
- African Centre for Statistics and the African Development Bank in collaboration with other development partners to develop a medium-term programme for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa;
- Countries to finalize their country action plans (drafted at the workshop) and submit them to African Centre for Statistics.

TECHNICAL

- Countries are advised and encouraged to revisit and update their civil registration laws and statistical legislations in-line with current developments and take measures that ensure their proper implementation;
- Countries need to identify underlying reasons for the low level of civil registration in the rural areas and design strategies to overcome this low coverage, including the introduction of mobile registration units in nomadic and hard to reach areas;
- It is indispensable to ensure that both civil registrars and statisticians are fully cross-trained in basic concepts, definitions and procedures in both areas;
- Civil registration offices and NSOs are urged to collaborate and interface, and the NSOs are urged to play an active role in setting national standards and methods for civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- Countries are encouraged to use conventional methods in evaluating their civil registration and vital statistics systems and to take measures in ensuring proper utilization and documentation of their data and information;
- Countries are encouraged to use UN guidelines and recommendations as a basis for their civil registration and vital statistics improvement programme;

PARTNERSHIP

- African Centre for Statistics and UN Statistics Division need to strengthen institutional linkages in facilitating integration, harmonization and coordination of efforts currently going on by various organizations at country and regional levels in order to promote cost-effective mechanisms and avoid duplication of efforts;
- Donors, UN agencies, consortiums, education and training centres, NGOs and other development partners are urged to support Africa in the area of capacity building, such as, provision of training, public education, IT development, data capturing, coding, processing and analysis and provision of other capacity building materials and financial support.
- Countries are urged to mainstream civil registration and vital statistics systems in their national statistical development programmes;

FOLLOW-UP

A full workshop report is under preparation. In addition, a compendium of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa will be prepared as part of the post-workshop activities. The compendium will comprise the status of country civil registration and vital statistics systems together with an action plan for the improvement of the systems. It will be used in the preparation of the medium-term regional programme for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa.